

2020 Sheep & Goat Survey SUMMARY REPORT



PURPOSE

The purpose of the 2020 Sheep and Goat Survey was to investigate the impact of the sheep and goat industries in Kansas. The information will be used to advance education, marketing, research and outreach activities designed specifically for the Kansas sheep and goat sectors. The Kansas Department of Agriculture has identified barriers and opportunities within those markets to allow the agency to become more responsive to producer and market needs. The survey is a direct result of being a high priority item identified by the industry during the 2019 Kansas Ag Growth Summit.

OVERVIEW

The specialty livestock industries in Kansas are relatively small compared to more traditional livestock production in Kansas. However, the industries that do exist are successful and have benefited from increased consumer demand. Statewide interest in the sheep and goat industries continues to increase. In July, 2020, Kansas agriculture stakeholders and the sheep and goat industries were asked via public survey tool to provide detailed information about their sheep and goat inventories, size and scope of operations, and marketing outlet information. A total of 314 Kansans responded to this survey that closed on August 31, 2020.

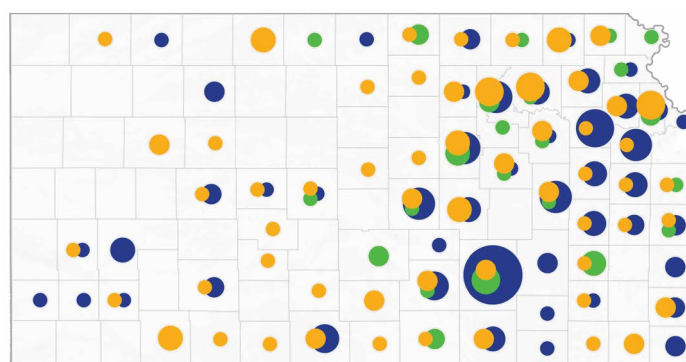
PRODUCERS and FARMERS

Type of Production: In Kansas, 35% of respondents raise sheep, whereas 51% of respondents raise goats. Mixed operations, where respondents raise both sheep and goats, comprise an additional 14% of responses.

Gender: Half of the respondents for this survey are female.

Age Groups: Producers represent a wide range of age groups, with the greatest percentage in the 41- to 45-year-old range. About 5% of respondents are less than 20 years old.

FARM LOCATION Kansas Sheep and Goat Farms by County



● Sheep ● Goats ● Both

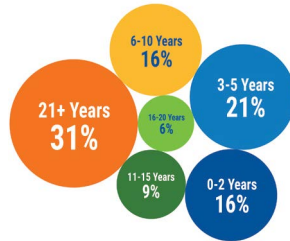
PRODUCTION

ANNUAL INCOME



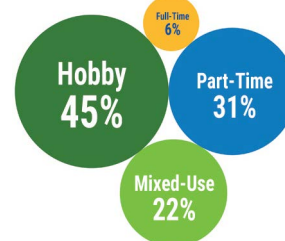
50% of operations make less than \$10,000 annually.

YEARS



Over 46% of sheep respondents have been raising sheep over 10 years. A significant number of respondents have been involved for 3 to 10 years.

SCOPE



Hobby farms, or small operations that are maintained without expectation of being a primary source of income, are the most popular type of operation.

EMPLOYEES



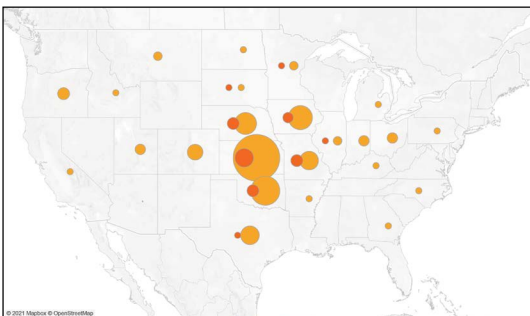
On average, sheep operations employ about 2 to 3 people. More often than not, these individuals are other family members.

OPERATIONS

- **Sheep Stock/Breed Type:** Close distribution between Maternal/Seedstock (29%), Wether/Show (29%), and Feed/Finish/Terminal (21%) production. Only 8% of flocks are primarily wool producing.
- **Average Size of Ewe Flock:** The majority of ewe flocks are less than 50 head. While 26% of respondents tend herds between 51 and 200 sheep, roughly 12% have flocks greater than 200 head.
- **Number of Acres Accessible to Flock:** Most flocks have access to less than 40 acres, with nearly 30% on 10 acres or less. About 15% have access to more than 161 acres.
- **Lambing Season in Kansas:** For most producers, lambing season occurs early in the first four months of the year, with 50% lambing in January and February and 21% in March and April. Accelerated lambing programs comprise 16% of respondents' operations.
- **Altering of Lambs:** Survey results indicate that 50% of respondents dock and 47% castrate their lambs.
- **Sheep Management Methods:** At 58% of responses, most producers surveyed manage small farm flocks. Another 10% manage confined flocks, while 26% utilize grazing management methods.

PURCHASE OF SHEEP

Breed & Feeding Goats



For both commercial and purebred producers, the overwhelming majority use private treaties to purchase new animals. Commercial producers' next most common method of purchase is sale barns at 10%, while purebred producers tend to rely more on online sales.

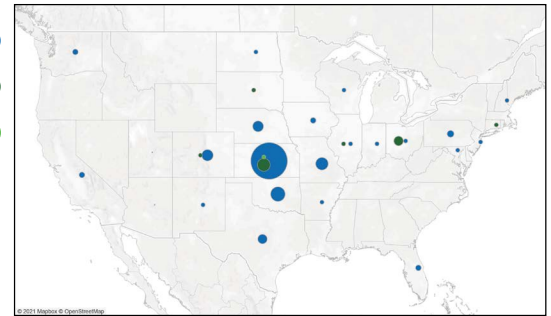
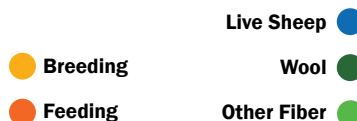
MEAT PRODUCTS

Producers rely on local/ethnic processors and commercial processors equally to process lambs for meat production. Only about 5% participate in on-farm slaughtering. The vast majority of producers harvest less than 50 sheep annually and only 8% harvest more than 500 head per year.

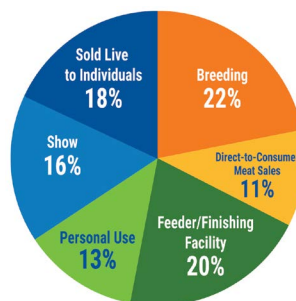
MARKETING

SALE OF SHEEP

Live Sheep & Sheep Products



PRODUCTS' END USE



This survey shows that 84% of producers market sheep and products themselves. Live sheep are most commonly marketed at dedicated marketing outlets, such as livestock auctions, while 27% of lamb meat products head to wholesalers then on to retailers. Both types rely heavily on social media, with 42% and 54% of live sheep and meat product marketing methods, respectively.

WOOL PRODUCTS

Of the producers raising sheep for wool, 38% market between 100 and 500 pounds of wool each year, while another 35% produce more than half a ton of wool and fiber annually.

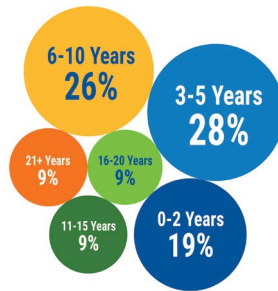
PRODUCTION

ANNUAL INCOME



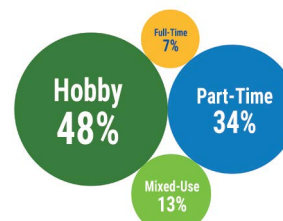
72% of operations make less than \$10,000 annually.

YEARS



Most producers are new to the industry, with roughly 73% of respondents raising goats for less than 10 years.

SCOPE



Nearly 50% of respondents indicate their goat operations are hobby endeavors, or small agricultural operations that are maintained without expectation of being a primary source of income.

EMPLOYEES



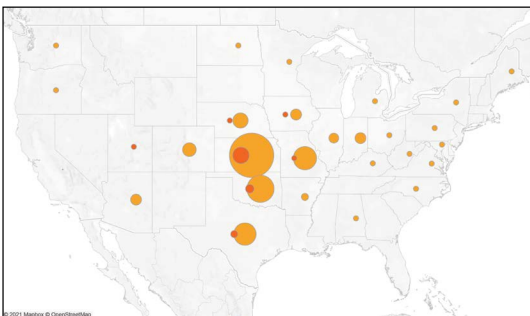
On average, goat operations employ about 2 to 3 people. More often than not, these individuals are other family members.

OPERATIONS

- **Goat Stock/Breed Type:** Most operations are for maternal production at 44%. The second most common production type is dairy at 28%, followed closely by feed/finish/terminal operations.
- **Average Size of Goat Herd:** The majority of goat herds are less than 50 head, with few operations at greater than 100 head.
- **Number of Acres Accessible to Herd:** Most herds have access to less than 40 acres, with nearly 50% on 10 acres or less. Only 6% have access to more than 161 acres.
- **Kidding Season in Kansas:** Kidding season tends to occur during the first four months of the year, with nearly 40% kidding in January and February and 35% in March and April. About 5% of operations use an accelerated kidding program.
- **Altering of Kids:** Survey results indicate that 13% of respondents docked and 63% castrated kids. Another 25% altered kids other ways, including disbudding or dehorning.
- **Goat Management Methods:** The majority manage small farm herds at over 75% of responses. Grazing management and confinement methods are common at 36% and 26% of responses, respectively. Over 10% of respondents indicate they utilize range management methods.

PURCHASE OF GOATS

Breed & Feeding Goats



Purebred and commercial producers rely heavily on private treaty to secure new breeding and feeding stock for their operations. Although both groups of producers utilize online sales for new stock, commercial producers also procure stock from sale barns. Social media is another common method for both types of producers, with 13% for purebred and 6% for commercial operations.

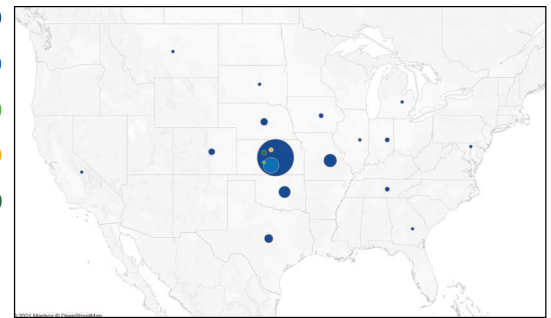
MEAT PRODUCTS

Producers tend to rely more on commercial over ethnic or local processors for harvesting goats for meat. Only about 10% harvest goats on-farm. The vast majority harvest less than 50 head annually; very few producers process more than 75 head in a given year.

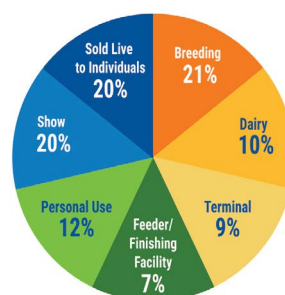
MARKETING

SALE OF GOATS

Live Goat & Goat Products



PRODUCTS END USE



The vast majority of producers market goats and goat products themselves. Social media is the overwhelming choice for marketing, with over 50% each of live goats and meat products methods. The next most common methods for live goat sales are through dedicated marketing outlets, such as livestock auctions. Goat meat products, on the other hand, tend to be marketed through local advertising or wholesale to retailer.

DAIRY PRODUCTS

Of the dairy goat producers surveyed, 60% produce less than 100 pounds of dairy annually, while another roughly 25% market between 100 and 500 pounds each year.

CHALLENGES and OPPORTUNITIES

CHALLENGES FOR KANSAS SHEEP AND GOAT PRODUCERS:

- Availability of markets and market outlets within a reasonable driving distance.
- Information on feed ratios and feed management.
- Veterinary care for sheep and goats; most local veterinarians do not have the appropriate education or training for small ruminants.
- Statewide extension outreach to consult with for both sheep and goats.
- Education and extension programs statewide, with the possibility of webinars and online training.

REQUESTED TOOLS AND OPPORTUNITIES:

- K-State Research & Extension events statewide or virtual events on hot topics and basic outreach.
- Marketing opportunities on a central site; development of directory for meat and dairy sales.
- Livestock markets available statewide.
- Additional emphasis placed on sheep and goats for students at K-State College of Veterinary Medicine.
- Feed and nutritional needs and information more readily available to producers.
- Develop a list of veterinarians that work on or specialize in small ruminants.
- Develop a list of ruminant nutritionists that work with or specialize in formulating rations for small ruminants.

GREATEST SATISFACTION OF RAISING SHEEP AND GOATS:

- Family business.
- Supplemental income to farm income. Programs are financially successful.
- Working with youth in 4-H and FFA programs and seeing the end results of a job well done.
- Untapped market for growth in Kansas.
- Pasture improvement/brush control.

KEY POINTS:

- There is longevity of raising sheep in Kansas with 46% of respondents in the industry for over 10 years.
- Raising goats in Kansas is gaining popularity, as 73% of respondents have been raising goats for less than 10 years.
- Respondents indicated a need for animal husbandry, veterinary care, nutrition management, and marketing assistance.



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