

# Achievement

## College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

### Supporting Meat Goat Producers

Since 1995, when an appropriation from the North Carolina General Assembly established a faculty position in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences to support the meat goat industry, North Carolina State University has become a leader in the development of meat goat educational and research programs. Raising goats for their meat is seen as a viable agricultural alternative in North Carolina as a result of increased demand for the meat by ethnic groups that represent a growing segment of the population. To support this emerging industry, research has focused on evaluating the potential of cool-season and warm-season perennial and annual forages to meet the nutritional requirements of productive does throughout the different stages of their production cycle and of growing kids and replacement does. Locally-available byproduct feeds for goats fed forage-based diets have also been evaluated. Additional research is exploring non-pharmaceutical approaches to protect goats from gastrointestinal parasites. Research has also shown that goats have significant economic value when used to control weeds and brush in land reclamation projects. In cooperation with the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, graded goat sales have been held to supplement weekly auction market sales, and meat goat shows are now an integral part of the North Carolina State Fair and the Mountain State Fair. In addition, educational programs targeting North Carolina Cooperative Extension agents, commodity associations and other agricultural professionals have been implemented. These programs give agricultural professionals the information they need to help meat goat producers select, adopt and implement best management practices.

North Carolina Meat Goat Association membership increased from 215 in 1994 to over 575 members in 2000. Working with key meat goat producers, N.C. State University and the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services established two research herds that are providing a sound genetic base for the improvement of meat goat genetics. Crossbred animals with Boer genetics are now being sold for meat at auction markets or under private sales. Collaborating with the Franklin County Center of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service, the Meat Goat Program in June 2001 created the Franklin County Meat Goat Producers Cooperative. The coop markets live goats and goat meat directly to consumers and area retail stores and restaurants. Using Golden LEAF grants, the coop, initially composed of 40 members, has expanded to 180 certified members from 48 counties. About 10 years ago, Powell Livestock in Smithfield sold 15 to 50 goats a week. Now that number ranges from 200 to 400. The industry has grown nearly 800 percent in the last 10 years. According to the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, more than 215,000 goats were sold for meat in North Carolina in 2002. Receipts from meat goat sales were over \$9 million.



Dr. Jean-Marie Luginbuhl's work supports farmers who raise meat goats.

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