



Greetings and Salutations!

Spanish goats graze in front of the new, research facility at the Institute.

by Dr. Terry Gipson

It is with great pleasure that the E (Kika) de la Garza American Institute of Goat Research embarks upon this inaugural column. Some readers of HoofPrint may be familiar with the Institute while for others; this may be the first time that they have heard of the Institute. I would like to take the time to you a brief history of the Institute.

The E (Kika) de la Garza American Institute for Goat Research was founded at Langston University in Oklahoma in 1984 to generate and disseminate technical information on goats, advance the knowledge of goat production, and enhance the utilization of goat products.

According to our resident historian, Dr. Frank Pinkerton, the origins of the Institute lie not in Oklahoma but in Texas. That is, dairy goat producers in Texas wanted Texas A&M University to establish a dairy goat research center but A&M directed that request to its affiliated historically-black university, Prairie View A&M University (PVAMU). Prairie View established the International Goat Research Center in 1981 under the leadership of Dr. Ocleris Simpson with Dr. Pinkerton assisting. In 1984, Drs. Simpson and Pinkerton and several other PVAMU scientists relocated to Langston

University and established the American Institute for Goat Research.

In 1989, the American Institute for Goat Research officially changed its name to the E (Kika) de la Garza Institute for Goat Research. This was done to honor Representative E (Kika) de la Garza, who served for a number of years in Congress representing the people of the 15th district of Texas. As chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, Representative de la Garza was instrumental in passing legislation supporting the 1890 Land-Grant Universities. Funding in that legislation enabled the Institute to



expand its research and extension reach. Several years later, the Institute inserted the term American back into its name.

The first facilities of the Institute were built in 1985 at the Main Farm. During the early period of the Institute's history, foundation animals were acquired, with Alpine doelings arriving in 1985 and

Angora goats in 1986. These goats were used in the initial research conducted at the Institute in support of dairy goat and mohair industries. Spanish goats for cashmere research were added in 1990, and in 1991 a small number of Tennessee Stiff Leg goats were introduced.

As the Institute grew in stature and reputation, and as research supporting the meat goat industry increased, facilities and animals expanded further. In 1995, a group of Boer goat bucks was obtained for use in crossbreeding. In addition to grading up with Boer in the late 1990's, 20 full-blood Boer doelings from Texas were procured in 1999. The Institute now hosts a herd of purebred and high percentage Boer goats.

In support of the dairy goat industry, the Institute has made improvements at the Main Farm. In 1992, a Grade A creamery was established that allows research of goat dairy products. In 1995, a Dairy Herd Improvement Laboratory was established and received certification.

The South Barn was built in 1995, providing an excellent research venue for more detailed research into meat goat production. Further refinements have been made to the South Barn complex over the years including the installation of a Calan gate feeding system in 1998 and feed intake recording equipment (FIRE)



Dr. Frank Pinkerton with Alpine goats in the early days of the Institute.

in 2002. In 2009, a pilot goat leather tannery was established at the facility.

In 2015, a new 35,000-square foot research facility was constructed at the South Farm. It has group pens equipped with automated FIRE feeders, which enable the monitoring of feed consumption and eating behavior of each animal in the pen. The barn has a covered working facility suitable for vaccinating, sorting, ear-tagging, foot-trimming, etc. to save labor and provide safe working conditions.

Recently, the South Farm has been expanded by the addition of 80 acres of adjacent land. The area is presently infested with cedar trees and will need development before usage. The Institute recently added a research flock of Dorper, Katahdin, and St. Croix sheep for grant-funded research. The addition of hair sheep will provide Institute scientist the ability to make species comparisons in future research.

The laboratory facilities of the Institute have also grown over the years. The expansion of research at the Institute along with accompanying increases in the amount and sources of extramural support has facilitated enhancements of laboratory facilities through the purchase of equipment and upgrading of current instruments. A notable event in the past decade was moving both laboratory and

office facilities to the new Agricultural Research, Education, and Extension Center, which in 2010 was officially named the E. L. Holloway Agricultural Research, Education, and Extension Center in honor of past-president Dr. Ernest L. Holloway's commitment to agriculture.

The Institute has also broadened methods of disseminating information through its extension program. The Institute's Goat Field Day has continued to be an annual event with proceedings published and distributed. In the mid-1990's, the Institute established a presence on the Internet with a website, which can be found at <http://goats.langston.edu>. The website provides a convenient means of providing access to new technology

packages. Examples are Goat Field Day proceedings, the online meat goat certification program, and the nutrient calculators.

International activities of the Institute have also continued to grow, with an increase in number and scope. Since 1998, the Institute has received funds for 25 international grants involving countries in Africa, the Middle East, and Armenia. International projects have expanded from being strictly research oriented to now include training and agricultural development components.

Building upon its rich history of growth and achievements in research, extension, and international activities, the Institute will continue to provide leadership and support to goat industries and producers both here and abroad.

Dr. Terry Gipson earned his B.S. and M.S. in Animal Science from the University of Missouri and Ph.D. in Animal Breeding and Genetics from the University of Illinois. Since 1998, He has been the Extension Leader at the E (Kika) de la Garza American Institute of Goat Research at Langston University.



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