



NEWS RELEASE

Goat milk sector charts a collective path forward

Ontario Goat funding model announced

Guelph ON, December 12th, 2013– Together, Ontario Goat (OG), Hewitt's Dairy Ltd, and the Ontario Dairy Goat Co-operative Inc are pleased to announce that an agreement has been signed between the three organizations that will see the collection of a half cent check-off per litre of goat milk beginning January 1, 2014.

Over the past year, representatives of a joint working committee have met to discuss the needs of the Ontario goat sector and what role Ontario Goat as a non-profit commodity organization will have in order to address the needs and priorities of the whole sector.

The joint working committee was comprised of staff and producer representatives from each of Ontario Goat, Hewitt's Dairy Ltd and the Ontario Dairy Goat Co-operative Inc. The meetings, facilitated by dairy industry expert John Core, were focused on developing strategic priorities for the goat milk sector and providing a core budget for Ontario Goat in order to accomplish these shared goals.

"There is no doubt we need an organization like Ontario Goat in order to work on the issues, projects and initiatives that will impact the entire goat sector" said Christine Rohrbach, General Manager of Hewitt's Dairy Ltd. "This agreement provides the financial resources and a solid foundation for Ontario Goat to work on all of our behalves" she added.

As the two main brokers of goat milk, Hewitt's Dairy Ltd and the Ontario Dairy Goat Co-operative Inc will remit the half cent check-off per litre of goat milk to Ontario Goat on a monthly basis for goat milk purchased during that period.

The agreement, in place for a two-year period until December 2015, provides Ontario Goat the opportunity to continue working on research and industry development projects while at the same time developing a strategic business plan focused on measurable outcomes and objectives. As a result, the three key priorities of this agreement, as directed by a joint working committee, will be focused on 1) industry communications; 2) consumer promotions; and 3) a dairy goat cost of production study.

"We support the work of Ontario Goat because it does not duplicate but enhances our ability to broker milk. As a broker we need to focus on the business of selling milk but Ontario Goat can work on the other projects and issues that will benefit all our farms and businesses so that we can grow sustainably together" suggested Coby Tenvoorde, General Manager of Ontario Dairy Goat Co-operative Inc.

"At this time, the goat milk sector is the largest driver of the Ontario goat industry and that is why we have focused our efforts to secure financial support from this sector. However, that does not mean we do not represent all goat farmers and I hope that Ontario's goat farmers- whether licensed dairy producers, breeders, meat producers and others- will see the great news of this historic agreement and how it will benefit all involved in the goat sector" stated Anton Slingerland, Ontario Goat President.

“Moving forward into 2014, this agreement means that Ontario Goat will remain an active partner with the Ontario Livestock Alliance in order to remain an efficient and responsible organization for all our members” stated Jennifer Haley, Executive Director of Ontario Goat. “The Ontario Goat Board of Directors is eager to get started on the next steps, focusing on the three key priority areas and getting involved in projects and issues that will really make a difference for all goat farms” added Haley.

“Ontario Goat would like to thank the various working group committee members from each of Hewitt’s Dairy Ltd. and the Ontario Dairy Goat Cooperative Inc for all their hard work and dedication to seeing this agreement through to completion” stated Slingerland. “The leadership and commitment that has been demonstrated by the committee members is outstanding and it has been encouraging to see a collective vision come together for the goat industry” he added.

“I want to encourage all goat producers to take an active role in this organization” suggested Slingerland. “Please let us know your ideas and thoughts. We can only be an effective organization if everyone participates in the process” he added.

Ontario Goat is a non-profit organization dedicated to serving the needs of the milk, meat and fibre sectors of the Ontario goat industry. Hewitt’s Dairy Ltd is an experienced processor and broker of goat milk, committed to the growth of the Ontario goat milk market for their producing group, and providing quality products with quality service to their customers. The Ontario Dairy Goat Co-operative Inc is a leader in brokering raw goat milk by providing excellent quality goat milk to processors and profitability to its members.

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