

## 7. SUMMARY

This Report recounts the evolution of the Goat Sector in the Region of Murcia, from the year in which Spain entered the European Economic Union (1986) until the end of the millennium (including 2000) and consists of two well differentiated parts.

The First Part deals with the evolution of the goats that make up the herd and their productions, quantifying the goats that have obtained commissions from the E.E.C., in the confines in which the Community Agrarian Policy (PAC) is applied.

A sustained growth has been detected in the sector, particularly from 1987 to 1990, which brought about a drop of 36% in the following three. The following years, were frankly recuperated, especially 1995 in which the census was duplicated, and which closed the millennium with an increase of 84% in regard to 1986.

This development was not uniform throughout the different regions, since in those which were most favoured by the irrigation provided by the Tajo-Segura, Campo de Cartagena and Alto Guadalentín diversions, the reproductive female population tripled. However, the number of goat breeders shrank and, as a result, the size of those existent increased their average size, since 2,345 herds were registered in 1989 as well as 1,319 in the 2000, with an average size of 38 and 66 adult females, respectively.

Due to the lessening of importance of the slaughtering of the lambs and despite the increase in prices, meat production has descended from 790 tm in 1986 to 499 tm in 1999. Meanwhile, milk production increased by 33%, in the period studied, which is, in reality a 6.87% of national production.

The commissions received by the farmers in relation to the loss of income from their enterprise as a PAC application, represented 8% of the income proportioned by the regional goat sector to the Final Agrarian Production for stock breeding. In the period mentioned the value of the annual commissions increased by 83%.

The Second Part attempts to characterize the regional Goat sector by carrying out 89 surveys of pure goat breeders (10% of the herd and 15% of the herd make up), during the months of May and June of 1999 and comprised of 123 questions.

The structure of the exploitation is such that the scarce territory on which the goat farms are established in Murcia may be deduced since 91% of the goat herders do not have surfaces for irrigation or possess less than one hectare and 80% do not have dry surfaces at all or in the cases that did, possessed less than 5 hectares.

All of the herders claimed to be the proprietor of their herd and in 92% of the cases the farms were also theirs. The results reveal the effort of investment in the farms since 74% of the herders made improvements on their constructions, and all of them have basic facilities at their disposal, among which the milking rooms stand out reaching 80%.

30% of the herds were kept in permanent stables and the rest receives a dietary supplement in their stalls despite grazing regularly. The distances covered during the grazing and the duration of their stays were scarce, not surpassing 2.5 kilometres and 4 hours respectively. Concretely, 21% of those surveyed used fodder as complimentary to grazing, 32% used hay, 38% used concentrates and only 9% used sub products.

In regard to the managing of the herds, all the goat herders of the Region carry out animal identification. The tendency is to employ male and female horned animals (more than 80%) although the horns are removed in the first few weeks after their birth.

The majority of the goat herders claimed that restocking came from the herd itself. Thus, only 2% of those surveyed always bought females while 14% only occasionally did so, in the same way 42% never buy males and only on counted occasions are males acquired in order to avoid inbreeding.

Directed pairing (separation of males and/or apron) is the most common form used (75%), 25% use free pairing and only 7% use artificial insemination. The pairings preferably take place in spring – summer, which implies that the largest number of births occurs in autumn – winter. The relation between female goats paired with a male reached the figure of twenty seven, the larger faros being the ones that used the smallest proportion of male goats.

Regarding the productive indexes, the following average values stand out: prolificacy (189), interval between births (11 months) and the weaning-fertile pairing interval (6 months).

The average renovation tariff for the farms was 17% for the females and 2% for the males. In regard to the criteria used by the herders to select the animals for renovation the following should be noted for the females: the production of the mothers, the racial standard and the conformation of the udder and for the males: the situation of the testicles and the emplacement of the reproductive organ.

The beginning of the milking alter birth is done the next day by 65% of the goat herders, and, in any event 96% begins within a four day period following the births. On the other hand, 70% of the herders practice the drying.

In terms of labour, 80% of the goat farms are exclusively family run, 1% hired labour and the remaining 19% hired labour as a compliment to family labour. Without accounting for the labour provided by a family member in determined concrete operations, 69% of the farms used one U.T.H. (full time); two in 17% of the cases, three in 12% and only 2% were above that figure. Another notable fact is the low academic level, since 29% had no studies whatsoever, 55% had a primary education level, and 16% had passed the stage of primary education.

Finally, health among the goat herds was characterized by an important participation on behalf of the farmers in the programs that fought against epizooties and zoonosis by belonging to health defence groups and by a higher conscientiousness regarding the problem. In concordance, only 3% of the farmers surveyed answered that they did not vaccinate their herds. Almost a complete majority carry out delousing and it is normally done previous to vaccinating.