

Meat Goat Opportunities

URBANA, ILL.

Significant economic opportunities may await producers interested in raising meat goats, said a University of Illinois Extension meat goat specialist.

"Population projections predict an increase of 100 million people in this country by 2040," said Dick Cobb. "Much of this growth will be due to the increase of Hispanic and Islamic populations with much of it in Illinois centered on Chicago.

"Both of these groups enjoy goat meat."

The University of Illinois, Western Illinois University, and Southern Illinois University are working with producers to develop a sustainable Illinois meat goat industry, he noted.

"Working with these universities, the Illinois Meat Goat Producers Association is hosting a buck test to be held at Western Illinois University starting in July 2009," he said. "The test is to identify bucks that can convert feed to meat protein efficiently and thus sire offspring that can be raised in a sustainable industry to supply the greatly increasing demand for goat meat.

"All producers of meat goats, regardless of breed, should be interested in this test."

The test station will be at WIU's Agricultural

Research facilities in Macomb. Bucks must be delivered to the test station on July 18, 2009. Following a six-day adjustment period, the 84-day confinement test begins. It concludes Oct. 16. Test candidates must be born between Feb. 20 and April 20, 2009.

Test oversight will be provided by a test advisory committee for the American Meat Goat Association. The committee includes representatives of state meat goat associations in the upper Midwest. The goal is to establish standardized protocols for confinement performance tests. Current committee participants include Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Iowa, and Wisconsin.

The test will evaluate and compare test bucks in a common environment for average daily gain, feed efficiency, and other factors. The WIU test facility is equipped with a FIRE (Feed Intake Recording Equipment) system to allow continuous recording of individual buck feed intake, allowing feed efficiency to be determined for each buck.

For more information contact: WIU-buck-test@attglobal.net or call Paul Miller (217) 322-4687 or Jennifer Miller (217) 688-2043. Δ