

Assuring the future of the industry

An analysis shows that Meat Industry Trust bursaries are helping to build expertise in the red meat industry, and a draft development plan for meat goats has been published.

The principal aim of the Meat Industry Trust (MIT) bursary fund is to encourage study in key areas of the red meat industry, and thus contribute to its improvement. This objective has largely been achieved, according to Dr Vuyelwa Penxa, chairperson of the SA Qualifications Authority.

Penxa studied MIT bursary recipients between 2014 to 2017. Among her findings are the following:

- The University of Pretoria has had the most bursary recipients (12). It is followed by the University of Fort Hare with six, and the University of KwaZulu-Natal, with one.
- An analysis of the historic spread of study in the industry reveals that some fields require more attention. These include the environment, reproduction, nutrition, and economics and marketing. In addition, no research has been conducted on rangeland and pasture studies.

Hygiene, animal health/welfare and genetics have received the most attention over the years.

- The industry needs to develop animals and production systems that require only limited medicinal support. The MIT bursary committee should consider helping students to enter this field of study.
- The criteria of selecting bursary holders on the basis of the excellence of the student and the quality of his or her research proposal has yielded good results.

Meat Industry Trust bursaries are open to South African citizens who have qualified for admission to a Masters or Doctoral degree at a recognised tertiary institution.

In line with the efforts of government, the MIT ensures that South African demographics and gender

interests are addressed when awarding bursaries. To date, 28 students have received funding, of whom 22 are females.

DRAFT DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR MEAT GOATS

Large areas of South Africa are suitable only for extensive animal production off natural veld. In this environment, it makes economic and ecological sense to farm more than one livestock species.

Furthermore, to ensure sustainability, most of the natural vegetation requires balanced utilisation by a combination of browsers and grazers.

and producers, processors and retail product outlets.

Interventions will include:

- The development of a national goat databank for accurate statistics, information, animal identification and appropriate value chain traceability.
- Market research and development.
- Value-adding through product development, including processed meat and skins.
- Integrated biome-linked farmer support centres, including the revamp of existing facilities.
- Client-centered research and development (breeding, nutrition, and animal health).

GOATS REMAIN A LARGELY UNDER-UTILISED RESOURCE

South Africa has several improved and unimproved indigenous goat breeds suited to a wide variety of production environments and systems. The unimproved goats are owned mostly by people in the resource-poor developing sector, where the animals are used for a variety of purposes such as religious ceremonies. These goats remain a largely under-utilised resource with enormous potential.

A draft development plan for meat goats in South Africa has now been published to create a framework for establishing a sustainable meat goat industry in the country. To this end, a series of integrated strategic interventions will be undertaken. These will benefit the entire value chain, from goat owners and keepers using communal rangeland resources to commercial breeders

- The establishment of a permanent umbrella organisation for meat goats based on an existing structure, such as the SA Ostrich Business Chamber.

Most of the goats kept in South Africa, excluding Angoras, are traded as live animals, mainly through the informal trade, speculators and, to a lesser extent, formal auctions. Only a small percentage of goats are slaughtered at recognised abattoirs.

Between 14% and 17% of recorded annual goat sales in South Africa take place during April and December, while only 7% are made during each of the remaining months of the year. The informal live goat market is based mainly in KwaZulu-Natal and high-density urban areas.

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