

International Conference on Goats:
Factors to be Considered When Choosing a Venue

The Mission of the International Goat Association (IGA) is stated as: *The IGA promotes goat research and development for the benefit of humankind, to alleviate poverty, to promote prosperity and to improve the quality of life.*

An International Conference on Goats (ICG) takes place at a different venue once every four years, under the auspices of the (IGA). This is a prestigious event, and it is an honor to be granted the opportunity to host this Conference. In return, the IGA Board requires the host organization to fulfill certain objectives and expectations.

All participants should strive to ensure that the planning of the ICG achieves excellence in the scientific input, without neglecting the importance of being relevant to the promotion of sustainable goat development. Some of the factors that should be considered are listed below, more or less in order of importance, according to the requirements of the Board.

1. Competent People (a strong team):

It is a daunting prospect to undertake the organization of an International Conference on Goats. A team of committed people who share the vision and will be capable of achieving the objectives of the ICG is the most important component in ensuring success. These people are usually volunteers, who will carry out the many tasks in addition to their normal work.

2. Organizational Infrastructure and Adequacy:

Many aspects must be planned and shown to be adequate for the proposed program and the expected number of delegates and accompanying persons.

These include:

- The conference venue
- Accommodation
- Communication systems
- Banking facilities
- Tourist facilities (including visa applications)
- Language competence (English; and translators?).

3. Costs:

Costs should be kept as low as possible to make it easier for people to attend, especially when they come from countries where the currency is not strong. This will include the cost of conference registration and accommodation at the venue. However, the cost of an airfare might also be very high if the delegate has to travel long distances.

The organizing committee should also consider the needs of people from the host country, who might not be able to afford the high registration fee, and yet would wish to participate in such a significant conference.

4. Budget:

A realistic budget for the ICG should be carefully planned, based on the proposed activities, and showing all expected costs and income. If possible, the budget should make provision to contribute towards the costs of the IGA. Provisions should also be made to offer limited financial assistance for delegates who would not otherwise be able to attend the ICG.

5. Financial Support:

The organizing committee should ensure that they have significant financial support before they make a bid to host the ICG. This should not be just a vague promise of support, but a substantial and guaranteed commitment. For example, from a government department, such as the National Department of Agriculture. Other sponsorship will also be needed, but this could be obtained at a later stage.

6. Relevant Goat Research and Development:

The ICG should provide opportunities for the sharing of experiences related to scientific research and programs, but it should not only consist of a conference. It should also include opportunities to visit relevant goat-related organizations and facilities in the host country, to demonstrate the context of goat production. These programs might be part of the ICG program, or they might be optional pre-conference or post-conference tours.

7. Geographical Diversity:

The opportunity of hosting an ICG should be given to countries in different parts of the world. This will be in line with the Mission of the IGA and enhance its international impact.

Less-industrialized countries should possibly be favored as venues, provided they have adequate facilities and a strong organizing committee.

Previous ICGs have been held in different countries and on different continents:

- 1st - London, UK, 1967
- 2nd - Tours, France, 1972
- 3rd - Tucson, USA, 1982
- 4th - Brasilia, Brazil, 1987
- 5th - New Delhi, India, 1992
- 6th - Beijing, China, 1996
- 7th - Tours, France, 2000
- 8th - Pretoria, South Africa, 2004
- 9th - Queretaro, Mexico, 2008
- 10th - Recife, Brazil, 2010
- 11th – Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain, 2012
- 12th - Antalya, Turkey, 2016

If a country is not successful in hosting an ICG, then it is still possible to host a Regional Conference in the years between the main ICGs.

Conclusion:

These principles should be put to the Board of the IGA for discussion, amendment, and approval.