

Regional & National 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.*

A Regional or National Conference on goats 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 Conference 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 a Conference on Goats. A team of committed people (the Organizing Committee) who share the vision and will be capable of achieving the objectives of the Conference 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 Conference should be carefully planned, based on the proposed activities, and showing all expected costs and income. Provisions should also be made to offer limited financial assistance for delegates who would not otherwise be able to attend the Conference.

5. Financial Support:

The Organizing Committee should ensure that they have significant financial support before they make a bid to host the Conference. This should not be just a vague promise of support, but a substantial and guaranteed commitment. This could be, 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 Conference 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 Conference program, or they might be optional pre-conference or post-conference tours.

Conclusion:

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