

Capricorn Hill Meats
369 Clark Hollow Road
Pine City, NY 14871

SARE grant #FNE00-345

June 22, 2003

David L. Holm
SARE
Hills Building
105 Carrigan Drive
University of Vermont
Burlington, VT 05405-0082

Mr. David Holm,

This is our final report concerning a small-ruminant meat plant SARE grant # FNE00-345. Our grant application's goal was to build, onsite at Capricorn Hill Farm, a USDA small-ruminant meat plant. This would provide our customers with a fast turnaround time on slaughter and processing. Before this point, it had taken up to a month to receive these services.

At present, our commercial goat herd consists of 85 breeding does. We primarily breed in the fall for April kidding, but are attempting some out of season breeding. We currently use approximately 80 acres of our 107 acres in a combination of grazing pasture and hay production.

Our main marketing tool is "farm gate sales". All of our market kids are sold directly from the farm as well as an increasing the supply of pasture-raised poultry, pasture-raised veal, and eggs.

Capricorn Hill Meats opened in March of 2002 with a successful inspection by NYS Ag and Markets as a custom meat plant for small ruminants. In New York State, this type of inspection is required every six months. This allows us to slaughter and process small-ruminant livestock for the owners of the animal. All products are labeled, "Not For Sale".

To increase the use of Capricorn Hill Meats and to make it more available for other producers' customers, we established Capricorn Hill Farm's, "Live Market". Our first market was held on June 1, 2002. We equipped an existing dairy barn attached to the Capricorn Hill Meats facility to facilitate the sale. Other producers are invited monthly to bring some of their best livestock to market directly to the public. Live market days are held once a month on Saturday mornings for three hours. Available to the customers are a variety of lambs and goats of different sizes and breeds. After purchasing the animal, the buyer may choose to take the animal to another processing facility, process the animals themselves on the farm, or use Capricorn Hill Meats. An on-site harvest shed was built

and can be leased for those who wish to slaughter their own animal and process it to a hanging carcass. Capricorn Hill Meats welcomes customers who wish to perform their own halal slaughter in the plant. They may also have the animal quartered or cubed with bone on or off and returned to them for same day service. They may also leave the carcass to cool and have their meat cut and wrapped to order for pick up several days later. Our power point presentation can be seen at our web site, www.CapricornHill.com. All the offal is disposed of by Capricorn Hill Farm in their "on farm", compost site. To date, every market kid purchased for slaughter from our farm has been processed through Capricorn Hill Meats since it's opening. An increasing number of clients are beginning to use Capricorn Hill Meats for their regular processing needs. During the Muslims, "Festival of Sacrifice" holiday, in February of 2003, several new clients found the services of our plant accommodated their religious requirements nicely.

Because of the increase demand for goats we started to experience since the opening of our plant, I began to purchase goat kids in the fall of 2002. For the first time since offering on farm sales, we were unable to provide enough animals for the volume of customers coming to the farm. I continue to require off farm purchases of goats to meet the demand of our customers.

With the opening of Capricorn Hill Meats and the conception of our live markets, we have found ourselves watched by many people in the agricultural fields. At our first live market, Robert Pestridge visited us, from the USDA's rural development with great interest in our live market concept. We have been featured in our local paper as the lead story in the local section. Several agricultural publications have also featured our meat plant and live markets, offering their readers another concept in marketing as the production and sales of goats increases in the United States.

We also received tremendous support by the University of Cornell's grant program, "Northeast Sheep and Goat Marketing Program". They provided marketing ideas and logistical support. Several members attended some of the live markets and offered the information to prospective customers on their web site. I had the opportunity to work with them for four months till the end of the grant in January of 2003. I filled the position as a part time "market coordinator". Their site can be found at, www.sheepgoatmarketing.org.

Capricorn Hill Farm created it's own web site, www.Capricornhill.com to promote it's own concept of farming and show it's customers what is available at the farm. Visitors to the web site are invited to sign into the address book, place orders or offer their own comments.

During the past year, we have been asked to speak several times to explain our marketing concept and how others may take advantage of what we have learned. We have opened our farm for numerous farm tours sponsored by cooperative extension and have spoken at meetings on marketing to the ethnic population to using the web for marketing.

At present, we are actively pursuing a USDA inspection status. This will enable us to begin marketing to a local clientele of restaurants and hopefully some day see our locally grown goats and lambs on the grocery shelves. Having a local federally inspected plant will offer greater marketing possibilities to our local producers.

Our experiences working local producers, cooperative extension agents, the Northeast Sheep and Goat Marketing Program and many new customers, has been wonderful. Thanks to the support received by the Northeast SARE Grant Program, our dream has been realized. We cannot wait to see what future holds for us next.

Capricorn Hill Meats
Chris and Colleen Parsons
February 17, 2003

What is a Live Market Day??

Always looking for a "better way" to serve customers, Capricorn Hill Meats on Capricorn Hill Farm in Pine City, NY did some investigation and discovered that many people, especially first generation immigrants, wanted to choose their meat "on the hoof". These people want the best meat they can afford, and not necessarily what they are limited to in the butcher case. One of the many skills immigrants bring to this country is the ability to choose the right animal for harvest.

More investigation revealed that the goat and sheep farmers faced frustration with finding an outlet for their highest quality meat animals. These farmers are very proud of how they raise their livestock, and felt saddened when their prime animals were lumped together with "all the others" at a sale.

Chris and Colleen Parsons, the goat and poultry farmers of Capricorn Hill Farm since 1998, began to feel compelled to bring these groups together. They are proudly providing their neighbors in the Twin Tiers an opportunity to choose a wonderful, locally grown lamb or goat ready for immediate harvesting. On a Live Market Day, farmers who devotedly raise their animals, present their highest quality goats and lambs for sale. Customers have an opportunity to deal with the farmer, learn how the animal has been cared for, and buy that specific animal. No middleman! This is a chance for honest people to deal directly with each other.

As this concept grows, and more customers and farmers choose to participate, Capricorn Hill Meats will encourage that a wide variety of products become available on Live Market Days. Poultry and rabbit producers will be encouraged to sell their livestock. Fresh, homegrown fruits & vegetables will be available, as will other locally harvested products such as honey and maple syrup. Eventually they hope to include ethnically produced products as well for this once a month Live Market Day event.

Capricorn Hill Meats, a state certified custom meat processing facility for small ruminants only, opened in March, 2002. What is now the meat plant, was once one of the largest dairy bottling plants in Chemung County. Capricorn Hill Farm on Clark Hollow Rd. in Pine City, NY received a SARE Grant (Sustainable Agriculture Resource and Education) providing much of the funding for the renovation and adaptation of the dairy-based building into a meat processing plant. Cornell University's Sheep and Goat Marketing project is providing expertise and assistance with the development and marketing of this innovative concept. It is hoped that this pilot project will be able to be replicated throughout the northeast.

If you would like more information about an upcoming Live Market Day, contact Capricorn Hill Farm at (607) 732-4987 or visit them on the web at www.CapricornHill.com.

Live Market

at
Capricorn Hill Farm
Pine City, NY
between Elmira & Corning



**FEATURING:
Goat & Lamb**

Offered by area Goat & Sheep Farmers

Saturday, June 1st, 2002

9 AM to 1 PM (rain or shine)

Capricorn Hill Meats,
a custom meat plant, will provide
same day harvest services.
Complete processing and wrapping
services will be available
for pick-up later in the week.

The Harvest Shed
is a private space available to rent
for personal or religious slaughter.
Knives, carcass bags and ice will be
for sale.

For more information and directions:

Chris Parsons

369 Clark Hollow Rd. -- Pine City, NY 14871

(607)732-4987

e-mail: TheFarm@CapricornHill.com

website: www.CapricornHill.com

Snacks, drinks, outdoor seating and local tourist information available.

Capricorn Hill Meats

Chris Parsons
owner/manager



- custom plant for lamb & goat
- deer processed
- Harvest Shed rental
- leasing options available

Live Market Days

Saturdays
9 AM to 12 Noon:

August 10th

September 7th

October 12th

November 2nd

... more to be announced



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369 Clark Hollow Rd
Pine City, NY 14871

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fax: (607) 767-0674

Email:
Meats@CapricornHill.com

Website:
<http://www.CapricornHill.com>



Win FREE Goat Meat

Come to a
Live Market Day
on or before
November 2, 2002
to enter the drawing for
this **FREE** meat goat
- valued at \$100!!



GRAND PRIZE

This well-muscled 3/4 Boer wether goat weighed 58-lbs at 12 weeks old. We project he will weigh between 70 and 80-lbs on Nov. 2nd. Estimated value of this goat is \$100.00. Processing fees are not included.

Other prizes:

1st Prize is one free goat or lamb processing
processing includes slaughter, meat cutting, and wrapping
with estimated value of up to \$32

2nd Prize is one free harvesting of goat or lamb
slaughter only, with head-off valued at \$15

3rd Prize is one free rental of the Harvest Shed
slaughter your own animal in our well-equipped slaughter shed valued at \$8

Drawings for the Grand Prize meat goat and other prizes will be held on Saturday November 2, 2002 at 10 AM. While you don't have to be present to win, and no purchase is necessary, you must enter the drawing in person, with only one entry per day per family allowed. Attend all 4 Live Market Days and have 4 chances to win this goat, or the other prizes listed above.

For those interested in earning "extra chances" for the drawing, ask Chris Parsons how your friends can help you, while they help themselves!

Cosponsored by:
Northeast Sheep and Goat Marketing Program
at Cornell University



**Small Ruminant Pasture Walk
Saturday, July 20 10:30-1:30**

**Capricorn Hill Farm
Pine City, NY**

There will be a pasture walk at Capricorn Hill Farm on July 20th from 10:30 am till 1:30 pm. Capricorn Hill Farm is owned and operated by Colleen and Chris Parsons in Pine City, NY. The farm consists of meat goats and pastured poultry as well as a custom small ruminant (sheep and goats) meat plant and live market area. This farm is a great chance to see both innovative grazing management and cutting edge marketing techniques.

The Parsons' meat goats have turned what was idle land filled with golden rod and multiflora rose into productive pasture. In the process, they have experimented with several different types of fence before arriving at a hybrid of electric and high tensile woven wire following the expert suggestions of a fencing company in the Midwest and help with a grant from Chemung County Soil & Water. They have also started to use electric poultry netting in the place of Salatin-style pens to raise their chickens.

In terms of marketing, the Parsons' have recently started Capricorn Hill Meats, a business designed specifically for small ruminants. With the help from a NE SARE grant, they converted a defunct milk plant into a state inspected slaughter house, and then added a monthly live market day in effort to help other producers, as well as themselves. Live markets bring consumers and producers together to their mutual benefit. Consumers benefit from being able to purchase the animal that best suits their needs while producers benefit from potentially better prices for high quality animals. In addition, the farm has developed a website for people to learn more about the farm (www.capricornhill.com).

This will be a great opportunity to hear about pasture management for small ruminants and direct marketing of meats to consumers.

A light lunch will be available at the farm free of charge.

For more information, please contact Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cortland County at (607) 753 5077 or Schuyler County Soil and Water at (607) 535 9650.

This event is made possible by the Fingerlakes Grazing Advocacy Program, a partnership between Cornell Cooperative Extension, the Sullivan Trails RC&D, and local Soil and Water Conservation Districts funded by a grant from the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program.