GOAT INDUSTRY - AN OVERVIEW

Goats can be profitably incorporated into existing livestock farming systems, providing benefits of:

- increased revenue and profitability from the sale of meat and fibre
- improved productivity from the livestock presently farmed
- improved pasture quality, and lower-cost weed control
- a non-chemical alternative for weed control

These benefits are not limited to certain farming systems; rather they are available to all enterprises in which sheep, beef, dairy cattle, and deer are farmed.

Despite these benefits, not all farmers are willing to add goats to their current farming system (Greer 1996). When asked whether they would consider farming goats, many indicated that they would consider farming goats provided:

- they could manage to control their impact on sheep, and forestry and shelter plantings
- they could manage internal parasite problems and minimise the development of drench resistance in their sheep flock
- they could be better informed about breeds and breeding programmes, and shearing management
- they were aware of the market opportunities and risks of investing in goat farming

The New Zealand goat industry has had a volatile history, which has affected the perception that many farmers have towards the farming of goats.

That perception needs to be changed because:

- it precludes many from farming and enjoying the benefits that goats could contribute
- significant expansion of goat numbers will occur only when more sheep, beef and dairy and deer farmers begin to integrate goats into their livestock systems

Goats - Where are They?

It is estimated that in 1996, there were 227,900 goats in New Zealand, with 57% of these (140,000) farmed in the North Island. (Figure 1)

There have been large fluctuations in the number of goats farmed (Figure 1). These changes have been in response to the changing returns for fibre, live animals, and meat. (Table 1)
Table 1  Trends in Export Value of Goat Products

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seasonal Average Return (FOB Value)</th>
<th>Goat Meat</th>
<th>Fibre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1983-1984</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>12.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984-1985</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>15.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-1986</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>17.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986-1987</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>13.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987-1988</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>15.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988-1989</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>23.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989-1990</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>16.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-1991</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>8.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-1992</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>7.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992-1993</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>5.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-1994</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>6.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994-1995</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>7.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-1996</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>9.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-1997</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>7.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics New Zealand

There are some important features associated with the periods of rapid expansion and reduction in the number of goats farmed that occurred, including:
- accessing a large feral population quickly expanded breeding flock numbers
- high livestock demand inflated livestock prices and provided a strong incentive for intensive breeding programmes
- low animal and product returns resulted in intensive culling and reduction of numbers through slaughter

In the future, the rate at which the industry will be able to expand production will be influenced by:
- increased suppliers to profitable markets for increased goat meat returns.
- the expansion of profitable markets and returns for goat meat
- a limited number of potential female breeding stock, estimated to be 150,000 head in 1996
- the reproductive rate of the population. Although the average kidding rate is significantly below 100%, some flocks are consistently achieving in excess of 150%.
- competing demand for goats, either to meet the expanding needs of meat markets, or as breeding stock

Farmer Knowledge and Experience

There continues to be notable regional variation in the distribution of goats throughout New Zealand (Table 2).

Regional

Table 2  Distribution of Goats (30June 1996)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>No of Goats</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northland</td>
<td>22,952</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auckland</td>
<td>16,059</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waikato</td>
<td>38,557</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bay of Plenty</td>
<td>18,388</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gisborne</td>
<td>4,531</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawkes Bay</td>
<td>17,117</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taranaki</td>
<td>4,696</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manawatu</td>
<td>11,921</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellington</td>
<td>6,079</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTH ISLAND</td>
<td>14,0270</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson Marlborough</td>
<td>26,552</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Coast</td>
<td>5,097</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canterbury</td>
<td>3,627</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otago</td>
<td>14,821</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southland</td>
<td>9,793</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUTH ISLAND</td>
<td>87,672</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEW ZEALAND</td>
<td>227,942</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Including Great Barrier Island
2 Including Chatham Islands
Source: Statistics New Zealand

This has implications for the availability of livestock, and access to local knowledge for farmers entering the industry.

A characteristic of the goat industry in 1993 was that there were 5499 farmers with goats, with an average flock size of 64 head. However, only 16% (900 farmers) were involved in farming 270,000 head, which represented 76% of the national flock, Table 3.

Table 3:  Distribution of Flock Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flock Size</th>
<th>Number of farms</th>
<th>Number of Goats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 25</td>
<td>3390</td>
<td>21,994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 - 49</td>
<td>635</td>
<td>22,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - 99</td>
<td>574</td>
<td>39,193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 - 149</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>31,739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150 - 199</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>29,087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200 - 249</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>29,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250 - 299</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>15,276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300 - 349</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>19,701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>350 - 399</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10,233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400 - 449</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11,530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>450 - 499</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6,015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 - 599</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>58,169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000 and over</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>58,721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>5,499</td>
<td>352,858</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics New Zealand Agricultural Census (1993)

What is interesting is that most farmers working with goats have considerable experience, gained over many years. For example a survey of Mohair producers in 1995 highlighted the
considerable time that existing farmers have had in the industry, and the experience and knowledge that they could provide to new entrants (Table 4).

Table 4  Mohair Farmers Experience in Goat Farming

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years Farming</th>
<th>Percentage of farmers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goats</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 9</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 – 14</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;15</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As numbers have declined, goat farming has tended to become the practice of farmers with good skills and experience who are able to achieve good benefits. The outcome is that throughout New Zealand there is an effective network of farmers with significant skill and expertise in successfully farming goats.

Goat Breeds

Dairy Goats
There are approximately 33,000 dairy goats in New Zealand. The breeds milked are predominantly Saanen (66%) with some Anglo Nubian, and British Alpine. Currently there is one major commercial dairy factory for goat milk in New Zealand, with around 21 suppliers milking 26,000 does.

There are a few farmers producing fresh milk for local supply or specialist cheese production.

In addition, dairy flocks are a potential source of cull does and kids for slaughter, and have potential for use with a terminal sire as the Boer.

Boer
The mature weight of females is in excess of 50 kg, with bucks weighing up to 100 kg. Considered a specialist meat breed, the Boer can produce a fine down undercoat equivalent to cashmere.

The Boer can be bred exclusively as a specialist meat breed flock. It is also suitable for use as a terminal sire over fibre producing goats, or as one breed in a composite dam breed.

Cashmere
Cashmere is the fine coat of down found beneath the coarse outer guard hair.

Fibre diameter can range from 8 - 19 microns, and is valued for its lightness, warmth and handle. There is no cashmere breed. Between animals, fibre production is variable. Cashmere producing flocks are the result of intensive selection of feral goats for fibre production and ongoing selection and breeding programmes.

Cashgora
In New Zealand and Australia down fibre with a mean diameter of 19-23 microns, or lustrous cashmere has been given the name Cashgora.

Angora
Angora goats produce mohair fibre. Mohair is a relatively long lustrous fibre with a mean fibre diameter of 19 - 45 microns. Recent importation of Texan and South African Angora genetics has reduced kemp and medulation levels that were previously a problem in New Zealand Mohair.
Industry Contacts

Sources of Information

**Cashmere Producers Of New Zealand (Inc)**
President: Alastair Frizzell
Tramway Road
P O Box 32
Kirwee
Canterbury
Ph/Fax: 03 318 1644

**Dairy Goat Co-Operative (NZ) Ltd**
General Manager: DJ (Dave) Stanley
Cnr Ruakura and Morrinsville Road
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Hamilton
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Fax: 07 856 0651

**Mohair New Zealand**
Executive Officer: Brian Coulter
Aniseed Valley
RD 1
Richmond
Ph/Fax: 03 544 4353

**New Zealand Cashgora Farmers (Inc)**
President: Allan Billington
23 Sheffield Street
Palmerston North
Ph: 06 358 2300

**New Zealand Dairy Goat Breeders’ Association**
Secretary: Mrs Susan Phillips
Private Bag 1
Helensville
Ph/Fax: 09 420 5278

**New Zealand Goat Meat Industry Council**
Secretary: MD (Mark) Aspin
Meat New Zealand
P O Box 121
Wellington
Ph: 04 474 0836
Fax: 04 474 0800

**New Zealand Nubians Breed Club**
Acting President: Colin Thrupp
RD No.1
Walton
Ph: 07 888 3873

**New Zealand Boer Goat Breeders Association (Inc) 1989**
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Waitakere
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**Regional Associations and Interest Groups**
**Goat Meat Industry Council Regional Representatives:**
Otago, Southland: Frances Hore
Ph/fax 03 206 4046
Nelson, Marlborough,
Canterbury, West Coast: Wayne Pearce Ph 03 325 4014
Lower North Island: Allen Billington Ph/fax 06 358 2300
Central North Island: Allan Mitchell
Ph 07 377 6374 Fax 07 377 6155
Bay of Plenty, Waikato: Ian Pirani
Ph 07 552 0827 Fax 07 552 0829
Northland, Auckland: Bev Gray Ph 09 422 0662
Fax 09 422 0663

**Local**
There are local and industry specific groups throughout the country. Contact through industry and regional contacts listed above.

**References and further reading**

**Industry Background**
- Proceeding of second International Cashmere Conference – Lincoln College 1987
- A review of the New Zealand Goat Industry
- AERU Lincoln, discussion paper No42 July 1979
- Goats: A bibliography – AERU Lincoln, discussion paper No.43 July 1979
- Proceedings of the 8th International Wool Textile Research Conference Vol. II.
  February 1998 Christchurch.

**Proceedings from Goat Seminar 1987:**
Publication No. 115, Veterinary Continuing Education, Massey University, Palmerston North. ISSN 0112-9643


Greer JP - 1996: Profitable Integration of Goats into Pastoral Farming Systems - A Focus Group Survey - MRDC

Statistics New Zealand: Agricultural Statistics. Published annually.

News and Issues
The New Zealand Goat Report- P O Box 641 Whangarei Ph: 09 439 0338

The Goat Farmer: (7 times a year) Editor: Geoff Minchin, P O Box 641, Whangarei

NZ Farmer: 0800 651 652

NZ Meat Producer: 0800 696 328

Management and Production


Crouchley, G. Regrowth control by goats – plus useful meat returns. NZJA Dec 1980: 9-14


