

**Ontario Goat**

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **GOAT WORKSHOPS TO FOCUS ON PROFITABILITY AND PRODUCTIVITY**

*Popular goat producer workshop series expands in its second year*

Guelph, ON, October 1, 2015 – Back by popular demand, Ontario Goat (OG), along with partners EastGen and Gay Lea Foods/Hewitt's Dairy Ltd., will be hosting its second annual Goat Profitability Workshop series October 27 in Belleville; October 29 in Tavistock; and October 30 in Listowel.

The focus on productivity and profitability is critical for the growing Ontario goat industry. "It is pretty hard to have profitability without productivity and goat producers have done a great job so far getting the base of their herds built" stated OG President Anton Slingerland. "The industry is moving into the next phase of growth where it is important to have a solid genetic base to maximize farm profitability" he added.

The workshops will be of benefit to both dairy and meat goat producers; both new to the industry and those with more experience. "The Ontario goat industry is growing rapidly and producers are hungry for information to help them achieve their business goals" stated Kendra Keels, Director Producer and Industry Development. "Based on the feedback from the successful workshops last year, we have put together another great line up of speakers and key topics" added Keels.

"Gay Lea Foods/Hewitt's Dairy recognizes that education and training is a foundational piece that will assist in building a strong, sustainable and profitable goat industry" said Ove Hansen, Director of Member Relations and Corporate Secretary. "We are proud to partner with Ontario Goat and EastGen to support these goat workshops that benefit all goat producers" Hansen added.

Whether it is a dairy or meat goat farm, kids are the next generation of the herd and successful kid rearing can make all the difference in profitability and the financial bottom line. Kathleen Shore, Ruminant Nutritionist with New-Life Mills, will discuss tips for kid management with the goal of maximizing production during this critical growing phase and reducing mortality.

Mike Draper, Livestock Community Sales Act Coordinator with Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs, will be providing tips on assessing goat welfare and the criteria producers should consider before culling.

Artificial insemination (AI) can help boost yield and in turn productivity with the goal of improving the base genetics in your goat herd. Paul Stewart, EastGen Genetics Program Specialist, will review ways goat producers can implement AI on farm with the help of actual examples from goat farmers who have been successfully using AI.

“Too often breeders look at the genetic improvement of their herds as an expense. We hope to have more farmers consider their herd’s genetics as an opportunity for investment” suggested EastGen’s Paul Stewart. “At each meeting, we plan to have a respected breeder partner with EastGen to give their practical experience with implementing an Artificial Insemination program on their farm. We look forward to reinforcing the principle that genetics should establish the foundation for profitable dairy goat production” added Stewart.

With the 2014 Dairy Goat Cost of Production pilot study results now available, Erin MacDuff, OG’s Policy Manager, will provide an in-depth review of the data and provide some insights into areas where producers can make adjustments with the goal of increasing profitability. To wrap up the day, Kendra Keels will introduce a number of new educational resources being launched by OG and discuss the path forward for both the industry and the organization.

The workshops are being held in three locations: Belleville Parkdale Community Centre (October 27), Tavistock Memorial Hall (October 29) and Listowel Agricultural Hall (October 30). Registration is only \$25 per person and includes a lunch, speakers and session notes. In order to plan, pre-registration is encouraged. For more information about the workshops or to register, call the OG office at 519-824-2942 or go to [www.ontariogoat.ca](http://www.ontariogoat.ca)

#### **About Ontario Goat**

Ontario Goat is dedicated to enhancing the goat industry through education, collaboration, innovation and strategic alliances. OG continues to focus on sustainable growth, industry development and profitability to allow all sectors of the Ontario goat industry to reach their full potential. For more information about OG visit [OntarioGoat.ca](http://OntarioGoat.ca)

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