

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

INCREASING THE SUPPLY OF SHEEP AND GOAT MEAT PRODUCTS FOR CARIBBEAN CONSUMPTION

EDUCATING AND EQUIPPING SMALL RUMINANT PRODUCERS AND PROCESSORS TO ENSURE FOOD SAFETY AND INCREASE PROFITS IS THE FOCUS OF A WORKSHOP SUPPORTED BY THE EU-FUNDED APP PROJECT

Kingstown, St. Vincent and the Grenadines November 11, 2016 – There are over 6 million sheep and goats being raised on farms across the Caribbean and meat from these small ruminants is a highly desirable commodity. From shoulders, shanks and loin chops to burgers, sausages and black pudding, there are a lot of nutritious and delicious options being prepared from small ruminants for Caribbean dinner tables. As such, during the farm to table process, safe and proper handling of these meats for human consumption is of utmost importance.



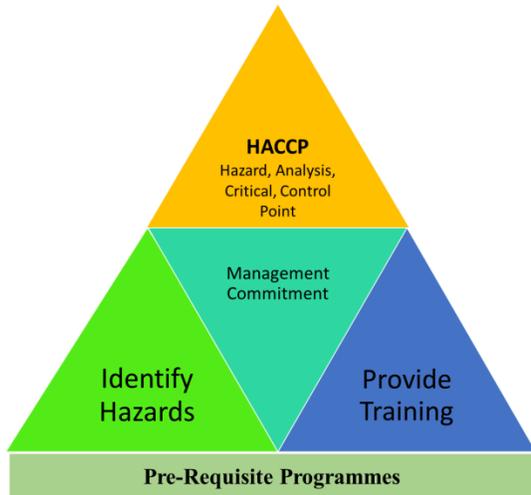
Raising sheep at a small family farm in Guyana. (Photo: Canbean Associates Inc.)

It is estimated that as much as 75% of meat from small ruminants in the Caribbean is processed in unofficial butcheries. This practice can lead to unsafe food handling practices and that risk needs to be addressed. As noted on the Caribbean Agribusiness website there is also a need for other improvements in the industry including, an upgrade of the systems used for slaughtering, meat handling and waste disposal, standardisation and grading of meats along with adequate labeling, an improvement in cuts and quality, and enhanced product presentation to support better marketing.

Richard Rampersaud is a Technical Coordinator with the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), working on the Caribbean Action under the Agriculture Policy Programme (APP). “The ECS small ruminant industry is small”, he says, “but has a lot of potential for expansion, contribution to food security, economic development and poverty alleviation.”

It is in light of all of these factors that CARDI will be hosting a regional training workshop for the Eastern Caribbean States (ECS) on Small Ruminant Meat Fabrication, Value Added Products and Marketing, in St. Vincent and the Grenadines on November 14th and 15th, 2016. This training workshop is a key activity under the APP, which is a programme supported by the European Union (EU) under the 10th European Development Fund (EDF).

During the expert-led workshop sessions, butchers, meat processors and farmers from Eastern Caribbean States, including women and youth, will be equipped with the important knowledge, techniques and practical skills required to properly process sheep and goats before they go to the public market.



They will receive an overview of meat science and discuss the importance of proper slaughtering and handling procedures, including the generic and specific meat handling principles purported by the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) system. HACCP is a process control system that identifies where hazards might occur in the food production process and then puts actions in place to prevent those hazards from occurring.

A master butcher will carry out practical sessions with attendees that address safe and efficient butchering, the preparation of different cuts and the creation of end products such as, ham, black pudding and burgers. Attractive labeling and labeling requirements, as well as suitable and safe packaging methods and effective marketing will also be discussed.

The overall goals of the workshop are to teach producers and processors how to carry out safe food handling practices and how to get more income per animal by creating specialty cuts and value added products. With better cuts and additional products, producers can earn almost double the income from one animal.

As noted by Mr. Rampersaud, almost half of the goat meat and more than half of the sheep meat consumed in the ECS is imported, even from as far away as New Zealand. Productivity must be increased in order to compete with such extra-regional imports. Perhaps with the additional training and earnings from new cuts and products, Caribbean farmers will respond by investing in larger herds, bringing about increased production in the Region, and more safe and local food for Caribbean tables.



Grazing goats in Guyana. (Photo: Canbean Associates Inc.)

For More Information about the **ECS Regional Workshop on Small Ruminant Meat Fabrication, Value Added Products and Marketing for High End Markets** please contact Richard Rampersaud, CARDI, Technical Coordinator, Component Two, APP, by email at richard.rampersaud.rr@gmail.org.



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