



# SDGA

SUSTAINABLE DAIRY GOAT AGRISYSTEMS

NEWSLETTER

Volume 1 | October 2025

## Empowering Dairy Goat Producers' Sustainability, Prosperity & Resilience



»» Intro

### Who We Are

**Sustainable Dairy Goat Agrisystems (SDGA)** explores how dairy goat production systems may be integral to sustainable agricultural intensification, promoting workforce development & contributing to their community's vitality. In 2024, Iowa State University was awarded funding by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to improve the sustainability of dairy goat production in the US. Reaching this goal would allow for both environmental and economic intensification of dairy goat sustainability within production while assuring continued access to value-

added markets that support farmers and small rural farming communities.

Our work will provide a model of an integrated farm system that will provide valuable insight & decision-making power to farmers working to build resiliency into their operations to manage economic & environmental uncertainty that feeds back into their production system.

»» Project Goal

### Working with Farmers

Crucial to the mission of **SDGA** is building a relationship with dairy goat producers from across the United States. **SDGA** has developed a collaborative system to aid in understanding the particular needs of the farmer and how they can best create value. This is accomplished by collecting strategic data through detailed questionnaires focusing on three topics pertaining to the

sustainability of the operation:

### FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT

This stage collects financial information from the farmer in order to provide dairy goat producers with information on their financial health. This tool can improve production sustainability by providing strategies to increase productivity and profitability.

### LIFE CYCLE ASSESSMENT

Next, the **SDGA** representative will collect data on the topic of lifestyle assessment in order to provide dairy goat production with some of the same resources available to beef & cow dairy producers.

### COMMUNITY CAPITAL ASSESSMENT

Community capital assessments provide a snapshot of the current community support and potential for market growth. This gives dairy producers insight and information on business planning & goal setting for scaling their operation.

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#### ➤ Project Goal

## Animal Health Study

Addressing high-priority health challenges to dairy goat production while improving antimicrobial stewardship is a key component of how **SDGA** seeks to provide resilience for dairy goat producers. **SDGA** will accomplish this by performing key

research to investigate the causes of respiratory disease in dairy goats & identify appropriate antibiotic & non-antibiotic treatment & prevention tools for both respiratory disease & mastitis. These are key issues to dairy goat sustainability, especially in light of rising antimicrobial resistance. Farms that participate will receive valuable herd diagnostics information & will be the first to know about new health intervention tools.

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#### ➤ Recap of Recent Activities

## Educating the Next Generation of Dairy Goat Producers

One of the primary goals of the Sustainable Dairy Goat Agrisystems team is to educate and inspire the next generation of dairy goat producers. In support of this mission, the team hosted a 4-hour interactive youth workshop at the 2025 National Dairy Goat Show in Grand Island, Nebraska.

The workshop was led by **Dr. Paul Plummer** (University of Tennessee–Knoxville), **Dr. Amanda Kreuder** (Iowa State University), and **Dr. Sarah Al-Mazroa Smith** (Iowa State University). A total of nine youth participants—from 9th grade through age 21—attended the session, representing various regions across the United States.

This year's workshop centered on hands-on learning in animal husbandry. The

day began with a session on herd health, where youth learned about biosecurity practices, administering injections, interpreting product labels, and managing parasites. Participants also explored milk quality, including testing colostrum and milk for high somatic cell counts. The final hands-on topic focused on nutrition, which allowed youth to identify different feedstuffs and develop dairy goat rations tailored to specific production phases. The day concluded with a special guest presentation by Chris Owens of Spinning Spider Creamery, who shared insights into her business and discussed various career opportunities within the dairy goat industry.

This workshop provided an engaging, in-depth learning experience for youth passionate about dairy goat production.

"It is important to provide youth with an opportunity to explore different topics that impact the dairy goat industry. This group of youth is excited to learn more and very passionate about the industry they are part of," said **Dr. Al-Mazroa Smith**.

"We are excited about the opportunity to continue these educational workshops at future ADGA National shows," added **Dr. Kreuder**.



## Upcoming Events & Engagement Opportunities

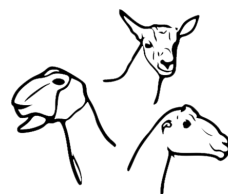


**SOUTHEAST DAIRY**  
BUSINESS INNOVATION INITIATIVE  
TN, KY, NC, WV, VA, SC, GA, AL, MS, LA, AR, FL

ARE YOU A SHEEP OR  
DAIRY GOAT FARMER?

### Small Ruminant Dairy Farm Survey

To participate, contact the Institutional  
Review Board at The University of  
Tennessee, Knoxville  
Phone: 865-974-7697



## Dairy Goat Extension & Education



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