

Goats

Currently in the country there is a goat herd of about one million heads, of which 600 thousand are located in region four and in the Metropolitan Region.

The goat population is almost exclusively formed by native animals, descendants of those that were introduced 400 years ago by the Conquistadors. There have been some imports over the last few years of about 100 reproducers on the hoof from the USA and Australia, basically of the Sahnen and Anglonubian breeds.

Goat exploitation is almost exclusively dedicated to the production of goat's cheese, and in 1993 there were a total of 4,500 producers; among these the following stand out: Cerillos de Tamaza, Quesos Villarica, Manchego, and Lacteos Pirque.

In this regard, there is growing interest in the consumption of industrially manufactured, fresh goat's cheese. As a result of this interest, INDAP is developing a program of exploitation for small goat herd owners so that they can be instructed and organized into small businesses capable of offering this product in an industrialized manner.

Thus, medium term projections are that the domestic goat breeding outlook will change from the current extensive, small scale, non-industrial, exploitation of goats to an intensive, industrialized, system, where the introduction of new genetic material capable of producing more than the 90-100 liters of milk per lactation that is currently achieved will become important.

Sheep

Exploitation of sheep is concentrated in regions XI and XII, with a herd of more than three million head.

Of these, the predominant breeds in the domestic scene are the CORREDALE, SUFFOLKDOWN, and MERINO breeds.

These breeds are primarily wool and meat producers. Thus in 1993, the country produced 10,000 tons of wool and approximately 4,000 tons of meat. In this regard, it must be emphasized that consumption of mutton in the country is very seasonal; mutton is consumed mainly in the months of September through December and the average consumption is 0.8 Kg. per inhabitant per year.

As far as imports of genetic material are concerned, there are some imports of reproducers on the hoof, but these are sporadic and the number of rams is low, since they are used solely for maintaining the sheep population in the extreme south of the country.