

Conclusion

In the context of the Reunion Island, goat meat production provides farmers with a good remuneration. Flexibility of flock management and the ability to use grazing with indoor feeding explains why there is goats keeping across a diversity of farming systems. Goats are also bred on landless holding. Farmers under all systems expressed interest in genetic improvement. Thus, the second step of this study is to analyse relations between the different farming systems and genetic resource management.

References

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doi:10.1017/S2040470010001263

PATRE (Programme d'Amélioration Technique et de Recherche des Élevages), a programme of development for the small ruminant farmers in French Guyana

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French Guyana is a French Over Seas Department located between Surinam and Brazil in Northern South America. The equatorial forest covers more than 95% of the 85 000 km² landmass and most of the population of 220 000 live in the coastal area (300 × 10 to 20 km). Half of the 126 small ruminant farmers own from 50 to 600 animals each (75% of the overall herd), and most of them have other income resources (farming or non farming activities). Among them 25 small ruminant farmers belong to the "APOCAG" (the French Guyana small ruminant farmer association), clustered with another farmer association called "Paysans de Guyane" (Farmers of French Guyana) with the aim of strengthening the organisation and development of the agricultural sector.

Main characteristics of the French Guyana small ruminant sector

Despite the high demand for small ruminant meat, the sector is still poorly organised. This may be because of strong geographical constraints as farmers are scattered away from main towns and facilities such as slaughter houses or animal feed suppliers but also for economical reasons as live animal markets are more profitable for the farmer than the official carcass market.

A very heterogeneous small ruminant farmer population, in terms of technical skills, genetic policy, rearing system or objective, without local technical or economical reference.

The PATRE Project

This project aims to initiate the organisation and development of the small ruminant sector through some key actions:

- Gathering and analysis of technical and economical data from farmers participating in the project.
- Gathering and synthesis of technical and scientific knowledge archived by various institutions such as agricultural research institutes, agriculture or animal health administration, extension services and school of agriculture.
- Defining the best fit feeding, breeding or animal health policies, for increased sustainability of small ruminant farming activities.
- Training farmers with locally adapted skills.
- Counselling with an extension officer in charge of the data collection and the project management.

The project is scientifically and technically supported by:

- the French institute of applied research and development at the service of livestock and the herbivore sectors for cattle, sheep, goats and horses, "Institut de l'Élevage"
- the French National Institute for Agricultural Research "Institut National de Recherche Agronomique"

The project is funded by the French fund for investments in the Over Sea Departments (FIDOM)

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