

Marketing Goats & Sheep - 2012

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Meat – The primary product from goats and sheep is meat. There is a demand for animals of all ages, weights and qualities (unlike beef, pork and poultry that have well defined carcass and quality targets). Market price is influenced by supply and demand, dressing percentage and the carcass quality of the animal offered for sale. Neither the goat or lamb meat trade has a use for excessively fat animals.

Most goat and lamb is sold bone-in. Packers generally sell young goats as whole carcasses, which then may be quartered for retail presentation. Fabrication specifications for retail products can vary significantly, depending on consumer group preferences. Older goats are usually processed and sold as bone-in cubes.

Small lambs may be presented for retail sale similar to kid goats. Heavier lambs (>50 lb carcass) are generally fabricated in to the four retail cuts (leg, loin, rack and shoulder), each of which may be further fabricated before sale.

| | Age | Teeth | Typical Range for Live Weight, lb* | |
|-----------|---------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|--------|
| | | | Goats | Sheep |
| Kid, lamb | 0-11 months | milk (baby) teeth | 15-70 | 15-80 |
| Yearling | 12-23 months | 1 pair permanent | 60-120 | 75-150 |
| Young | 24-36 months | 2-3 pair permanents | 90-180 | 90-200 |
| Mature | 4-6 years old | 4 pair permanents | 100-200 | 90-225 |
| Aged | 7+ years old | worn, broken mouth | 100+ | 90+ |

* Includes all species of goats and sheep respectively.

Offal – Offal includes the head, skin, shanks and viscera. Some consumers enjoy dishes prepared from the head, organ meats and/or the viscera. Goat and sheep skins yield very high quality leather. Most fresh skins are salted and exported 'raw' to other countries (ex. Mexico) for tanning.

Market Timing – Most goats and lambs are born in the spring and come to market mid-summer to late fall. Consequently, supply often exceeds demand during late summer and early fall and prices soften. Kid and lamb prices are historically the highest from mid-November through the Easter holidays. Holidays and religious celebrations often drive market prices higher (see Table 2).

| Table 2. Noteworthy Marketing Opportunities* – Goats & Lambs | | |
|--|---|---|
| Consumer Preference | | |
| Holiday | Goat | Lamb |
| Easter Western Apr 8, 2012 Greek Apr 15, 2012 | young, milk fed <40 lb liveweight | 30-55 lb live weight, fat |
| Passover Apr 7-13, 2012 | | 30-55 lb live weight, fat no blemishes |
| Rosh Hashana Sep 16-17, 2012 | | forequarters, from 60-110 lb live weight |
| Ramadan July 20-Aug 18, 2012 | no permanent teeth 45-80 lb live weight | 60-80 lb live weight |
| Eid al-Fitr Aug 19, 2012 | " | " |
| Eid al-Adha Oct 26, 2012 | " | prefer blemish free yearlings, 60-100 lb |
| Caribbean Holidays August | yearlings and older intact bucks preferred, 80 lb+ | |
| Christmas | young, 15-25 lb live weight | young, 15-25 lb live weight |
| Cinco de Mayo May 5 | grilling size, usually <60 lb live weight | |
| Memorial Day May 30, 2012 | " | |
| July 4 th | " | |
| Labor Day Sep 3, 2012 | " | |
| *To capitalize on these opportunities, animals must usually be marketed 7-10 days before the holiday/event occurs. | | |

Visit with your goat/sheep marketing professionals regarding these and other marketing opportunities.

Breeding Stock – Kids, lambs and yearlings of acceptable quality and confirmation can often be sold at a premium to their value as a slaughter animal. If using the services of a commission company, let the marketing professionals know you are bringing quality replacement breeding animals, thus providing them an opportunity to promote your consignment. When culling breeding females (especially does), if forage conditions permit, allow thin females to gain some condition and udders to dry up before marketing. Thin does with distended udders have little market value.

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