



First National Goat Study Launched by USDA

Health, productivity and management practices among goat producers to be analyzed in voluntary, confidential survey.

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Goat producers in 21 states may be asked to participate in the first national study of health and health-management issues facing the U.S. goat industry.

The survey, conducted by two USDA agencies--the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the National Agricultural Statistics Service--in July and August 2009, will focus on the health, productivity and management practices of the meat, dairy and fiber goat industries.

The 2007 Census of Agriculture showed the percentage of farmers raising goats increased in 2007, while many other production sectors showed a drop or little change.

Participation in the study is voluntary and confidential.

According to the USDA, the Goat 2009 study has the following major objectives: Determine producer awareness of veterinary services program diseases;

Describe management and biosecurity practices important for the control of infectious diseases-including brucellosis, scrapie, caprine arthritis encephalitis, Johne's disease and caseous lymphadenitis;

Establish a baseline description of animal health, nutrition and management practices in the U.S. goat industry;

Estimate the prevalence of Johne's disease infection, internal parasitism and anthelmintic resistance;

Characterize contagious ecthyma (sore mouth) in U.S. goats. Determine producer awareness of the zoonotic potential and practices to prevent sore mouth transmission, and assess producer interest in an improved vaccine for sore mouth;

Examine factors (e.g., genetic and management) that correlate with caprine arthritis and encephalitis virus levels; and

Provide genetic and serological banks for future research.