



**CANADIAN  
MEAT GOAT  
Association**

**Association  
CANADIENNE  
de la CHÈVRE  
de BOUCHERIE**

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## **International Marketing 2008**

As some of you may be aware, the Canadian Meat Goat Association holds a membership in the Canadian Livestock Genetics Association. This membership allows the activities of our marketing representatives to be funded through government funding obtained by the CLGA. In view of the fact that the CMGA simply could not afford these activities on their own, this arrangement is of considerable benefit to our members.

The end of 2007 and the first half of 2008 were busy months for our international marketing representatives, Ann Marie Hauck and Stan Johnston. A mixed shipment of goats, Dorper sheep and rabbits was sent to Trinidad & Tobago in December 2007. In the early months of 2008, considerable effort was expended in obtaining orders from Cuba.

Marketing of livestock in Cuba means dealing with the Cuban Ministry of Agriculture, as they are the only authorized buyer in the country. This becomes quite a long drawn out affair, with Stan and Ann Marie negotiating with them for over two years at this point. The fact that Cuba is one of the poorest countries in the Caribbean is obviously a factor. Ann Marie and Stan travelled to Cuba to meet with Cuban officials in January 2008. A second follow-up visit took place in March. Immediately upon their return from this trip, Stan and Ann Marie were contacted by the office of Canadian Minister of Agriculture Gerry Ritz, inviting them to accompany the Minister and a Canadian trade delegation to Cuba in April. This invitation came because we were one of only two livestock groups that actually had ongoing negotiations and orders in Cuba. As a result, Ann Marie and Stan were back in Cuba only two weeks after they had returned from their March trip.

In between these Cuba travels, Stan and Ann Marie were in Trinidad and Tobago in February 2008 to obtain further orders from those islands. This resulted in a confirmed order for Boer goats, as well as obtaining promises of further orders from smaller breeders.

A shipment of 100 Boer goats was sent to Cuba in July 2008, but we were still in negotiation with Cuba for a much larger order of animals.

As a result of negotiations with Cuba, an invitation to visit Canada in July 2008 was extended to the Director of the Small Ruminants Section of the Cuban Ministry of Agriculture. As this man does not speak any English, arrangements were made for the translator that Ann Marie and Stan use in Havana to accompany him on the trip. Stan met them at Toronto airport and the following week was spent on touring the Director around to various Boer, dairy goat, sheep and rabbit operations, as well as processing facilities, in Ontario and Alberta. Having been out of Cuba only once before, on a brief

trip to Mexico, the Director was immensely impressed with the prosperity, productivity and consumerism of this country. At the end of this trip, the Director confirmed an order for several hundred Boer and dairy goats, hair sheep and a large number of rabbits, for delivery in the fall of 2008.

Finally, after several years of negotiation with Cuba, we had the firm order for large numbers of animals that we had been expecting of them. We were in the process of negotiating the contract and deposit when disaster struck. Hurricanes Fay, Gustav and Ike all hit Cuba within about a two week period. Gustav was the strongest hurricane to hit Cuba in over 50 years. Total damage from these storms was estimated at over \$5 Billion, which is a horrendous blow to such a poor country. As a result of this, we were advised that the substantial money that had been set aside for the purchase of Canadian breeding stock would now have to be used for repair of their infrastructure. Although understandable, after spending so long on getting to this point this was a severe disappointment. Nevertheless, our contacts in the Ministry of Agriculture in Havana assure us that the money will be available to go ahead with this purchase in 2009. We are cautiously optimistic, but time will tell.

Marketing goats in other parts of the world presents many challenges. Cargo ships will not mix live animals with general cargo, which means that you cannot ship by sea unless you are shipping enough animals to fill the entire ship. This generally restricts us to shipping by air and Toronto airport is the only choice unless you are only shipping 2 or 3 animals. Larger livestock shipments are on pallets that will each hold approximately 30 goats, which means that that we must have a large enough airplane flying to the required destination to get the pallet through the cargo door. In these times of high fuel costs, the airlines are increasingly putting smaller airplanes on many routes. European Union countries are not yet open to us, as Canadian exporters must be enrolled in the scrapie certification program for a minimum of three years in order to export to Europe. We do not yet have any Canadian breeders who meet that requirement. Most Latin American countries are open to us and are interested in obtaining Canadian breeding stock, but most of those countries do not have large enough airplanes flying to them to accept the shipping pallets. We have had enquiries from many other countries in various parts of the world, including the Middle East, Russia, the Azores, etc. Generally speaking, the high cost of getting animals to these destinations severely limits the sales potential. For any destination, the combination of air freight, trucking in Canada, health testing, quarantine, CFIA inspections, etc will far exceed the price of the goats.

At the time of this writing, we have a confirmed sale for one pallet of Boers to Trinidad, with the likelihood of further sales of Boer and dairy goats and Dorper sheep in both Trinidad and Tobago. However, the only airline flying a large enough airplane to Trinidad to handle the pallets went bankrupt last winter and we are still working on how we can get these animals to that destination. We are currently working with another organization in Ontario to try to fill a charter cargo plane, which will require further sales on the part of both of our organizations. In addition to this, we are still hopeful that the large order from Cuba will come through. If this should happen, the Canadian Boer industry will be hard pressed to supply the numbers that they have indicated. And of course we are frequently receiving enquiries from other areas of the world. As many of you know from marketing your own goats, casual enquiries often come to nothing, but sometimes they do result in serious sales.

International marketing efforts for the remainder of 2009 will primarily focus on Latin American countries, with Trinidad, Tobago and Cuba being the prime targets. If the promised order from Cuba is obtained and we find a way to get our stock to Trinidad & Tobago, this will probably require more Boer goats and dairy bucks than Canada can supply.

If anyone has any questions regarding international marketing, please contact either of the following:

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