



Is Meat Goat Production Increasing In Florida?

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Several farms in Union County keep goats as a hobby or just to keep down the weeds!!! Some are commercial farms that produce milk and meat or meat alone. Union County holds good potential to increase its goat production. According to the United States Department of Agriculture Census (2002), the number of goat farms increased by nineteen (19) percent, the goat population by twelve (12) percent, the number of farms that sold goats by forty five (45) percent from 1997 to 2002. National sales were up by fifty-five (55) percent during the same period. The increase in goat production is most likely driven by an increasing demand for goat meat.

The growing demand was noted by several newspaper articles, for example in 2001, the Boston Globe reported on the "Growing Markets for Goats." In 2003, Daily Oklahoma ran an article captioned "Goat Meat finds Support in Oklahoma." The following year the Chicago Tribune published "A Growing demand for Meat Goats." Even the Kentucky Living Magazine featured the "Growing Goat market during 2006." The growing demand for goat meat appears to be a trend across North America. In 2007, The Globe and Mail, Canada's national newspaper carried an article on "Goats are not for cheese anymore." The increase in goat numbers is evident in Florida as goat production increased by 180 percent from 2002 to 2006 with a current population of 75,000 head.