International Goat Association

- Fostering the use of goats to provide for the needs of humankind.
- Encouraging research with and development of goats to increase their productivity and usefulness throughout the world.
- Perpetuating the International Conference on Goats.
- Sponsoring the Journal of Small Ruminant Research

IGA NEWSLETTER

April 1997

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GOATS IN MEXICO

Roque G. Ramirez--Director of IGA (1996-2000) and President of The Mexico Association of Goat Production (1995-1997)

The goat population in Latin America may appear small compared to the world's population (approximately 6% of the world's stock), but in some countries, namely Mexico and Brazil, goats represent a substantial proportion of the livestock.

Native goats in Mexico, derived from animals brought from Spain, have evolved through natural selection during five centuries, acquiring the capacity to thrive in harsh climates, scarcity of forage and shortage of drinking water. Because of the extensive use of dairy bucks in the northern part of the country in the last decades, purebred native goat herds are rarely found in the states that form the borderline with the United States. However, roughly from the parallel 24 downward, a great deal of the goat herds are composed of purebred native animals.

The purebred native goats present a wide variety of colors which include brown, black, cream, reddish, gray and white and combinations of these in a variety of patterns. Regarding the size of native goats, two very distinctive types of goats may be distinguished: small animals (25-30 kg for adult females and height to withers at 14 months of age of 61.5 cm) in the southwest part of the country, and medium size animals (30-40 kg for adult females and 45-55 kg for males) in the arid and semiarid regions of the North. Regardless of ecological zones and latitudes, native goats of Mexico present full ovarian activity from June through March, with a marked reduction in sexual activity in April and May.

Because of shortage of food in the arid zones, the native goats of the North are first bred at 12-18 months of age, whereas small native goats of the South are bred for the first time at 6-11 months of age. With short breeding periods (15 to 30 days) and independent of month of breeding (except April and May) (continued page 2)

From the President of IGA -- Adel Aboul Naga. During the VI International Conference on Goats in Beijing last May, IGA paid special tribute to Heifer Project International (HPI) for their partnership and shared goals in helping small farmers in the developing world. Several members of the HPI staff were charter members of the International Goat Association. We were pleased that Jo Luck, HPI's President and CEO, joined us in Beijing. Robert Pelant, Director of the Asia/South Pacific program of HPI, served as Secretary-Treasurer from 1991-1993. Rosalee Sinn was elected in 1993. She played a key role in the organization of the VI ICG. Although she is retiring as Director of Resource Development and Education for HPI, and is completing her full-time work at the end of May, she will continue to serve as Secretary-Treasurer of IGA. She will continue on a part-time basis with HPI. The IGA Board of Directors expresses their strong appreciation to HPI, particularly to Rosalee Sinn and Robert Pelant, for their indispensable support of IGA.

(Continued from page 1) Goats in Mexico

pregnancy rate of native goats in the arid zones normally is above 80%, but because of the high abortion rate observed (5 to 50%), particularly when the gestation period coincides with shortage of food, kidding rates vary from 30 to 80%.

On the other hand, with year round permanence of bucks with does, kidding rates of the small native goats of the South usually are above 80%. Prolificacy when the breeding period takes place in the winter varies from 1.32 to 2.06 kids per doe. In the arid and semiarid zones (precipitation between 200 and 400 mm principally from June to October) milk production during the rainy season is 100-140 kg per lactation with lactation lengths of approximately 6 months and once a day milking. On the other hand, milk production in winter (dry seasons) averages only 72 kg in a lactation of 6 months, which many times is not enough for an adequate growth rate of twin kids. Mortality of kids varies widely depending upon the kidding season. When parturition occurs in winter in the northern part of the country mortality of kids varies from 20 to 50%, whereas the mortality with kidding in summer is less than 10%.

Regardless of sex and type of birth, birth weights of kids are 2-2.27 kg for small criollo goats of the South and 2.2 to 3.45 for criollo kids in the North. Dressing percentage for small criollo goats is 42.2 and 52.3% for recently born kids and animals of 10 months of age, respectively.

The population of goats in Mexico is increasing, but at a slower rate than in the human population. However, the number of goats represents a substantial biological resource for meeting humankind's need for food and fiber.

VII INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GOATS
TOURS, FRANCE, MAY 14-20, 2000

Tours, France is the venue for what promises to be a productive and exciting conference.

As in previous conferences, specific sessions will be organized and chaired by internationally recognized animal scientists. Practical applications and the transfer of technologies to the farm, either in intensive or in extensive systems, particularly those of developing countries will be discussed.

Mark your calendar. Plan planning now to take advantage of this important opportunity.

See details on page 7 of this newsletter.

A Report on VI International Conference on Goats, Beijing, China, May 6-11, 1996

by Jerry Laker, Macaulay Land Use Research Institute, Scotland

The increasing research interest worldwide in the goat is reflected in 167 papers presented for publication in the proceedings of this meeting, the sixth in the series of conferences of the International Goat Association. The goat is being increasingly recognized for the key role that the species can play in systems for sustainable agricultural production in some of the least-favored environments around the world. At the conference, some 92 presentations were given in 9 sessions covering Production Systems, Genetics and Breeding, Nutrition and Feed Resources, Economics and Social Issues, Products, Environment and Ecology, Pathology and Heath and Reproduction. In addition, 6 workshops were held on Reproduction Techniques for the Tropics, Fiber Measurement, Boer Goats, Worm Control, Gender Issues and the International Committee for Animal Recording (ICAR) and 2 roundtable sessions on Cashmere Goats and the Management of Small Ruminant Genetic Resources. Over 500 delegates attended the conference, representing 36 countries.

In comparison with previous conferences, a strong emphasis was given to production by goats of specialty fibers, reflecting in particular the present level of interest in cashmere production in China. In total, some 70 papers included in the proceedings relate to cashmere and Angora production, with 47 of these papers reporting research on goat fiber in China. The reports from China cover work on genetic selection, fiber biology, the influence of environmental factors on fiber quality and descriptions of the fiber characteristics of a number of indigenous goat breeds.

The Chinese production of cashmere has been expanding rapidly over the past decade, from 3000 tons (raw combed down) in 1985 to its current highest ever level of 7300 tons from 52 million goats (42% of the total Chinese goat population). Growth of the Chinese cashmere industry is expected to be maintained in the medium term. Faced with problems of overgrazing, considerable work is currently being directed at improving the genetic potential of local breeds to improve per capita production. Cashmere provides an important contribution to the local economy, when it is realized that the average monthly income in rural areas is less than US $100.

Papers presented from outside China addressed some of the key issues for fiber producers in Australia, New Zealand, Europe and the United States viz. what effect do environmental conditions have on fiber production and quality, what is the potential for manipulating fiber growth by nutrition and hormone administration, and what benefits are to be gained from international exchanges of genetic material, such as South African Angora and Boer goats?

Just as goat fiber production is becoming more widely established in extensive farming systems, so the important role that meat and milk goats play in the small-farm economics of tropical developing countries is being recognized in research. In Asia, goats had the highest rate of population growth of all the domestic ruminants (3.3%/yr.) between 1983 and 1993. There is a strong tendency for the contribution that goats make to rural economies to increase with decreasing quality and viability of feed, with the result that goats tend to be the species of the most crucial importance to the poorest sectors of the rural society and are a central element in small-farm production systems. A number of development projects were reported in Africa and Asia in which goat production has been enhanced as a means to improve the incomes and nutrition of small farmers and their families. In many parts of the world it is women who carry much of the responsibility of goat farming, and it is crucial that gender issues be taken into account in the planing of extension work aimed to increase the technical skills of goat keepers.

Nutritional studies in the goat have attempted to improve the utilization of low-quality forages by goats. It was reported that digestive efficiency is very similar in goats and sheep. Digestion of organic matter may be slightly higher in goats, but there is no evidence to indicate that goats are better able to digest fiber. Similarly, digestibility and utilization of nitrogen are generally similar in sheep and goats, though there is evidence that, when offered low-protein diets, goats may have a more efficient nitrogen utilization than sheep. The goat's skill at selecting components in the available forage diet that are nutritionally more valuable and to adjust feeding behavior as in response to seasonal variation, which enables the species to obtain adequate nutrition in situations where food is scarce, was reviewed in several papers. Diet selection by goats can have a marked effect on vegetation composition and this characteristic can be effectively exploited as a significant product in addition to the value derived from sales of meat, milk, skins, etc. Two aspects of goat diet selection may (continued page 4)

Continued from page 3. **VI ICG**

make positive contributions to grazing systems. Goats actively avoid clover in grass/clover swards, allowing the proportion of clover to increase and thereby improving sward composition and the forage quality available to other subsequent grazing livestock. Goats also consume larger proportions of browse than other species and can, given appropriate management, be used to eradicate unwanted woody and weed plants or incorporate productive shrubs, such as gorse (Uulex europaeus) into a sustainable grazing system. The importance of appropriate management was dramatically underscored by a report from Botswana of the serious and widespread overstocking by goats and cattle or communal lands, which is leading to deforestation, soil degradation, erosion and desertification.

The control of intestinal parasitism of goats has received much attention, particularly in view of increasing numbers of reports of anthelmintic resistance. This problem was extensively discussed in a review paper in which recommendations are made to alleviate or avoid resistance. The session on pathology addressed a number of other diseases including caseous lymphadenitis, peste des petits ruminants, footrot, mastitis and hereditary goiter. Importantly, attention was given to ways of improving systems of animal health care in developing countries.

A key element in genetic improvement projects is the adoption of advanced reproductive techniques, to enable cost-effective transport of genetic material internationally and to assure rapid dissemination of superior genotypes within a breeding population. Reported work examined ways of improving the efficiency of artificial insemination and embryo production in goats, and investigated seasonality of reproductive activity in Mediterranean areas.

Holding the VI International Conference on Goats in China provided an excellent opportunity to make useful contacts between researchers at a time when China is increasingly keen to develop such opportunities. Praise should go to all those involved in the planning of the VI ICG. They not only succeeded in providing efficient organization of the 500 delegates, but also successfully completed the task of publishing the proceedings (published in 2 volumes) which will undoubtedly provide key sources for researchers and extension workers for many years.

Animal Genetic Resources at a Cross-Roads—Strategic Directions for Sustainable Development for the Next Century. Excerpts from Stein W. Bie, at the Ad Hoc Meeting of Donors and Stakeholders in Animal Genetic Resources, Rome, 2-3 December 1996.

The World Food Summit essentially suggests that efforts in agricultural research that relate to developing countries should now be seen in the immediate context of food security for an estimated 840 million people who are currently malnourished or undernourished. . . . This ad hoc meeting in Rome was concerned about the role that animal genetic resources can play in both giving food insecure more food security, ensuring that those who are not food insecure now will remain well fed, and in the preservation and strengthening of animal genetic resources in general and farm animal genetic resources in particular.

. . . We know one thing about farmers: that they rarely knowingly and voluntarily practice unsustainable agriculture. But as global human populations grow towards 8 or 10 billion people, we in agricultural research may have to come up with alternative practices, . . .

If I can now sum up these challenges of shifting paradigms as they apply to animal genetic resources, I believe we see the outline of new policies for livestock in the next century. These policies will be important, because we need to feed more people and more people will want to be better fed, and that means eating more livestock products.

1) Both in the short term and in the longer term expansion of the livestock industries will be important for food security.

2) The monoculture systems that formed the backbone of the green revolution in crops will give way, at least for the poor peoples of the world , to more mixed farming systems, with a diverse range of plants and animals. These animals will supply not only outputs but be important as input providers of nutrients and energy to farming systems.

(A copy of the full paper available on request.)

Report on the Activity of the Editorial Board of Small Ruminant Research--May 1996-March 1997

M.H. Fahmy, Editor-in-Chief, Small Ruminant Research

I received from Dr. George F.W. Haenlein, past and honorary Editor-in-Chief, 154 articles originally submitted to him in addition to 29 directly addressed to me for a total of 183 or an average of 20 a month. The papers were equally divided between sheep and goats with a few dealing with other small ruminants. The origin of the papers is: Africa, 33; Asia, 33; Europe, 78; North America, 30; South America, 5; and Australia, 4. Of these papers 52 dealt with nutrition, 40 with physiology, 37 with health, 29 with management. Up to March 31, 18 were accepted and forwarded to the journal desk in the UK, 26 were rejected and the rest are in various stages of revision.

The regulation of publishing papers only if at least one author is a member of IGA has been strictly enforced and accordingly, there has been a marked increase in IGA membership.

J.P.C. Greyling from South Africa kindly accepted to be our associate editor for reproduction. The work on updating the editorial advisory board has been completed, there will be 22 new members and 10 will continue serving for another term. The associate editors selected the new board members according to their field of expertise. The new board will be weighed heavily toward members in North America in an effort to speed the reviewing process through better mail service and the possibility of sending manuscripts and reviews electronically.
E-mail: fahmym@EM.AGR.CA

Associate Editors: David M. Sherman, Tilahun Sahlu, E.S.E. Galal, J.P.C.Greyling

Calendar of Meetings

- May 20-22, 1997 Zaragoza, Spain
  Conference on Animal Production
  Meredes Ferruz, PO Box 727, 50080 Zaragoza, SPAIN
  Telephone 34 76 576314

- August 25-28, 1997 Vienna, Austria
  48th EAAP Annual Meeting
  Programme of the Commission on Sheep and Goat Production
  Contact: M.D. Croston, Meat and Livestock Commission, PO Box 44, Winterhill House, Snowdon Drive, GB -
  Fax 44 19 08 67 75 77

- October 1997 (dates to be set) Puerto de la Cruz, Tenerife (Canary Islands)
  Meeting of the Spanish Society of Sheep and Goat Production

- October 25-27, 1997 Bella, Italy
  Sheep and Goat Production Systems
  Regione Basilicata -- Dipartimento Agricoltura e Foreste, Ufficio Sviluppo Agricolo-Unita di Divulgazione Zootecnica
  Via Appia
  85051 - BELLA SCALO (PZ) ITALY
  Tel. 39 976 79939 Fax 39 976 79939

- September 26 - October 1, 1998 Athens, Greece
  6th International Symposium on the Milking of Small Ruminants
  Prof. G. Zervas -- Department of Animal Nutrition
  Faculty of Animal Sciences
  Agricultural University of Athens
  75 Iera Odos, Votanikos
  GR-11855 Athens, GREECE

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Membership Application

INTERNATIONAL GOAT ASSOCIATION

Make check payable to International Goat Association. US$ if possible. Please forward the membership form along with your payment to: Rosalee Sinn, IGA 1015 Louisiana Street, Little Rock, AR 72202 USA.

Name _____

Address _____

_____

Country _____

Telephone No. _____

Fax No. _____

E-mail No. _____

Referred by _____

Company/Institution (optional) _____

Position (optional) _____

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	1997	1998
IGA Membership--US $35.00 Does not include Journal	____	____
IGA Membership with Journal US $135.00	____	____
Individual Sustaining Membership Includes Journal-- US $300.00	____	____
Organizational Membership Does not include Journal--US $300.00	____	____

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VII International Conference on Goats
Tours, France, May 14-20, 2000

1. General observations and proposals

In addition to the "classical" objectives of the International Conferences, the 7th International Conference on Goats (VII ICG) in 2000 should reach specific goals.

This conference has not been held in a developed country for 20 years and this will be the opportunity to give a thorough presentation of the latest scientific advances in the different areas of goat production. These advances should be shown as the platform of knowledge concerning the specificity of goat production and should form the necessary basis of national goat production development in all countries, regardless of their geographical and economical situation. One of the specific objectives of the 7th Conference could be to speed up the transfer of knowledge and technology from the basic laboratories, where specific intensive disciplinary research is performed, to the laboratories or extension services in charge of the application and of the development of production.

The conference should not only focus on these recent scientific advances per se in various scientific areas, but also on the methods of transferring the techniques on site. This consideration raises the question of the organization of the research and the relationships between research laboratories and other structures. Particular care should be given to the validity of basic research results in the different countries, i.e., in developing countries as well as in developed countries. Science should be the link between these countries.

2. Participation

As in previous conferences, the aim is to gather as many goat specialists as possible, from all over the world. This should be achieved by offering a wide scientific and technical program adapted to different goat systems of production.

An effort should be made to help young scientists attend by asking international institutions for special grants.

A special effort should also be made to attract specialists per scientific area (genetics, reproduction, nutrition, pathology, etc.) rather than specialists working exclusively on goat species.

Special care should be given to technicians in charge of development projects who are interested in normative observations from different scientific areas, as well as from socio-economic areas.

3. Scientific organization

The scientific management of the conference will be handled by a scientific committee composed of internationally recognized scientists working in the area of goat production and in other areas. Each member of the scientific committee, assisted by experts, forming the Advisory Board, will be in charge of organizing a specific session of the conference and will act as chairperson for the session. Chairpersons will be responsible for proposed main speakers and, after validation of the latter by the scientific committee, of contacting them and of organizing manuscript preparation and collection and coordination between the speakers.

4. Technical organization

The conference will be held in Region Centre and Region Poitou-Charentes, in Tours (Region Centre), the Vinci Congress Centre will welcome participants of the sessions. Situated 230 km. South of Paris, Tours is easily reached by high speed train (55 minutes) and is located in the Loire Valley.

Technical visits and satellite symposia will be organized in Poitou Charentes, at about 120 km South of Tours. This region owns 35% of the national flock and produces 60% of the animal milk harvest.

For more information:

Philippe Chemineau, I.N.R.A., 37380 Nouzilly, France

New Goat Center being developed in Poitou-Charentes. Story on Page 8.

Developing a Strategy for Meat Goat Production and Marketing -- A summary of meetings held in 1996-1997 in Red Deer, Alberta, Canada -- by Sara Emond

On December 12, a number of goat producers representing the Alberta Goat Breeders Association, the Western Chevon Cooperative, the Canadian Boer Goat Association, the International Goat Association and the Canadian Goat Society met in Red Deer to develop a strategy for marketing chevon.

Participants listed the problems they perceive as limiting the industry. The lack of profitable markets was a basic complaint, in that input costs are high, processing costs are proportionally very high for goats and locally produced chevon must compete with imports offered at a price far below our cost of production. Consumers may claim to want a higher quality product, but often refuse to pay the price required for it.

Transportation of live animals is costly, but federally approved slaughter facilities, which would make it possible to see meat outside the province charge very high rates. Many large retailers will not buy a product that is not federally inspected and generally there are few stores interested in carrying chevon. Backyard butchering, which is also related to high abattoir costs, is limiting legitimate markets especially during the summer and fall.

A lack of research on economics of production, meat quality and composition, consumer preferences and performance of various breed crosses was cited by many as limiting promotion and production. It was pointed out that the Kinsella facility had been offered to the goat industry for such purposes, but that it had not yet received adequate support from producers.

Goals:
1. Optimize production efficiency
2. Establish an efficient marketing system
3. Increase and develop markets
4. Practice ethical and environmentally responsible management

Strategies need to be developed that will lead us to our goals. Fro instance a first step in optimizing production efficiency might be to evaluate the present situation, costs and management concerns which affect the cost of production overall. To improve access to markets, we need to identify new markets for chevon products; we could try increasing the number of value-added products to increase our market base, etc.

As a participant in the meetings, representing the Canadian Goat Society and the International Goat Assn.

I feel these goals are universal for meat goat producers, perhaps all goat producers, seeking markets for their products and animals.

I would like to call on the general membership for their opinions on our discussions, our conclusions and how we need to proceed.

Please contact me: Sara Emond, Box 70, Sunnybrook, Alberta, Canada ToC 2MO. Telephone 403 789 2279
Fax 403 789 3187 E-mail: semond@agt.net

International Goat Center in Poitou-Charentes

An International Goat Center is in development in the South of the department of Vienne, in the heart of the Poitou-Charentes region, which represents more than third of goat livestock and 75% of the industrial goat cheese production in France. The project, led by the initiative of the Chamber of Agriculture of Vienne and of the Regional Counsel of Poitou-Charentes, will create a federative center and circulate regional and Ranch knowledge in the area of goats.

The Centre will focus around two poles:

1) A professional center with a national and international vocation that will have several roles, notably:

- The organization of specific training for foreign farmers and technicians, in collaboration with organizations of goat training already in existence in the region (Center of professional agricultural training of Melle, ENILIA de Surgeres. . .)
- Diffusion of information concerning the goat network of Poitou-Charents, thanks to the most modern communication methods (auditorium with system for video-conferences and simultaneous translation, telematic hall with Minitel and access to the Internet).
- Transfer of regional knowledge in the area of goats.

2) A visitor and pedagogical center that will include:

- a farm with 300 goats with a mini-dairy
- a conservatory of European goat breeds
- an information center on the regional and French goat network, and its place in the world
- a tasting center and sales center for goat products

UCARDEC (French Agency for Cooperation in Goat Development) is directly associated with the development of this center, notably with the elaboration of training models destined for a foreign public, and the conception of the information center.