

Purdue Extension: Reaching a Global Small Ruminant Audience

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NEED OF OUR CLIENTS

The small ruminant inventory in Indiana has increased by 120% since 2016 (National Ag Statistics Survey, 2016 and 2020). Many of these inventory numbers are from first-time sheep and goat owners that have many questions they want answered. In Fall 2019, the Purdue Small Ruminant team began “ruminating” on the idea of an online “lunch ‘n learn” style program to deliver this needed information to our clients. With the onset of the coronavirus and quarantining, this idea quickly turned in to a successful international program.

RUMINATING ON THE PROGRAM

Fall 2019 began with planning for a “Lunch ‘N Learn” style programming to deliver relevant Small Ruminant information taught by Extension specialists, educators, and other professionals across Indiana. With the onset of COVID-19, we put this program in to reality with quick planning in early March 2020. At that time, we began with weekly learning sessions on Thursdays at noon from March 26 to May 28, for a total of 10 programs weekly.

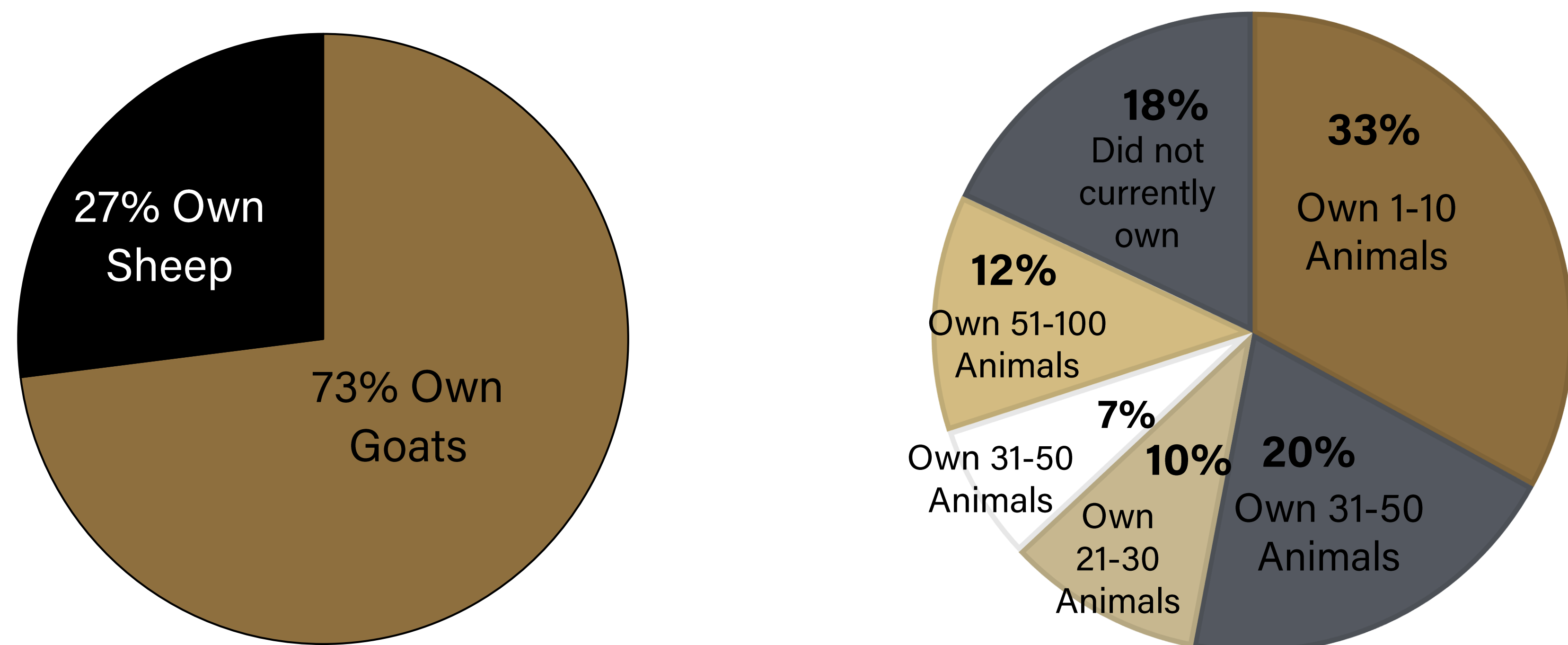
Once that extensive series was complete, we moved to a monthly format, meeting on the third Thursdays, unless there was a scheduling conflict. This resulted in a total of 7 more sessions. We chose to use the WebEx delivery format for easier “webinar” style meetings and control over participants. Sessions were advertised internally through Purdue Agriculture and Natural Resource Educators and externally, primarily through Facebook posts..

PROGRAMMING IMPACT

- 17 Small Ruminant Lunch ‘N Learn webinars delivered in 2020
- 595 participants from 22 different states and two Canadian provinces
- 1,167 recorded viewings to date
- 6 Purdue Extension Educators, 4 Purdue University campus specialists, and 1 veterinarian delivered the programming

As a result of the Purdue Small Ruminant Team Lunch ‘N Learn presentations:

- 11% of participants planned or had implemented sanitary milking procedures
- 55% of participants planned or had implemented checking pastures for toxic plants
- 42% of participants planned or had implemented prenatal vaccinations of females and gathered birthing kits
- 75% of participants planned or had implemented forage tests on their hay
- 75% participants planned or had implemented matching nutritional needs with production stage of animals
- 50% of participants planned or had implemented selective deworming practices
- 48% of participants understood how to prepare and use primal cuts of lamb and goat
- 10% of participants have reported a decrease in their costs associated with raising their small ruminants
- 35% of participants have increased their overall confidence in raising Small Ruminants



LOOKING FORWARD

The Purdue Small Ruminant Lunch ‘N Learn series is continuing in 2021 with a monthly schedule, having already completed sessions on “Preparing For A Successful Lambing And Kidding Season” and “Managing the Ewe and Doe for Birth”. We look forward to continuing our impact upon the Small Ruminant owner population in the United States and other countries!

