

328 ON-FARM TECHNOLOGY TRIALS ON SMALL GOAT FARMS IN NORTHEAST BRAZIL

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The purpose of this study was to evaluate technology recommendations developed at the National Goat Research Center, in Sobral, Ceara, Brazil through trials on small goat farms. The study was carried out in four stages: site description and problem diagnosis, technology design, technology testing, and technology evaluation. An agrarian reform project in Northcentral Ceara was chosen as the study site. A baseline survey revealed that the producers activities were mainly directed at providing subsistence for their families. The major constraint was judged to be the lack of proper health care for the animals. Other constraints were the poor nutritional state of the animals during the dry season, and the lack of reproductive management and proper facilities. The lack of an adequate infrastructure severely limited the producers access to credit, input and output markets, and training and technical assistance. Ten producers were randomly assigned to three groups: a control and two treatments. Animals on farms in the first treatment group received regular vaccinations and drenchings, treated the navels of newborn animals, and were regularly treated by a veterinarian subject to a monetary limit. The second treatment group determined the technology they received jointly with the researchers. The only restriction was that the cost of the technologies used by the two groups be relatively equal. The technologies were evaluated by the use of periodic surveys to monitor such factors as animal numbers, weights and health, and farm inputs and sales. The farmers perceptions of the technology were also solicited.

KEY WORDS: On-farm trials, goat production, farming systems research.

329 DAIRY GOAT PRODUCTION IN NORTHEAST BRAZIL: PRODUCTION CHARACTERISTICS AND RESEARCH NEEDS

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The objective of this research was to study the potential of dairy goat production in Northeast Brazil. Producers in Paraiba, Pernambuco and Rio Grande de Norte, the states with the most extensive dairy goat production, were surveyed using purposive sampling. Goat milk production played a minor role on the survey farms, the majority of which were characterized by mixed