Ontario's Dairy Goat Sector

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Industry Statistics

• 262 licensed producers (Sept 2016) with 15-20 more farms likely by the spring of 2017

• Ontario produces an estimated 43 million litres of milk worth approximately $43 million in farm gate sales.

• Ontario currently has 52% of all goats in Canada with Quebec second at 17% and Alberta third at 13%.

• It is estimated that Ontario accounts for up to 75% of Canadian goat milk production.

• Most milk is sold through two brokers to 15 licensed processing plants.
Canadian Goat Milk Production

Source: Canadian Dairy Information Centre - Estimated milk production
Year in life of a dairy doe

Lactation Curve

- Kidding
- Early Lactation
- Breed
- Gestation (~5 months)
- Dry Period (30-60 day)

~ 3.0L/doe/day
Reproduction

• Seasonal breeders – Short day
• Off season breeding - Lighting, Hormones, Housing
• Artificial Insemination
• Embryo Transfer

Challenge:
• Winter milk!
• Consistency in off season breeding
• Metabolic issues with Pregnancy Toxemia & Ketosis
• Multiple kids per gestation
• Colostrum management
• Buck kid marketing
• Dehorning
• Proper housing
• Efficiency in labour (i.e. automated feeders)

Challenges:
• Labour availability through kidding period
• Raising buck kids for meat
• Mortality range
Nutrition

- Lactating and Dry doe nutrition a challenge
- Cost effective ingredients
- Kids nutrition
- Labour efficient methods

Challenges:
- Labour efficient deliver and management
- Sorting a challenge in TMR systems
Genetic Improvement

Traits of Interest:
• Production
• Conformation
• Health
• Reproduction

Challenge:
• Limited goats for sale in Ontario
• High priced animal based on health status
• Limited records collected on farm
Current Health Challenges in the Industry

• Production limiting diseases:
  • Caprine Arthritis Encephalitis (CAE)
  • Caseous Lymphadenitis (CLA)
  • Q Fever
  • Chlamydiosis
  • Listeriosis
  • Toxoplasmosis
  • Brucellosis
  • Pregnancy Toxemia

• Minor Use Minor Species for Drug use
  – Very few drugs approved for use in goats
Many producers (new and existing) are building large barns with complex milking systems, rotary parlours and automated feeding systems.

Challenges:

- Very expensive barns & systems, long term investment
- Plan for future expansion
Cost of Production Study

Highlights:

• $1.30/Litre with top 5 farms under $0.87/Litre
• Top contribution to cost of production:
  – Feed
  – Labour
  – Interest on Debt
Take Home Messages

- Large initial investment
- On-going animal management
- Availability of labour to milk goats
- Lack of breeding stock available
  - Source healthy breeding stock
Take Home Messages

• If you are serious about becoming a dairy goat farmer:
  – Develop a business plan with realistic expenses & revenue
  – Work on a dairy goat farm for one year to ensure you understand goat management & herd health protocols
  – Do your research
Thank You

For More Information Contact the:
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