Vermont Goat Collaborative

Colchester, VT

The purpose of the Collaborative is to help refugee farmers produce goats for the greater Burlington (VT) ethnic market, thereby replacing 3000 goats currently imported frozen from Australia and New Zealand each year.

The project will build a small custom exempt slaughter facility at the farm where New American ranchers raise goats to replace the imported, frozen meat currently sold in Burlington and Winooski. It will allow New American consumers to purchase and legally slaughter a goat for their own consumption within a few miles of where they live. They will refurbish an old milk-house and comply with all Vermont regulations. The septic system, not included in this request, will be built under the Agricultural Best Management Practices program.

Total Working Lands Grant—$10,868.00
Total Match provided by Vermont Goat Collaborative—$3,980.00

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GRANT RECIPIENT UPDATE - DECEMBER '13

The Community Slaughter Facility opened in September, just in time for the Dhasan and Eid festivals.

The custom slaughter facility opened at the end of September, just in time for the Hindu Dhasan and Muslim Eid festivals. In addition to the 67 goats raised at the Collaborative Farm, they brought in 50 animals from partner farms who had expressed a desire to sell through them rather than directly to New American customers. These goats came from Tannery, Cedar Hollow, Sloggy Bottom, and Blue Ledge farms. In addition to increasing the number of available goats (which was important because their production was falling short of demand this year), these partnerships enabled them to provide a wider range of products. In addition to their own young castrated dairy bucklings they were able to offer some Boer meat goats, some Nubian goats, some intact older male goats, and some cull female dairy goats. This was important in meeting the specialized preferences of different ethnic groups.

Goat Choosing Days at the Farm, September 2013

People from more than 12 countries have bought goats at the farm during this first season. Below, Mostafa and his family enjoy Eid preparations.

The cultural value of "participatory slaughter" cannot be underestimated. Grandma Gurung (above left) said that up until now, she'd never had the opportunity to attend a slaughter in the U.S. "It was always just the young men who went off to Boston." "But now," she said, "we have the opportunity to pass these traditions on to our children and teach them our ways."

Modesmo, from Rwanda, said, "This is a really good thing. We never imagined we would have this in Burlington."