

Place and Importance of Goats in the Milk Sector in Algeria

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Abstract : Currently, goat farming is widely practiced among the rural population of Algeria. Although milk yield of goats is low (110 liters per goat and per year on average), this milk partly ensures the feeding of small children and provides raw milk, curd, and fermented milk to the whole family. In addition, given its investment cost, which is ten times lower than that of a cow, this level of production is still of interest. This interest is reinforced by the qualities of goat's milk, highly sought after for its nutritional value superior to that of cow's milk. In the same way, its aptitude for the transformation, in particular in quality cheeses, is very sought after. The objective of this study is to give the situation of goat milk production in rural areas of Algeria and to establish a classification of goat breeds according to their production potential. For this, a survey was carried out with goat farmers in Algerian steppe. Three indigenous breeds were encountered in this study: the breed Arabia, Mozabite, and Mekatia; Arabia being the most dominant. The Mekatia breed and the Mozabite breed appear to have higher production and milking abilities than other local breeds. They are therefore indicated to play the role of local dairy breeds par excellence. The other breed that could be improved milk performance is the Arabia breed. There, however, the milk performance of this breed is low. However, in order to increase milk production, uncontrolled crosses with imported breeds (mainly Saanen and Alpine) were carried out. The third population that can be included in the category for dairy production is the dairy breed group of imported origin. There are farms in Algeria composed of Alpine and Saanen breeds born locally. Improved milk performance of local goats, Crusader population, and dairy breeds of imported origin could be done by selection. For this, it is necessary to set up a milk control to detect the best animals. This control could be carried out among interested farmers in each large goat breeding area. In conclusion, sustained efforts must be made to enable the sustainable development of the goat sector in Algeria. It will, therefore, be necessary to deepen the reflection on a national strategy to valorize goat's milk, taking into account the specificities of the environment, the genetic biodiversity, and the eating habits of the Algerian consumer.

Keywords : goat, milk, Algeria, biodiversity

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