

Chapter 6: The History of The Florida Meat Goat Association

Ken Kenyon

The Florida Meat Goat Association was started in the Spring of 1986 by Tom and Helen Hill. Tom and Helen had been raising registered dairy goats for a number of years, and realized that many people were interested in goats as pets, field "cleaner-uppers," pack or cart animals, and for meat. Helen decided to send out a couple of hundred letters to survey people's interest in starting a Meat Goat Association. The response was good so plans were made for the first meeting.

Eight people attended that first meeting held at Tom and Helen's farm. Those in attendance were Tom and Helen Hill, Ed and Ann Davis, Frank Harvey, Diane Singley, Isabel Shider, and Helen's sister, Shirley. Frank and Diane are still (1994) active members of the Association. The second meeting was held at Frank Harvey's farm and a few more interested people attended. One of those in attendance at this second meeting was Laura Pierson, who served as the Association's Secretary for many years. The third meeting was held at Jerry and Laura Pierson's farm. Among those in attendance were Roger and Ruth Jansen. Ruth was elected the Association's President in 1990 and again in 1992.

The Association developed Articles of Incorporation and submitted them to the State of Florida for incorporation on October 16, 1989, with its objective being "to promote the goat industry with its various products and markets (meat, skins, milk, cheese, etc.) with a primary interest in the production and marketing of meat. In addition, the group tries to participate in educational and promotional programs to benefit producers and processors."

Initially, the logo used by the Association was the one shown in Figure 6.1. In September 1991, a contest was held to select the Association's official logo. Five were submitted for consideration and, in November 1991, the membership selected the entry submitted by Helen Hill as the official logo (Figure 6.2).

In an effort to better acquaint people with the advantages of raising goats plus giving them a chance to sample goat meat, a "Goat Day" was held in September, 1991 at the Alachua County Fair

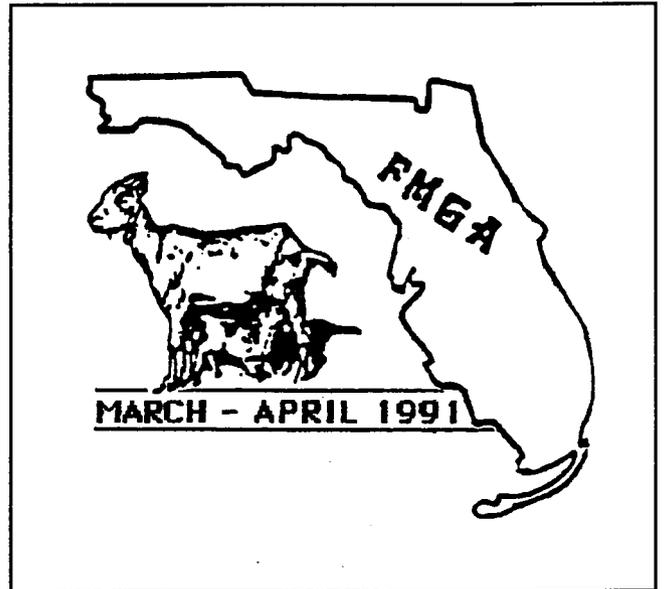


Figure 6.1. Logo used by the FMGA until November 1991.

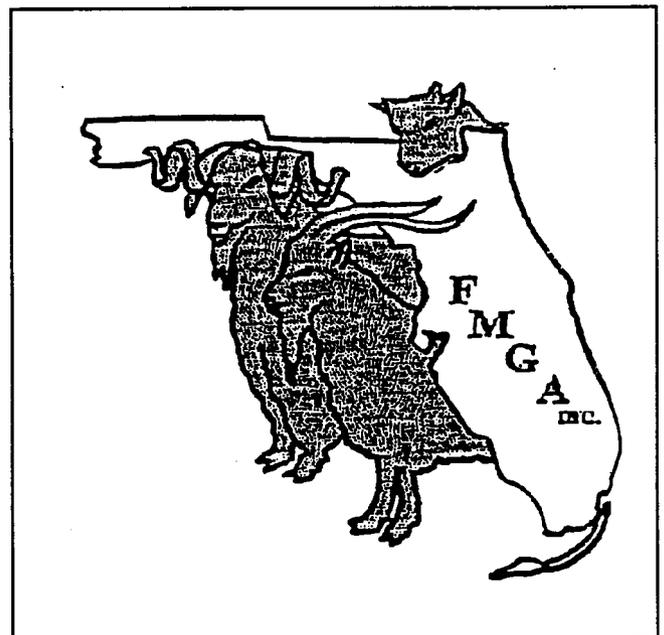


Figure 6.2. The current logo used by the FMGA.

Grounds. The day was a huge success, thanks to the superb organizational efforts of Georgia White. The author spent most of the day introducing people to the exceptional flavor of goat meat and listening to