

# Central Florida Small Ruminant Conference

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## Background

Central Florida is home to the top sheep and goat producing counties in the state. Small ruminant production is popular in Florida due to niche marketing opportunities for meat, fiber, and milk products. The price and scarcity of land also make small ruminants desirable for higher stocking densities on smaller acreage. Small ruminants require proper management to be most productive and to reduce overall death loss attributed to non-predator causes.

## Objective

Participants will learn recommended management practices that will enhance the production of small ruminant operations.

## Program Details

**Audience:** Sheep and goat producers of Florida, ranch managers, and clientele contemplating entering the industry.

**Delivery:** one-day classroom style lectures and hands-on demonstrations utilizing County Extension faculty, State Extension Specialists, and local farm cooperators.

- Parasite prevention
- FAMACHA training
- Marketing strategies
- Milking parlor practices
- Forage production
- Animal nutrition & health
- Animal selection & genetics



## Results

A total of 251 people attended this program from 2013-2020. Pre/Post tests and program evaluations were administered suggesting:

- 45% improved parasite management and animal health due to this training.
- ✓ 100% indicated an intent to adopt one or more recommended practices changes

## Impact

Extension workshops designed to target small ruminant management not only improve the productivity and efficiency of these livestock operations, but also continue to share the latest science-based information with Extension clientele. Maintaining these vital agriculture operations will provide ecosystem services to our environment while promoting the livelihood of rural Florida.

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