



Kentucky Goat Producers Association Goat FAQ

Are goats new to Kentucky? Actually, they've been here for generations – just in smaller numbers. Boer and Kiko meat breeds are, of course, recent arrivals in the United States. With the popularity of meat breeds, the increase in various ethnic populations within the U.S. and the decline of tobacco production in Kentucky, more and more small farm owners have seen how well dairy and meat goats fit into their diversification plans and the goat population in the Commonwealth has multiplied exponentially.

What are the markets like for meat goats in Kentucky? The 2000 census showed 10% of the U.S. population was born in a foreign country where goat meat is commonly consumed. These foreign born citizens are contributing to a huge demand for goat meat in the U.S. Kentucky is gaining national recognition for its strong market infrastructure in the form of regional graded sales and tel-o-auctions where farmers have been receiving top prices for their market animals.

How does goat meat compare to other meats nutritionally? Goat meat is highly nutritious and low in fat with even fewer calories and fat grams than chicken. A three-ounce cooked serving of goat meat has 122 calories and 2.6 grams of fat; the same portion of chicken has 162 calories and 6.3 fat grams.

Will goats replace tobacco in Kentucky's farm economy? Again, diversification is the key. It is widely held that no single crop will produce an income at the levels traditionally associated with tobacco. High product demand and good prices for live animal sales have demonstrated that meat goats are an attractive option for incorporation on the farmscape. Currently, an estimated 4,000 to 5,000 Kentucky farms feature goats. Some meat goat producers direct-market their livestock, increasing their profit margin and keeping more money in the community. Dairy goats can provide a value-added lift through cheeses, yogurt, and hand-crafted items such as goat's milk lotions and soaps.

Kentucky is one of the largest cattle producing states in the east. How do goats fit in with cattle? Goats and cattle are very complimentary when companion or rotationally grazed. Goats thrive on the abundant forages of Kentucky farms and since there is only about a 20% overlap in the dietary preferences of cattle and goats, the two species do not compete for food. Goats actually improve pastures for cattle by readily consuming plant species not favored by cattle, thus opening more pasture land for the production of desired grasses. Additionally, cattle producers will find the sale of market meat goats to be a welcome addition to their bottom line.

Hasn't the Kentucky goat industry been largely dependant on tobacco settlement money? Not at all. With limited financial support to date from tobacco settlement funds, Kentucky has propelled itself into a leading position in national goat production due to strong market demand and a commodity that "fits" with Kentucky Agriculture. Kentucky is the envy of other tobacco producing states due to its progressive programs such as the Goat and Sheep Diversification Model Program. Goat production is a statewide agricultural enterprise with over 100 counties participating in the Goat and Sheep Diversification Model Program.

How can I become involved with this exciting industry and learn more about goat production in Kentucky? Easy – Just print out the Membership application on our web page www.kentuckygpa.com and mail your application to the Kentucky Sheep and Goat Development Office at 1009 Twilight Trail, Suite 121, Frankfort, KY 40601