REPORT ON THE FIRST NATIONAL GOAT PRODUCERS CONFERENCE

This report was generated from a random sample of approximately one fourth (128 individuals) who participated in the 2010 National Goat and Sheep Producers Conference. The information provided in the report covers the following areas:

- Conference Advertising
- Demographic information
- Producer/Industry perspectives and
- Participant Feedback

PART 1. CONFERENCE ADVERTISING

In order to reach a larger audience for the next goat and sheep producers' conference, efforts were made to identify the method(s) that were most effective in reaching producers, agricultural and industry personnel who attended the conference. Figure 1 provides a breakdown of the methods identified by participants as being the primary source of information about the conference.

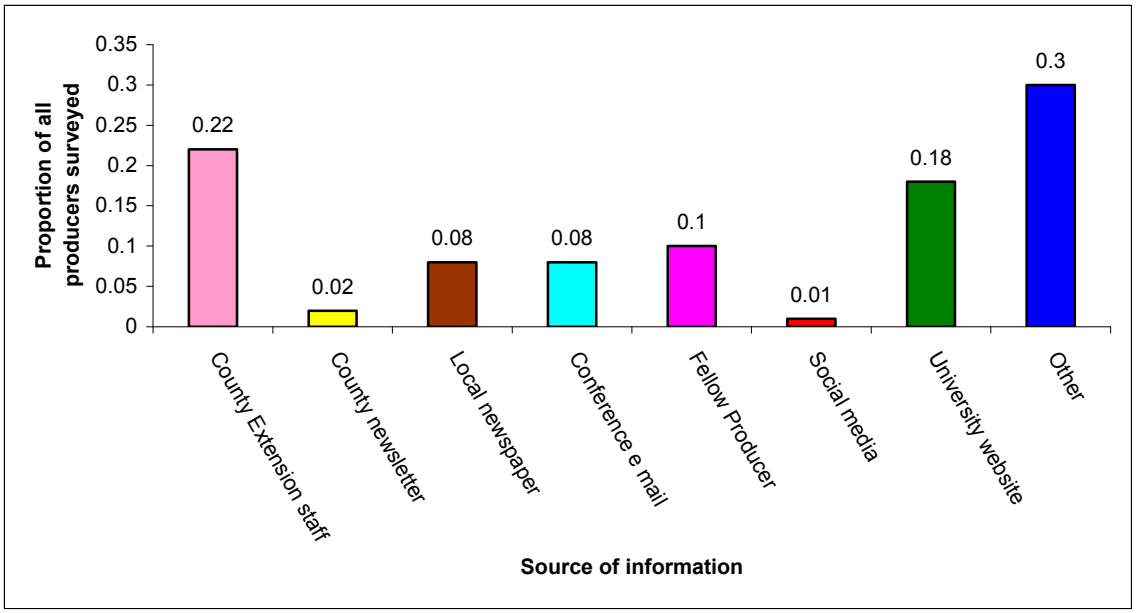

Figure 1. Methods of advertising the first national goat and sheep producer's conference

Of the 7 methods of advertising used, the ones identified by participants as being the primary source of information about the conference were county extension officers (22 %) and the FAMU website (18 %). However, approximately 30 percent of the producers indicated that they learned about the conference through methods not covered by the survey.

PART 2. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

A total of 16 U.S. states and territories including the U.S. Virgin islands and Puerto Rico and 4 international countries were represented at the National goat producer's conference (See table 1 for state listing). The majority of participants were from Southern states, which accounted for approximately 90 percent of the participants. The host state, Florida, accounted for 32 % of the participants followed by Kentucky (23 %) and South Carolina (12 %).

Table 1. State of Residence

State	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
Alabama	9	7.38	9	7.38
Arkansas	2	1.64	11	9.02
Colorado	1	0.82	12	9.84
Delaware	1	0.82	13	10.66
Florida	39	31.97	52	42.62
Georgia	4	3.28	56	45.90
Kentucky	28	22.95	84	68.85
Louisiana	2	1.64	86	70.49
Maryland	1	0.82	87	71.31
Missouri	3	2.46	90	73.77
Mississippi	8	6.56	98	80.33
North Carolina	2	1.64	100	81.97
South Carolina	15	12.30	115	94.26
Texas	2	1.64	117	95.90
Tennessee	1	0.82	118	96.72
International	4	3.28	122	100.00

Frequency Missing = 6

Table 2. County of Residence

County	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
Alachua	5	4.20	5	4.20
Brevard	2	1.68	7	5.88
Broward	1	0.84	8	6.72
Gadsden	2	1.68	10	8.40
Hardee	1	0.84	11	9.24
Hamilton	3	2.52	14	11.76
Jackson	1	0.84	15	12.61
Leon	6	5.04	21	17.65
Levy	2	1.68	23	19.33
Manatee	3	2.52	26	21.85
Okeechobee	1	0.84	27	22.69
Palm Beach	1	0.84	28	23.53
Suwannee	3	2.52	31	26.05
St Lucie	1	0.84	32	26.89
Volusia	1	0.84	33	27.73
Wakulla	1	0.84	34	28.57
Washington	2	1.68	36	30.25
Walton	1	0.84	37	31.09
Non Florida	81	68.07	118	99.16
Union	1	0.84	119	100.00

Frequency Missing = 9

The participants were also categorized according to their county of origin. Surprisingly, 68 % of the participants

were from non-Florida counties (including international representatives). Though sparse, representation from the state of Florida indicated that the largest number of participants (5 %) were from Leon County, a county not popularly known for having a high concentration of goat producers. This higher ranking for Leon County compared to other Florida counties, may be due to the fact that the conference was hosted in Leon County. Other Florida counties accounting for noticeable representation were Alachua (4 %), Hamilton and Suwannee counties both with (2.5 %) participation.

Table 3. Occupation of Respondent

Occupation	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
Current Goat Farmer	48	41.03	48	41.03
Current Sheep Farmer	8	6.84	56	47.86
Prospective goat farmer	16	13.68	72	61.54
Agricultural professional	19	16.24	91	77.78
Educator/Researcher/Student	12	10.26	103	88.03
Other	14	11.97	117	100.00

Frequency Missing = 11

In terms of occupation, a combined 61.55 % of the participants identified themselves as current or prospective goat and sheep producers. The majority (41 %) identified themselves as goat producers (Table 3). The remaining participants were distributed between Agricultural professionals (16 %) and Educators (including researchers and students (10 %).

Table 4. Gender of Respondent

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
Male	60	49.18	60	49.18
Female	62	50.82	122	100.00

Frequency Missing = 6

If the sample was representative of the conference population, then the number of males and females who attended the conference was approximately equal (49.18 % male) and 50.82 % female (Table 4). Tables 5, 6 and 7 provide ethnic and age demographics on the conference participants. The majority of participants were equally distributed between African Americans (38.84 %) and White Europeans (38.84 %). Hispanics accounted for approximately 7 % of the participants. Other ethnic groups in attendance

were Native Americans (2.5 %) Asians (2.5 %) and Blacks of Caribbean and Continental African origin (9 % combined).

Table 5. Ethnic Background

Ethnicity	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
African-American	47	38.84	47	38.84
Black Caribbean	5	4.13	52	42.98
Black African	6	4.96	58	47.93
Black Hispanic	2	1.65	60	49.59
White European	47	38.84	107	88.43
White Hispanic	8	6.61	115	95.04
Asian	3	2.48	118	97.52
Native American	3	2.48	121	100.00

Frequency Missing = 7

Table 6. Age of Respondent

Age	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
<=18	1	0.82	1	0.82
19-29	3	2.46	4	3.28
30-49	16	13.11	20	16.39
50-69	87	71.31	107	87.70
>70	15	12.30	122	100.00

Frequency Missing = 6

The majority of participants (83 %) are between 50 and 80 years of age. Only 15 % of the participants were within the 19 to 49 year old category. The following contingency tables that classify the various ethnic groups according to age show large percentages of African Americans (70 %) Black Americans of Caribbean decent (80%) Black Hispanics (50 %) and Africans (33 %) in the 50 to 69 years old category.

Table 7. Table of race by age

(Ethnic Background)

Frequency / Percent / Row Pct / Col Pct	(Age of Respondent) <=18	19-29	30-49	50-69	>70	Total
African-American	0	2	6	33	6	47
	0.00	1.67	5.00	27.50	5.00	39.17
	0.00	4.26	12.77	70.21	12.77	
	0.00	66.67	37.50	38.37	42.86	
Black Caribbean	0	0	1	4	0	5
	0.00	0.00	0.83	3.33	0.00	4.17
	0.00	0.00	20.00	80.00	0.00	
	0.00	0.00	6.25	4.65	0.00	
Black African	0	0	3	2	1	6
	0.00	0.00	2.50	1.67	0.83	5.00
	0.00	0.00	50.00	33.33	16.67	
	0.00	0.00	18.75	2.33	7.14	
Black Hispanic	0	0	0	1	1	2

	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.83	0.83	1.67
	0.00	0.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	
	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.16	7.14	
Total	1	3	16	86	14	120
	0.83	2.50	13.33	71.67	11.67	100.00

(Continued below)

(Ethnic Background)

Frequency Percent Row Pct Col Pct	(Age of Respondent) <=18	19-29	30-49	50-69	>70	Total
White European	1	1	4	38	3	47
	0.83	0.83	3.33	31.67	2.50	39.17
	2.13	2.13	8.51	80.85	6.38	
	100.00	33.33	25.00	44.19	21.43	
White Hispanic	0	0	0	5	2	7
	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.17	1.67	5.83
	0.00	0.00	0.00	71.43	28.57	
	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.81	14.29	
Asian	0	0	2	1	0	3
	0.00	0.00	1.67	0.83	0.00	2.50
	0.00	0.00	66.67	33.33	0.00	
	0.00	0.00	12.50	1.16	0.00	
Native American	0	0	0	2	1	3
	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.67	0.83	2.50
	0.00	0.00	0.00	66.67	33.33	
	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.33	7.14	
Total	1	3	16	86	14	120
	0.83	2.50	13.33	71.67	11.67	100.00

Frequency Missing = 8

PART 3. PRODUCER/INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVES

The age factor: As shown in table 6, the vast majority of conference participants (> 83 %) are senior citizens (between 50 and 80 years of age). This may also be indicative that the population of goat producers is aging rapidly. Only 15 % of the participants were within the 19 to 49 year old category. The data provides much evidence that more needs to be done to entice younger farmers and ranchers into goat/sheep production, in order to promote longevity of the small ruminant industry. Table 7 in particular, shows an alarming number of minorities in the 50 to 69 years old category. African Americans accounted for 70 % of this group, Black Americans of Caribbean decent (80%), Black Hispanics (50 %) and Continental Africans (33 %).

The income factor: Figure 1 illustrates the income distribution for conference participants.

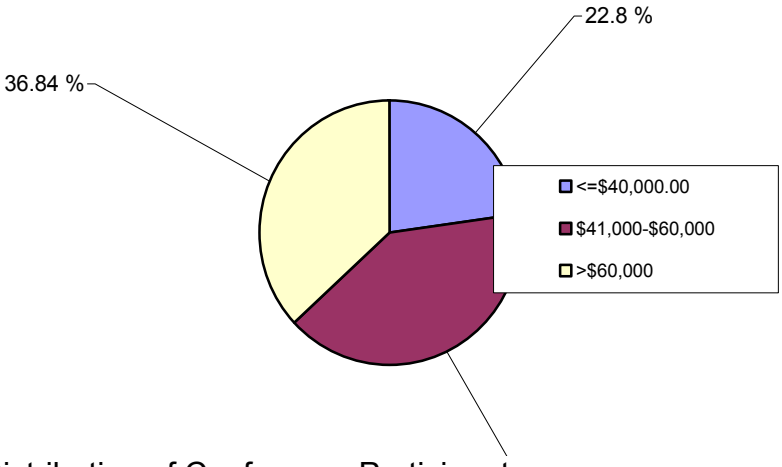

Figure 1. Income Distribution of Conference Participants

The majority of conference participants 40.35 % earn in excess of $60,000.00 annually. However, this figure should be approached with caution since it does not necessarily represent income from sales of sheep and goat. The following should be taken into consideration when evaluating these figures:

1. The majority of producers is retired individuals and may have also reported retirement income along with farm income.
2. Many of the conference participants were agricultural professionals who command high wages (in excess of $60,000.00 per annum). These two factors are likely reasons for the high income values reported here.

For more accurate and relevant revenues from goat/sheep production, please visit the charts and tables related to on-farm income. Table 8 provides categorical data regarding the annual incomes for the various ethnic groups who attended the conference. The data highlighted in blue in the third row for each income category represent the percentage of the various ethnic groups (column titles) who fall into the respective income categories (row titles). For example: If we were to assess the greater than $60,000.00 per annum income category, we will find that 42.86 % of White Europeans earn more than $60,000.00 annually compared to 33.33 % African Americans and 9.52 % Hispanics.

Table 8. Table of income by race

(Income Category) Frequency Percent Row Pct Col Pct	African-American	Black Caribbean	Black African	Black Hispanic	White European	White Hispanic	Asian	Native American	Total
<$5,000	1	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	5
	0.89	0.00	0.00	0.89	2.68	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.46
	20.00	0.00	0.00	20.00	60.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
	2.33	0.00	0.00	50.00	6.82	0.00	0.00	0.00	
$5,000-$20,000	11	0	1	1	4	2	0	1	20
	9.82	0.00	0.89	0.89	3.57	1.79	0.00	0.89	17.86
	55.00	0.00	5.00	5.00	20.00	10.00	0.00	5.00	
	25.58	0.00	16.67	50.00	9.09	33.33	0.00	33.33	
$41,000-$60,000	17	4	2	0	19	0	1	2	45
	15.18	3.57	1.79	0.00	16.96	0.00	0.89	1.79	40.18
	37.78	8.89	4.44	0.00	42.22	0.00	2.22	4.44	
	39.53	80.00	33.33	0.00	43.18	0.00	33.33	66.67	
>$60,000	14	1	3	0	18	4	2	0	42
	12.50	0.89	2.68	0.00	16.07	3.57	1.79	0.00	37.50
	33.33	2.38	7.14	0.00	42.86	9.52	4.76	0.00	
	32.56	20.00	50.00	0.00	40.91	66.67	66.67	0.00	
Total	43	5	6	2	44	6	3	3	112
	38.39	4.46	5.36	1.79	39.29	5.36	2.68	2.68	100.00

Frequency Missing = 16

LAND USE, LAND OWNERSHIP AND PURPOSE FOR RAISING GOATS/SHEEP

Virtually all of the survey participants (98.68 %) own their land (Table 9). Since land is an important factor of production, this is an excellent first step towards enterprise establishment.

Table 9. Land Ownership

Tenure	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
Own	75	98.68	75	98.68
Lease	1	1.32	76	100.00

Frequency Missing = 52

Figure 2 shows land use for sheep and goat production, figure 3 indicates the number of animals owned, and figure 4 indicates the purpose for which small goats and sheep are kept. Based on our findings, the vast majority of producers operate on holdings less than 25 acres in size (figure 2). The same scenario is evident with respect to the number of animals owned. More than half of the producers surveyed owned less than 25 animals. Only 2.7 percent of the producers surveyed owned more than 100 animals (figure 3). This is evidence that the majority of sheep and goat producers are small (limited resource) producers operating

on small holdings (< 25 acres) which limits the industry's share of the livestock market. However, there is much room for expansion.

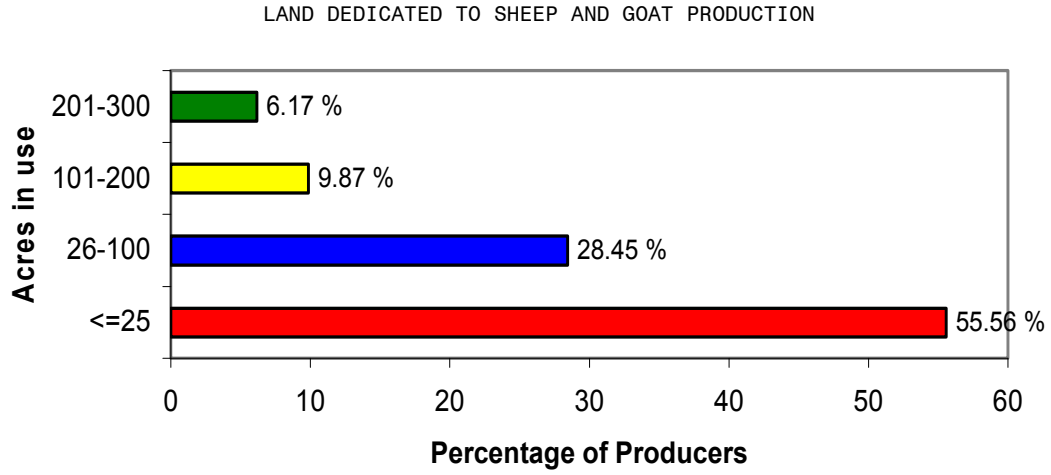

Figure 2. Land dedicated to goat/sheep production

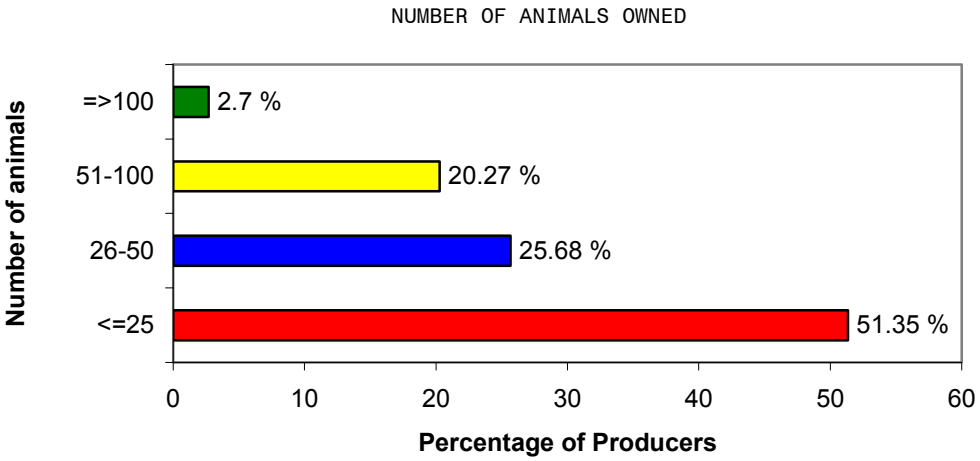

Figure 3. Number of animals (goat/sheep) owned

Figure 4 (next page) illustrates the purpose for which small ruminants are raised. The majority of producers (approximately half) indicated that they raised their animals primarily for meat. The second largest category (approximately one fourth of the producers) indicated that their animals were raised primarily as breeding stock.

PURPOSE FOR RAISING GOATS/SHEEP

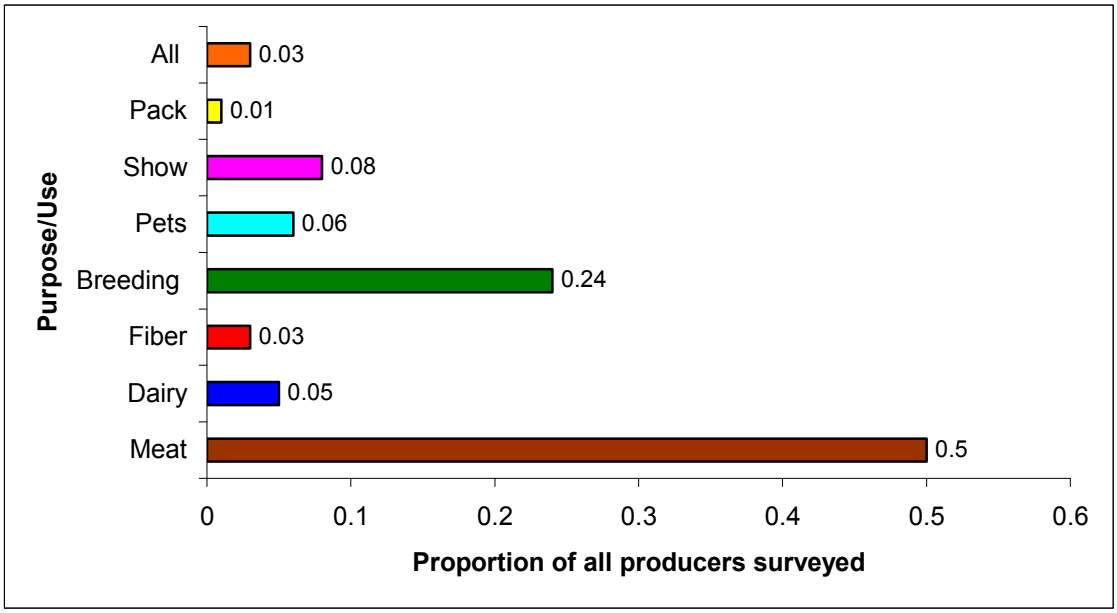

Figure 4. Purpose for raising sheep or goats

Markets and pricing: Producer confidence regarding markets and prices for their commodities are illustrated in tables 10 and 11. The majority of producers (65 %) indicated that they had markets for their animals and animal products (Table 10). The majority of producers (59 %) also felt that they received a fair price for their products. However, the 35 % of producers who indicated that they did not have markets for their products (Table 10) and the combined 41 % who either did not know or felt that they didn't receive a fair price for their products (Table 11) should not be ignored.

Table 10. Do you have a market for your animals or animal products?

Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
Yes	47	65.28	47	65.28
No	25	34.72	72	100.00

Frequency Missing = 56*

Table 11. Do you feel that you receive a fair price for your animals and or animal products?

Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
Yes	41	59.42	41	59.42
No	22	31.88	63	91.30
Don't Know	6	8.70	69	100.00

Frequency Missing = 59*

* indicates non producers since these two questions were only meant for producers

The primary points of sale are illustrated in Figure 5. The fact that the farm gate is the primary clearing house for goats and sheep and their byproducts (for example meat) is consistent with small scale agriculture. However, more than 30 percent of the producers surveyed indicated that they sold their animals at livestock auctions. Other points of sale (not included in the survey) accounted for 17 percent of goats and sheep and their related byproduct sales. Further research should be done to identify these market avenues or opportunities.

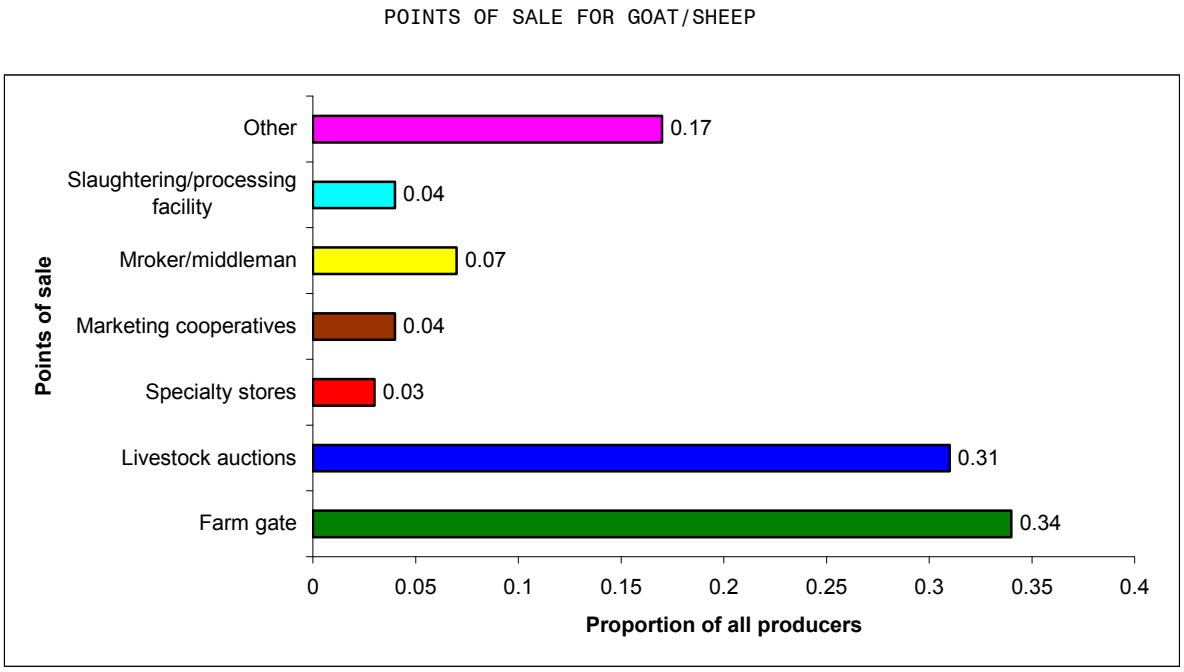

Figure 5. Points of sale for sheep or goats and related byproducts

Volume of sales: The majority of producers sell less than 50 animals per year (Table 12). This pattern is also consistent with small scale livestock production. However, in order to ensure sustainability, larger sales volumes at minimum producer cost should be encouraged.

Table 12. Volume of sale for goats/sheep

Number sold	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
None	12	16.00	12	16.00
< 50	53	70.67	65	86.67
50-100	8	10.67	73	97.33
101-150	1	1.33	74	98.67
251-300	1	1.33	75	100.00

Frequency Missing = 53*

* indicates non producers since this question was only meant for goat/sheep producers

Period of greatest sales volume: Table 13 outlines the periods when small ruminant sales are highest. According to the producers surveyed, the period between April and June account the highest volume of sales. However, there does not appear to be any statistical difference between sales during this period and sales between the period October to December. The lowest volume of sales is recorded during the first quarter of the year (January to March).

Table 13. Period during which greatest sales volume observed

Period	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
January-March	7	10.77	7	10.77
April-June	22	33.85	29	44.62
July-September	15	23.08	44	67.69
October-December	21	32.31	65	100.00

Frequency Missing = 63*

* indicates non producers since this question was only meant for goat/sheep producers

Producer Income from goat/sheep: More than 76 % of the producers surveyed earn less than $5000.00 annually from goat/sheep sales. However, slightly more than 7 % earn in excess of $40,000.00 per annum from the sale of their animals or related byproducts. Although the low income values for the majority are consistent with small scale production, higher incomes may be necessary to expand the industry.

Table 14. Producer income from goat/sheep sales

Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
< $5000	52	76.47	52	76.47
$5001-$20,000	11	16.18	63	92.65
$41,000-$60,000	3	4.41	66	97.06
> $60,000	2	2.94	68	100.00

Frequency Missing = 60*

*indicates non producers since this question was only meant for goat/sheep producer

PART 4. PRODUCER/FEEDBACK

The final but perhaps most important aspect of the conference was to solicit producer feedback on two critical areas:

- Areas of greatest need/importance to them and
- Their opinions of the conference.

To address producer needs, several survey questions were designed to identify critical barriers to their farming

endeavors and topical areas that they considered helpful in farm management decision making and risk management.

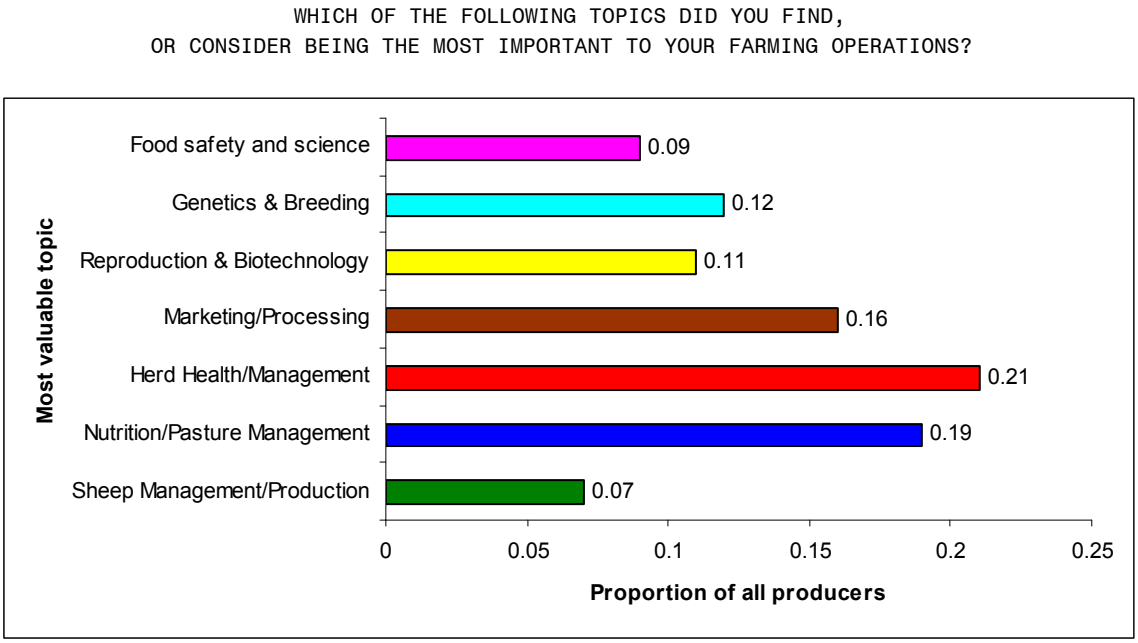

Figure 6. Most valuable topics to goat/sheep producers

The 5 highest ranked topics by producers, according to their level of importance were as follows:

- Herd health and management
- Nutrition and pasture management
- Marketing and processing
- Genetics and breeding
- Reproduction and biotechnology

Food safety was identified as the least important topic to producers. Since the conference was dominated by goat producers, it is not surprising that sheep management/production was not ranked among the topics of major importance.

Producers were also asked about areas where they believed they would be able to improve after having attended the conference. These are illustrated in Figure 7. The majority of producers indicated that they expected to see improvements in their management skills, collaborative skills, herd health practices and production capabilities respectively. Very few producers thought about continuing business as usual and hardly any anticipated getting out of the small ruminant business.

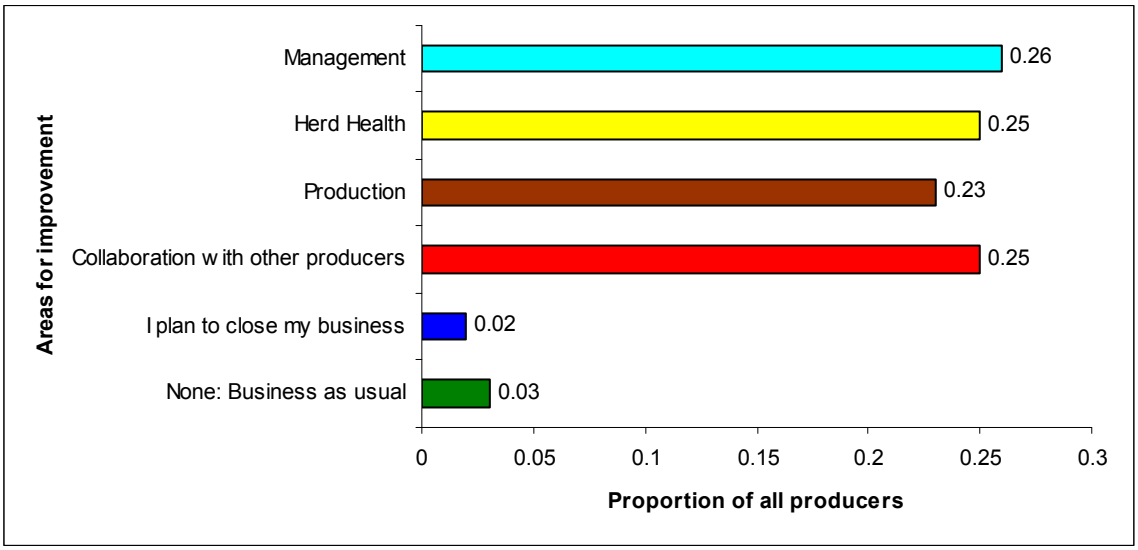

Figure 7. Areas where producers expect to see greatest improvement

Producer Confidence: Producer confidence is further illustrated in tables 15a, 15b and 15c respectively, where in all cases, producers were either moderately or extremely confident about their abilities to network, collaborate with other producers and industry personnel and apply knowledge gained at the conference to their farming operations.

Table 15a:
Having attended the conference how confident are you that you will be able to identify opportunities for small ruminant producers?

Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
Slightly Confident	12	11.21	12	11.21
Moderately Confident	40	37.38	52	48.60
Extremely Confident	51	47.66	103	96.26
No Opinion	4	3.74	107	100.00

Frequency Missing = 21

Table 15b
Having attended the conference how confident are you that you will be able to network with other small ruminant producers?

Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
Slightly Confident	5	4.67	5	4.67
Moderately Confident	28	26.17	33	30.84
Extremely Confident	65	60.75	98	91.59
No Opinion	9	8.41	107	100.00

Frequency Missing = 21

Table 15c
Having attended the conference how confident are you that you will be able to apply the knowledge gained to your farm or organization?

Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
Not Confident	2	1.80	2	1.80
Slightly Confident	5	4.50	7	6.31
Moderately Confident	21	18.92	28	25.23
Extremely Confident	76	68.47	104	93.69
No Opinion	7	6.31	111	100.00

Frequency Missing = 17

Concluding Remarks: In closing, conference attendance were asked to indicate how they felt about the conference itself, how often they would like to see it held and where they would prefer to see it held in the future. Responses to these questions are highlighted in tables 16 17 and 18 respectively. An overwhelming majority of the participants indicated that they would definitely attend the conference again in the future (Table 16).

Table 16. Would you attend this conference again in the future?

Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
Yes	113	94.17	113	94.17
No	2	1.67	115	95.83
Not Sure	5	4.17	120	100.00

Frequency Missing = 8

Conference participants were so impressed with the quality of the conference, that a majority indicated that they would love to see the conference held annually (Table 17).

Table 17. How often would you like to see this conference held?

Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
Annually	61	51.69	61	51.69
Bi-Annually	49	41.53	110	93.22
Every 3 Years	6	5.08	116	98.31
Every 4-5 Years	2	1.69	118	100.00

Frequency Missing = 10

In terms of a future venue for the next goat/sheep producer's conference, the majority of the participants indicated the Southeastern United States as their favorite venue for the next conference (Table 18). A very small percentage (approximately 7 %) indicated that they would

like to have the next conference hosted at an international venue.

Table 18. Where would you like to see this conference held in the future?

Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
Central U.S.	12	11.32	12	11.32
Southeastern U.S.	57	53.77	69	65.09
Northeastern U.S.	5	4.72	74	69.81
Midwestern U.S.	10	9.43	84	79.25
Eastern U.S.	8	7.55	92	86.79
Western U.S.	7	6.60	99	93.40
Other e.g. International	7	6.60	106	100.00

Frequency Missing = 22

Although still an infant industry, currently characterized by an aging population of farmers, small holdings, low sales volumes and incomes, the facts outlined in this report highlight the great degree of love and enthusiasm that small ruminant producers express for their profession. This is evidence that they take what they do seriously and would be happy to work with governments and other interest groups to help move the industry forward. There is still a great deal of room for improvement and producers and industry personnel alike are urged to take advantage of the opportunity to franchise this young but promising industry.

END OF REPORT