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Fifth Annual Focus on Goats Conference Slated for October 21-22

PLATTEVILLE, Wis. -- Dairy goat producers, cheesemakers and industry leaders from across the nation will gather at the Fifth Annual Focus on Goats Conference Oct. 21-22 at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville.

The two-day conference features a wide array of speakers and educational seminars, as well as a cheese tasting reception. The event has evolved and grown over the years, as a growing number of dairy goat farms and supportive infrastructure has propelled Wisconsin to lead the nation in the production of goat milk products. In fact, the 2011 U.S. Champion Cheese is a goat's milk cheese produced in Wisconsin.

Topics for the October conference include seminars for both dairy goat producers and dairy processors.

For producers, relevant topics include:

- Managing internal parasites (Dr. Hart, Langston University)
- Improving ventilation in goat barns (Dr. Kammel, UW Extension)
- Introduction to milking machine function
- Claws and inflations for goats (Pete Draeger, Coburn Company)
- Biosecurity measures for goat farms (Dr. Patton, WI-DACTP),
- Disease testing for goats (Dr. Sockett, UW Vet Diagnostic Lab)
- Farm transition planning
- Hiring employees
- Virtual Farm Tour of three unique feeding and management systems

Topics relevant to processors include:

- A survey of pathogens on farmstead dairy farms
- A farmer panel on value-added dairy production
- Mammary health and milk quality

In addition, two talks will focus on the use of goats for landscape management. Jesse Bennett, Julia Ela and Katie Baumann will discuss recent research and on-going evaluations related to the restoration of oak savannah in southwestern Wisconsin with managed grazing of goats.

Other conference events include:

- Oct 21 Cheese Reception, featuring award-winning Wisconsin goat milk cheeses
- Oct. 22 Youth program hosted by the Wisconsin Dairy Goat Association and University of Platteville students.
- Oct 22 Wisconsin Dairy Goat Association 'Select Doe and Buck Sale'.

A complete program and registration is at <http://fyi.uwex.edu/wisheepandgoat/> or <http://www.dbicusa.org>. Registration fees (lunch and breaks included) are \$30 for Friday or Saturday only, \$55 for the entire conference, and \$15 for the youth program (Saturday only). A \$10 late fee will be charged on registrations after October 7.

Organization of the Focus on Goats conference is conducted with the cooperation of the University of Wisconsin-Cooperative Extension, the Dairy Business Innovation Center, the University of Wisconsin-Platteville, and the Wisconsin Dairy Goat Association. For more information, contact Claire Mikolayunas at mikolayunas@wisc.edu or 608-890-3802.

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