

short summary of activities

LYDIA RATCLIFF

NORTHEAST DAIRY ASSOCIATES
RFD 1
Chester, Vermont 05143
USA

Telephone (802) 875-3159
Fax (802) 824-4072

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Mr. Fred Magdoff
Northeast Region Coordinator
Northeast Region SARE Program
Hills Bldg.
University of Vermont
Burlington, VT 05405-0082

Dear Mr. Magdoff,

You asked me to write you a letter describing what I would like to do with the dairy export SARE grant (FNE-96-149). Following up on my Oct.25 request to shift funds from "travel" to semen collection.

I have contacted dozens of goat herds throughout the region, inventoried numbers and types of animals available, prices and health status, DHIR, etc.; and also worked quite extensively with the Northeast Caprine Semen Cooperative (30 members) and the coop's semen processor Roger Ives. I have an expanding mailing list of these people, plus pedigrees and photos of their foundation animals. I also have made contacts on all continents and in a dozen cases negotiations for possible sale of semen or animals (including Jersey heifers and Cashmere goats as well as dairy goats) - in Marocco, Taiwan, Oman, Venezuela, The Netherlands, Italy, South Africa, Uruguay,, Costa Rica and The Philippines. Also contacts and research with U.S. -based livestock exporters, freight forwarders, truckers, insurers and government officials (state and Federal) involved with exports and foreign programs.

The Vermont Dept. of Agriculture and Dairy Goat Promotion Board have been very supportive of the effort and committed \$1,000 toward semen collection in Vt. and N.H.

It appears that Taiwan, until now the world's major importer of live dairy goats from the U.S., has stopped these imports - at least temporarily (explanation being sought via the U.S. Trade sources in Taipei - and Washington) - and increased interest in semen to upgrade existing stock.

I have responded by shifting emphasis to collection of semen from top bucks throughout our area, with SARE grant funds used to pay the costs of meeting export requirements (bucks have to undergo blood testing prior to semen collection; vet has to monitor semen collection and processing).

Both prongs of this export effort have been more costly than anticipated.

I feel the project is near bearing fruit and should be continued. People are beginning to call us; I was among the first people contacted in connection with a major import (1,000 + goats) by the government of The Philippines. Just to complete the semen project and do a good job of it would take most of the remaining \$1,700 in grant money. We have conducted three collection sessions in Vermont and Schenectady, N.Y. involving about 15 bucks (four breeds) and netted about 700 straws of semen. Since the rutting season comes but once a year (and is nearly over) I think it would be a good idea to have one more session in New York State in mid December.

I estimate current unpaid vet and blood testing bills at about \$800, costs of a fourth collection at \$200, equipment rental (2 nitrogen tanks/Roger Ives) at \$300 - applicable toward tank purchase (balance payable with new grant funds if re-application succeeds). And the rest - about \$400 to keep my lines of communication (phone, fax and computer) open till new funds might become available next spring OR an order from somewhere yields enough to keep us in business.

Suggest final report and close-out sometime in January or February. I'm very optimistic that this effort will succeed.

Thanks and best wishes,

Lydia Ratcliff