

Direct Marketing Halal Certified Goat Meat

To increase the income of small-scale goat producers in Wisconsin by providing them with the opportunity to direct-market locally-raised and processed fresh Halal-slaughtered goat meat to the members of a growing Somali immigrant community in Northwestern Wisconsin and possibly o larger numbers of Somali immigrants living in the Minneapolis, MN, region .

[Final Report](#)

Final Report

Direct Marketing Halal-Certified Goat Meat



Farmers Market Promotion Project

Dunn County Economic Development

2/25/2008

Farmers Market Promotion Program

Director: Robert Bossany, Dunn County Economic Development
Coordinator: Judy Moses, N12835 County Road Q, Downing, WI 54734
Information Contact: info@browseandgrass.org
www.browseandgrass.org

Direct Marketing Halal-Certified Goat Meat

**A Collaboration with the Wisconsin Barron County Somali
Refugee Community and Upper Midwest Goat Producers**

**Final Performance Report
February 25, 2008**

Collaborators

Browse and Grass Farmer Association

USDA Approved Claims:

- *Zabiah Halal*
- *Pasture Raised*
- *Never Confined*
- *All Natural*



Artisan quality all natural goat and lamb
Pasture-raised on family farms in the Upper Midwest

Contribution:

The Browse and Grass Farmer Association (BGF) is an organization owned by 100% independent sheep and goat producers. They market to families, restaurants, natural food markets and distributors. Their mission statement includes marketing to diverse ethnic consumers that includes families that require halal and kosher certified foods. BGF has involved Somalis in developing the halal-certification processes. This producer group has assisted in locating equipment such as a meat saw, walk in cooler and vacuum sealer equipment in line with the community's effort to open their own food market and deli. During the first 6 months of the project members met weekly on Sunday nights at the Safari restaurant to eat communally with members of the Wisconsin Somali Community Cooperation and to work as participants in the start-up of the restaurant while discussing the potential of other entrepreneur projects. The group has also provided support to Enat's condiment sourcing and direct sales outlets. As a result BGF has solid relationships with the Somali Community Corp, the Safari restaurant owners and key Somali individuals from the community.

Contact: Judy Moses, info@browseandgrass.org www.browseandgrass.org

Dunn County Economic Development Corporation

Contribution:

The Dunn County Economic Development Corporation (EDC) is a non-profit that works with small businesses at all stages of development and helps them through the start-up process and to find local and state funding resources. Robert Bossany, director, has multi-cultural family members and knows first hand many of the issues specific to minority business start-up, management and success. Bossany helped develop and guide this project and will continue to provide financial guidance, creative funding resources including loans that will

meet the conditions of the Muslim community religious requirements, oversight of grant objectives and budget, reporting activities, individual consultation and small-group training.

Northwest Wisconsin Regional Food Network

Contribution:

This is a grassroots organization with over 125 members dedicated to strengthening the local food system in the counties surrounding Barron. There are 5 food clusters: healthy meats, ethnic foods, organic produce, agriculture tourism, and herbs. Three USDA Value-Added Producer grants have been received by members of the ethnic foods and herbs groups. A steering committee is in the process of organizing a producer marketing cooperative. Some members of NWFN are also members of the BGF. Andrew Dane, Founder and Coordinator is an Assistant Professor with the University of Wisconsin-Extension. He has over 10 years of community development experience, including working with women's groups in rural Guatemala and community housing projects in inner city Tucson, AZ. He is active in several local food system projects including formation of a Slow Foods chapter, and coordination of a regional Farm Fresh Atlas producer directory. He helped organize and facilitate the first ever statewide local food summit which attracted over 225 participants in January 2007.

www.nwregionalfoodnetwork.org

www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/barron/cnred/foodnetwork.html

www.wifarmfresh.org/

WI Somali Community Corporation

Contribution:

The WI Somali Community Corporation (WSCC) is non-profit organization that was started in 1999. It receives funding from the Workforce Center in Rice Lake, Wisconsin, and Barron County Social Services to provide employment, English language and daily living skills for the ever-increasing Somali refugees arriving in Barron. SCC helps new arrivals obtain housing, understand legal contracts, medical services, government-funded food programs and most importantly find and maintain employment both locally and regionally. Nasha Xashi, President, was one of the first 5 Somali individuals to move to Barron in 1997 to work at the turkey processing plant. She volunteered to help later arrivals find housing, employment and mediated conflicts. Xashi was involved in the startup of the WSCC and has been president throughout its history. She was critical to organizing and recruiting participants from the Somali community and facilitating translation requirements by Abdi Abdilahi.

Collaborator Abdi Abdilahi is a multicultural specialist for a non-profit in Minneapolis, MN. Abdi founded a grocery store in New Orleans in 1985. In 1988 he moved to Texas and purchased a butcher shop and convenience store. In 1999 he moved to Minneapolis and was employed as a job counselor. Currently he works as a multicultural specialist for refugees and immigrants with disabilities advising and assisting on employment concerns and business start-ups. He is fluent in Somali, Amharic, Arabic, Italian and Swahili. Abdi will provide verbal and written translation services, resource contacts with successful small businesses and appropriate job skill training.

Collaborator Noor Arte is the owner of Safari Cuisine. This newly established restaurant (January 2007) serves locally grown halal goat and lamb. Arte has extensive experience working with Hmong, Mexican and Somali individuals. As a refugee Resettlement Director at Catholic Charities Arte helped do feasibility studies, write business plans, find resources and attended a variety of meetings with agencies and employers. He settled refugees from overseas to the local county, helped them receive public assistance, health screenings and other services. He taught school in Mogadishu, Somali before coming to the U.S. He has lived in Barron since 2000. He continues to volunteer in his community with refugees and is on the Human Services County Board, the WI Somali Community Board of Directors, and the City Diversity Council. Arte hosted meetings at the Safari, provided mentoring and participated on business ideas.

Collaborator Osman Musse is a translator at the Marshfield Medical Clinic, Rice Lake, WI. In his home country he purchased and transported goats and sheep from Somalia to Saudi Arabia. He provided supervision of the halal process, translation, and community contacts for the project.

Joe Regenstein, PhD

Contribution:

Consultant Joe Regenstein, PhD. Professor of Food Science at Cornell University is the head of the Cornell Kosher-Halal Food Initiative and a technical advisor to the Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America (the largest Muslim certification agency in North America). As a columnist he consults, writes and speaks extensively on kosher, halal, and ethnic food markets. He has been an active consultant for members of BGFA for over 3 years under WI State and USDA Value Added funding with significant personal match funds. He provided continued support on halal live animal slaughter, equipment, ethical halal certification and process improvement.

Executive Summary

Direct Marketing Halal-Certified Goat Meat

Over the past 14 months (October 2006 through November 2007) project members have facilitated an innovative collaboration between goat producers and the refugee Somali community in Barron, WI. The collaborators included producers, agriculture educators, and members of the Somali community. Opportunities to supply locally grown halal-certified goat meat products to Muslim communities were explored.

The main goal of this project was to increase profits for goat producers by direct marketing locally grown halal-certified goat meat products to the culturally and economically diverse Upper Midwest Muslim family. This project initiated a producer-to-consumer infrastructure to support the introduction of these products to families and individuals that require and/or value halal certification. These products met the emerging and, in some cases, totally unserved market demands for goat meat products that are fresh, locally grown, halal-certified, and culturally appropriate. From the beginning members of the Somali community were involved in the processing and marketing of the product. (See appendix for summary of project goals and objectives).

The project fulfilled all of its goals and objectives and some unique relationships have been established between key members of both communities. Collaborative processing and marketing of meat products have occurred but it has been generally agreed that there has been little ongoing interest in continuing this collaboration by the majority of the Somali individuals involved. More work was required with lower return for time committed than could be made at their regular employment and overtime always took priority over project goals. One woman commented on the idea of raising her own goats and being involved with the processing: "We are in America now. We don't have to do that here."

Project Assumptions: At the beginning of this project it was assumed that producer –Somali consumer relationships were desired by both groups and could be established and developed through invested workgroups with compatible goals. It was assumed that these relationships would increase the potential for profitable meat sales and in the future vegetable sales to the Somali community for the benefit of both groups. That the interest in community gardens and long term involvement in the processing and marketing of the food products would develop among the Somali participants.

It has been generally agreed by the producer group that the vision of community participation has not reached the imagined potential and the financial return has been lower than expected. Some of the reasons for this will be examined with the hopes that both the successes and challenges of this project will be helpful to other collaborative community groups.

Community:

Barron is historically a White town that has had dramatic increases in the number of Somali refugees drawn to the large turkey processing plant. In the past 10 years the population has changed from 0% Somali to over 13% and growing. At the beginning of this transition period poultry processing plants in the Upper Midwest had shifted from union to non-union plants. Human Resource managers from the meat processing plants encouraged settlement and benefited from the growing number of rural immigrants seeking employment. Meat processing jobs do not require knowledge of English or previous job skills. The wages are attractive when compared to other options and women are equally as likely to be hired as men. Work opportunities in Barron for the newly arriving refugees are limited almost exclusively to the one turkey processing facility. Somali individuals applying for employment at the local medical clinic, hospital, manufacturing plants or retail stores have been rejected with the exception of the few job opportunities for translators that are generally hired on an "as-needed" and "on-call" basis. Rural social services are also limited when compared to urban areas as with the majority of small towns in North West Wisconsin.

The Somali community in Barron fluctuates from approximately 450 to 650 adults. At the current time there are approximately 20 children under the age of 5. 70% of the community is male. With 200 more new refugees due to arrive during the Fall of 2007 and the Spring of 2008 these estimates could dramatically change. As the poultry processing facility capacity for hiring from the Somali community is limited to about 400-450 individuals and turnover is very low, the majority of the new arrivals will find Barron to be a temporary home. They will stay with family or clan members, begin ESL classes, learn how to use food stamps, take driving lessons, adjust to the cold climate and as their 8 months of government support runs down look for other employment in low skill jobs, in generally meat processing plants, across the nation.

Successful immigration and assimilation is often viewed as integration into one primary place of residence. Children begin school in the early grades to graduate from the same community many years later and to perhaps even attend a local community college and eventually find employment or start businesses and purchase homes in the community. Financial and human resources are invested into the local area. Relationships are developed across cultural boundaries and the minority group adapts to the values and views of the larger community. There is no room in this paradigm for transient mobility. In contrast, the Somali nomadic heritage does not view being settled as a high priority or as a source of financial or social security. Initial key planning members for the Somali community simply moved to Colorado, Georgia and Canada. In some cases, for what appeared to the producer group, a small increase in wages. This was perhaps the first, and primary clash in values noted by the producer group. As one member stated in the project's closing interview,

"I was prepared to be receptive and curious about the Islam religion, but when A.... moved to Georgia after all our initial planning without notice I was speechless. I felt minimized. As if our time together was meaningless to him. Even when he called and gave me details of his new job in another processing plant it was hard for me to respond. I kept wanting to ask "For a dollar an hour increase you moved there...why?"

This comment brings up two cultural clashes for the producer group: 1) the nomadic heritage of the Somali community and 2) the high priority to make the money required to fulfill the personal responsibility of supporting extended family members still at home in refugee camps or engaging in clan warfare.

Cindy Horst (2008) describes the Somali nomadic heritage as “a mentality of looking for greener pastures... A man who has travelled, a *wayo' arag*, is one who knows a great deal, has seen things, has lived. These patterns of transnational distribution of family members and a very high mobility rate are widespread amongst the Somali. “If it rains better today, we move there.” They are always on the move and changing their residency and they often do not like to be constrained by rules and regulations.”

Mobility has always been an important way of dealing with insecurity for the nomadic Somali tribes. In practice it means people move away from hardship and that family members spread out to different places and engage in different activities thereby reducing the consequences of drought, wars, or simply bad luck. Besides being a survival strategy it has always been a way of life, enabling both individual growth as well as community development. Young men and to a lesser extent women, are encouraged to travel in order to gain education and life experience (Horst, 2008).

Historically the Somali people have a strong social network that entails the obligation to assist each other in surviving. In the past this has meant investing in extended family members to ensure survival of the clan's power and wealth across the Horn of Africa. National boundaries were not recognized. Family members in Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia and other countries all received support as necessary. Today this has transferred to a global support network quite impressive in light of the ongoing war in Somalia and the funds originating for the most part from refugees and asylum seekers. Transfers by *xawilaad* are made quickly and accurately. Different studies estimate the amount of funds moving to their home countries at 140-180 million per year (Perouse de Montclos, 2000). *Xawilaad* enables both communication and remittance sending. Social ties are kept strong and relatives play an important role in each other's lives and livelihoods even over large distances. Cell phones are popular both at home and in their new country. One producer traveled to Ethiopia during this project as part of a Farmer-to-Farmer USAid project. He recalled the image of a mule cart filled with computer boxes with the driver sitting on the boxes talking on a cell phone. Cell phone coverage was more complete and reliable than cell phone coverage in rural Wisconsin where there are still large areas of no coverage. As another producer stated:

Ali came to purchase a goat. He had the goat selected and in his arms when he received a call on his cell phone. It was his mother calling from a refugee camp in Kenya. His Aunt needed money. “*What can I do. My mother calls. I need to send her the money.*” Resulting in no money for the goat purchase.

Family connections are strong and made in real time through cell phones and email. There was a very rare meeting when someone in the group was not interrupted by a call from their home country. Sometimes a quick explanation... “*It's from home. I have to take it.*”

The Somali people are truly a global community with settlements in the Netherlands, Australia, England, Canada, across the U.S. and other countries. Yet, their tie to home is

strong. Few members *disappear* during immigration and fail to fulfill their obligations to extended family and clan members at home. Their support supplements the meager food rations at the refugee camps, provide for education expenses for younger siblings or relatives and medical needs. This may be the only income elderly parents and grandparents survive on. In general one weeks pay a month is sent home. During religious holidays or emergencies more funds are sent through the *xawillaad*.

Community Stressors

The Somali community encountered many challenges transitioning to their new and for many one stop on their journey across the U.S. and Canada that impacted this project. Some of these challenges are common to any rural community with an influx of a new population of families in need of jobs, education and social services. This includes such issues as lack of jobs for the current population and even fewer for new arrivals. There is a shortage of housing and almost no rental options for large or extended families. The closest Head Start program is a 30 minute commute to another town. A new Montessori pre-school in Barron allowed two Somali children to enroll though others applied then requested one not attend because of over activity of the child. The preschool was going to be bilingual with a Somali teacher aide, but this did not occur. Little or no English is spoken in the homes. Apparently, the cultural challenges were too much for the new school to accommodate.

There is a continual struggle for parents to combine work and child care. Children are generally cared for by another family member or friend that works a different shift inside apartments with minimal exposure to parks and outside activities. Employed women will use friends or family members to care for their children while they work and 8-12 hr shift. When they return home from work they will take on the care of other children while parents work a different shift. On the weekends they will share rides to the metro area 2 hours away to visit other family members, get haircuts, purchase foods native to their culture. Teen agers from the metro area move to Barron for their last year of school living with extended family members. Wisconsin has different graduation standards than Minnesota and the youth are able to obtain a high school diploma without passing standardized tests. A 1990 UN estimate put the national literacy rate at 24% at that time and with the continued civil wars and resultant destruction of the school system it is unlikely that literacy has increased since then. With no or low math skills, low literacy in their native language and poor spoken English and no written English skills receiving a high school diploma is a challenge for even the most dedicated youth. Many youth drop out preferring full time work at the poultry plant.

The distrust of Christian churches halted the exploration of a local church for a community daycare and women sewing activities. As a small group of women were interested in learning to sew a local church was contacted to use the education rooms for both childcare and weekly sewing classes. The church was well equipped with age appropriate toys for young children. It was not possible to convince Somali women to consider a Christian church as a location for these activities or for childcare and no other location could be found. This is counter to the experience of Sudanese and Ethiopian Orthodox Christian experiences where the local churches initiate connections and serves as a safety net for new immigrants, providing space for separate worship services, and collaboration on daycare efforts and women groups.

Even secular opportunities for involvement in the larger community are regarded with some suspicion. One elderly gentleman stalked the public library disciplining Somali children and their parents that ventured towards the building. When a parent asked why—what happened in this building to cause such caution the respected elder stated it was a dangerous place. Children will lose their faith here.

“We don’t speak the same language, we do not chat. We have nothing to do with one another. What is there to speak about? We cover our bodies while their women don’t. They socialize by drinking alcohol and at parties, while we go to the mosque and worship Allah.” N.... Young woman at processing facility.

The majority of Somali residents in Barron are religiously observant, and this is reflected in food values (only eating halal, religiously sanctioned meat and no pork products) women’s clothing (hejab or veiling), men may wear traditional dress on the street (two lengths of white cotton wrapped around them as a skirt and shawl or they wear a *macaawiis* a brightly colored cloth similar to an Indonesian sarong) and 4 prayers a day determined by lunar calendar. These practices and shared language serve to strengthen the cohesion of their community but also increases separation from the larger community. Some of this is self-determined such as taking pride in Somali separateness, and-in some cases—distaste at the notion of interacting with non-Muslim co-workers and neighbors. Some Christian rural residents view Muslims as pagans to be avoided or evangelized to and since 9/11/01 negative perceptions are even more charged. This results in greater segregation than with Orthodox Christian or Catholic immigrants.

“We are Muslim people, followers of Muhammed—Peace and Blessings Upon his Soul”

Conflict within the Community

Issues that have directly influenced this project are repercussions from the former 6 owners of the initial Somali restaurant that closed in August 2006 before this project began. The restaurant was purchased by the current owner in November of 2006. The failure of the initial business caused a division within the community that lessened the support of the new restaurant. The first owners lost a significant amount of money and there is lingering resentment towards the possibility of success of the new business. Past owners have created conflict at the restaurant that in one situation caused customers to call the police to intervene. There is a significant percentage of the Somali community that will not enter the new restaurant.

Somalis belong to clans and sub-clans. These hierarchical descent groups, each said to originate with a single male ancestor, are a central fact of Somali life. Clans serve as a source of solidarity as well as conflict. Clans combine forces for protection, access to water and good land, and political power. The Somali clan organization is an unstable system, characterized by changing alliances and temporary coalitions.

A saying popular among Somali men:

My full brother and I against my father, my father’s household against my uncle’s household, our two household (my uncle’s and mine) against the rest of the immediate

kin, the immediate kin against non-immediate members of my clan, my clan against other clans, and my nation and I against the world.

With the fall of Somali's President Siyaad Barre (January 27, 1991) clan competition for power and the desire to settle old scores escalated with disastrous results for civilians resulting with more than half a million deaths and 700,000 displaced persons over the last decade. Three hundred thousand Somali refugees and asylum seekers are scattered across twenty-four different countries (USCR, 2002) resulting in a continuous flow of Somali refugees to the US. While 95% (Wilson, 2003) of first generation African immigrants live in US cities, a small but growing number are moving to rural towns such as Barron, WI. Clans that have a history of fighting with each other may suddenly be living next to each other in a small community with little opportunity for release of frustration except at each other. In clan and tribal warfare it is sometimes difficult to always know who the enemy is and the enemy may have changed during the many years of unrest.

For all Somalis, the family is the ultimate source of personal security and identity. The importance of family is reflected in the common Somali question, *tol maa tahay?* (What is your lineage?). Whom are you from? (Horst, 2008).

CHALLENGES:

Although the collaboration met or exceeded all of the project goals there were many challenges that will influence long-term success. Some of the difficulties were due to simple naivety among group members on the time requirements, cultural differences and logistic difficulties of any project involving a diverse group of individuals with at times conflicting values. Some producer members stopped active participation during the summer months when other farm and family related activities took priority and had difficulty becoming involved again in the fall. Some producer members had the expectation of "windfall" profits due to the high demand for goat meat and were disappointed not understanding the low profit margins. Others were instrumental in keeping the group focused on long-term results and the development of unity of vision among members.

The producer group has rethought how to expand future collaborations and support for the restaurant/grocery. When the van used for picking up supplies and food from the urban area 100 miles away broke down members paid for the repairs as it was critical that the owner had transportation but then the oil red light was ignored and the engine totaled. The group backed away from providing any assistance in replacing the vehicle and eventually a used truck was source from a relative in Alabama. When planning for the expenses of future vehicle repairs was brought up as an ongoing expense the response was "Allah will provide". When a grocery distributor was suggested for delivery of basic supplies the cost could not be justified in the owners mind by cost savings in vehicle and time expenses.

When a computer was needed to add an income tax service and to track customers that owed for past grocery sales members donated a used but fully updated XP portable. When there was misunderstanding when the computer screen went dark during periods of nonuse the computer was assumed to be unreliable or broken and a new faster machine with a flat screen monitor was requested from the group. The group decided we could not be

responsible for purchasing a new computer as the current machine was more than adequate to handle the software requirements and the difficulties appeared to be due to a learning curve not computer related. The producers are all small farmers without discretionary income and under increased stress due to doubling of hay and corn prices in our region. A request for a new computer with flat screen did not go over well with the group. These and similar issues have caused difficulties between the members. As one member stated: "He seems to think what we do is from Allah not from our own checkbook." The belief that Allah provides or Inshaa Allaah, appears to limit the ability to plan ahead for maintenance expenses or in initiating preventative action and is a cultural difference between group members.

The most challenging or unexpected aspects of this project

High volume of very low priced imported goat and lamb meat: basically closed us out of the majority of the ethnic market. An exception is the Safari restaurant that has held constant in their support of the project and is very proud of having local meat. The owner is also looking at expanding into other local foods and working with other producers. This is the exception but could perhaps mark a future trend IF producers began working as collaborators with their culturally diverse neighbors and businesses.



Imported Australian Goat Carcass at \$1.62 / lb
Restaurant Depot, St. Paul, MN for registered wholesale buyers

Logistics of accepting animals from other producers. Collecting and holding animals for slaughter if even a few days caused many problems. We were prepared for the need to quarantine incoming animals from the breeding stock. Transition issues such as weight shrink,

digestion problems, pink eye, escapes and death caught us by surprise and was more difficult to handle.



Producer Carl Sudbrink's young goats and daughter Abby

Logistics for slaughter. We focused on religious holidays for the peak slaughtering periods such as Ramadan and Eid. The Muslim Feast of the Sacrifice, Eid, requires slaughter to take place within a 3 day period, preferably on the 1st day. It also requires a specific prayer that includes the name of the person for whom the sacrifice is being made. The specific animal needs to be tracked to each owner. The meat needs to be divided in thirds. The third for the poor needs to be not less than a third and no more than 1 pound over the proper ratio. So although we could have taken more orders and had goats and lambs available we would not have been able to provide legal slaughter in the facilities we utilized for a much higher number. It is difficult to scale up the number of animals slaughtered at a commercial facility and still fully hold with the religious requirements in facilities not set up for ongoing lamb and goat slaughter. Facility owners that make most of their profit from beef, bison, hogs are not geared up for sheep and goat religious slaughter requirements and not necessarily interested in taking on this type of responsibility. A fully collaborating slaughter facility will be necessary to take full advantage of the opportunity these slaughter peaks provide for producers.



Producer Larry Jacoby picking up Goat meat from a USDA facility

The meat is cut into about 1 ½ x 3 inch pieces for bone-in stew

Lessons Learned:

If selling goat meat is the goal the producers with the most success piggy-backed it with another product such as lamb, bison, beef or chicken. With the high number of Muslim families valuing goat meat they suggested not to sell it with pork products due to the Muslim taboo regarding pork products. Sheep and goats are efficient to handle, transport and slaughter in a common group and make good product combinations. Collaboration with other producers to make up a more diverse product line would be helpful to initiate, expand and maintain sales.

If the desire is to sell halal meat spend the time to research the needs of the population to be served. At the current time, there are no standards on halal in the U.S. and each ethnic group may define halal somewhat differently. The producer group worked very hard to arrange for live slaughter as required by the strict Muslim community. Then found out that all the imported halal meat from Australia is from stun slaughter. Still, the customers assume the Australian meat is slaughtered live. Does the producer group hold high standards or match the competitions less expensive methods? They decided to maintain the higher standard but struggled over the resulting cost disadvantage.

Always question the assumptions. The producer group assumed that culturally diverse consumers would pay more for meat for their religious traditions, probably because our culture will pay more for the Thanksgiving turkey or the Easter lamb. They found that sensitivity to price might be somewhat less but not significantly so. Many potential customers would prefer to send money out of our country to family or friends abroad where a goat or lamb costs less and there are more poor people to share it with than pay a higher price. "In this country there are no poor people," comment from a strict Muslim in explaining his

actions. Although the sacrifice is still important it is not important that it be done in this country. It is more important that the meat is shared with the poor and that the cost matches their expectations--expectations that are likely distorted by the low price of imported goat and lamb.

Many producers appear to be looking for a quick way to get rich and see goats as a possibility. At this point in time raising goats for meat is a tough business not only due to import competition. The rate of gain expressed by goats is much slower than the rate of gain from lambs. Whereas it is possible to have 80-100 pound lambs straight of pasture in the fall in the upper Midwest, it is rare even with the best genetics to have kids above 65-75 pounds during the same period on the same resource base. This difference is the difference between being profitable and not. Goats also require more protection from the elements than sheep or lambs resulting in more infrastructure costs for the producer. The goat market is growing, some statistics show at 15-20% per year. This certainly has the attention of producers across the nation. In the northern states with the long winters and requirement for harvested feed and the low market prices it will be important for producers to move slowly and develop a market while they build their herd. Running goats with beef or other complimentary enterprises would be a safe and cost efficient option.

SUCCESS:

Community-based marketing strategies and tools were used to reach closed communities of consumers who desire fresh, halal-certified goat products.

Although, marketing goat meat is a tough business with low profit margins and competition from Australian imports limit sale opportunities we did have a major success during Eid (Feast of the Sacrifice) Dec 21-23, 2007. 135 goats were sacrificed by Noor Arte, collaborator. A few of the goats were for families from Barron and Minneapolis but the majority were for families in Madison, WI and Chicago, IL. A third of each of these goats were donated to Barron refugee families (Eid requires 1/3 of each sacrificed animal to be provided as a gift to the poor). Each carcass had to be divided into thirds. The third for the poor could be no less than one third and up to 1 pound over. The carcasses were cut into 1 inch by 2 inch pieces, vacuum packed and sealed in 2 pound bags, marked for each individual, boxed, invoiced and delivered. This took a huge amount of coordination and cooperation by all involved within the limited 3-day time period.

Mohsin Kahn, MD responsible for the Chicago orders, has encouraged the incorporation of a nonprofit, Barron Islamic Center, so taxable donations could be accepted by the local mosque. An attorney was consulted and the nonprofit mosque was formed. Our ability to facilitate and organize the outpouring of support from Muslim communities with more available resources has been a joy for us and provides closure to the first stage of this project.

Goat meat was provided for weddings in Barron with up to 150 attendees, 4 County board meetings with an average of 40 attendees, the Somali Resource committee meeting with 20 participants hosted by the Institute for Agriculture Trade Policy in Minneapolis. Catering of two producer conference are being scheduled for 2008, one with the NW WI Regional Food Network and the other with Focus on Goats with DATCP and other events.

- The Safari restaurant has opened a grocery qualified to accept food stamps. The producer]s meats are being sold in a bunker by the cash register. They have also stocked it with halal chicken and purchased frozen vegetables to increase sale options. New refugees are coming to Barron every month and receive food stamps for 8 months.

Safari Restaurant and Grocery



Noor Arte, Owner of Safari Cuisine and Grocery

Note green poster displayed.

A brochure is also available and a larger poster.



Safari Restaurant goat meat meal with anjura



Huma Siddiqui, Chef www.whitejasmine.com

Huma developed 6 recipes with video clips for our website.

- Establish product identity and brand, produce point of purchase materials, website and web commercials to market kosher or halal-certified, locally grown foods

- USDA approved “Pasture raised—never confined—all-natural” label with the addition of zabiah halal on our halal retail product with Arabic lettering. Evaluated 6 label and name designs. The brochures and other point of sale items finalized.

Brand:



Shepherd Song

Artisan quality all natural goat and lamb
Pasture-raised on family farms in the Upper Midwest



Zabiah Halal goat meat stew displayed at the Safari restaurant and grocery
(1st version of our generic label)

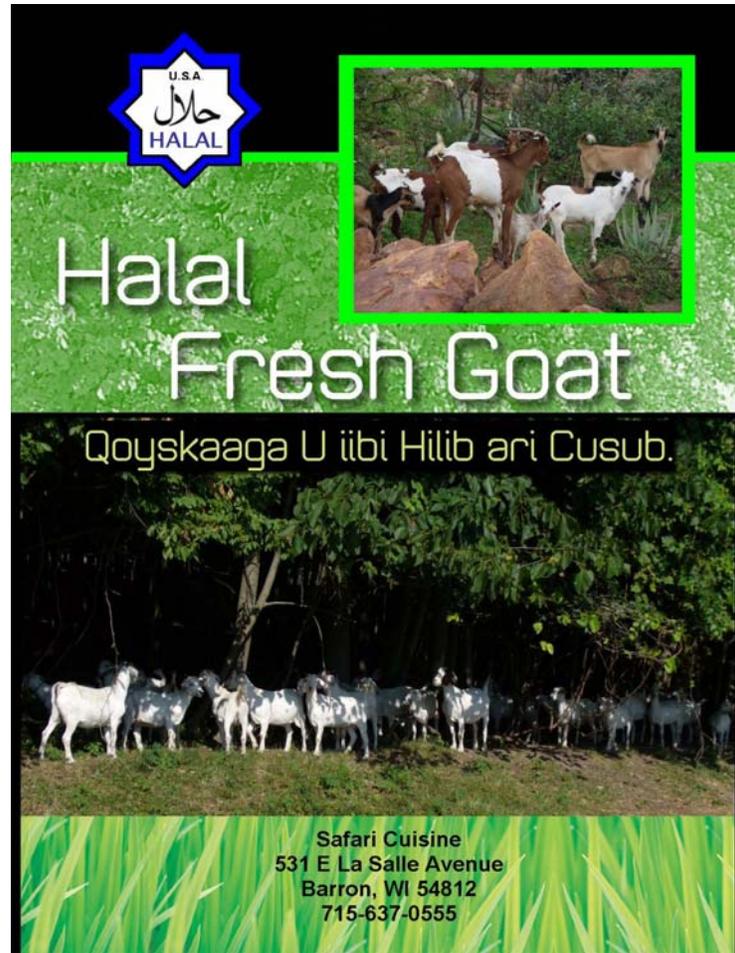


Zabiah Halal goat meat stew displayed at the Safari Restaurant and Grocery
 (2nd version of the label approved by the USDA for claims)



Final label approved by USDA for claims

Posters and Place of Purchase Materials



Poster designed for food cooperatives and retail display
Bolen Vale Cheese Store, North Country and Mississippi Natural Food Market
and other locations.

Translation: "Fresh goat meat for your family"

The halal meat focus initially was on the relatively small Barron Somali community and opened sale opportunities to the larger Minneapolis community through their family members and friends. There is a great deal of communication and travel between the two communities. Minneapolis restaurants have been in contact with the owner of the Safari on sourcing local goat meat although this has not developed into sale opportunities. The Safari will be catering our local producer group's conference with guest speaker in March. Catering for the Institute Agriculture Trade Policy has allowed their business to come up in goggle searches. They are very aware of that and encouraged to work more fully with producers.

Browse & Grass
FARMER ASSOCIATION

Raised naturally on pastures, meadows, and woodlots

Home
Projects
Producers
Resources
Conferences
Contact

Member login
user name

An association of independent sheep and goat farmers

Browse and Grass Farmer Association consists of independent sheep and goat producers whose animals are raised naturally on pastures, meadows and woodlots.

Our mission is to:

- Implement and maintain the use of sustainable, ethical and holistic practices to provide food choices

Website: www.browseandgrass.org



Website: www.spiritofhumane.com

To position the group as legitimate processors the slaughter process has been explained through a separate website. If combined with the general goat and lamb meat marketing site conventional meat purchasers would likely be put off. In our experience there tends to be two groups of consumers. One group may be represented by the statement “I’ve held a lamb—I could never eat a lamb,” and those consumers (generally ethnic but also some commune and CSA members) that want a relationship with the food that they eat or the producers of their food. We have worked hard developing ethical relationships with diverse communities that value humanely raised and slaughtered lamb and goat meat.

APPENDIX

SUMMARY:

The main goal of this project was to increase profits for goat producers by direct marketing locally grown halal-certified goat meat products to the culturally and economically diverse Upper Midwest family. This project initiated a producer-to-consumer infrastructure to support the introduction of these products to families and individuals that require and/or value certification. These products meet the emerging and, in some cases, totally un-served market demands for goat meat products that are fresh, locally grown, halal-certified, and culturally appropriate.

These goals were accomplished through the following objectives and benchmarks:

Objective 1: A producer network will be expanded to market locally grown, halal-certified goat products.

Stage 1: The cooperating producer network will be expanded.

Stage 2: Training and support will be provided.

Objective 2. Locally grown, halal-certified goat meat products will be marketed to Upper Midwest families.

Stage 3: Custom halal-slaughter and processing equipment will be set up within our collaborating state inspected facility.

Stage 4: Community-based marketing methods will be implemented.

Objective 3. Evaluation and report of results, and model replication article and/or handouts. Information provided through regional and national speaking opportunities and conferences.

Stage 5: Results will be reviewed and evaluated with replication considerations documented.

RESULTS:

- **Stage 1:** The producer association was expanded from 9 members to 16. One couple left the group due to bankruptcy of their goat dairy and resultant loss of their goat herd.
- **Stage 2:** Four trainings were provided to a total of **165** producers and professionals. Nationally known speakers addressed topics such as meat marketing basics, halal slaughter, determining customer values and the humane animal handling movement.

- Stage 3: Initially a USDA facility was used for zabiah (live halal) slaughter and processing while a local facility was upgraded to allow custom slaughter. The USDA facility is being used for all products sold across State lines. Custom slaughter for religious sacrifice was handled by having the customer or family member come into Wisconsin for sale and pickup.
- Stage 4: Community-based marketing methods resulted in the sales of 737 goats at a blended price of \$4.80/lb.
 - 145 Holiday Season (December 2006).
 - 275 Ramadan (September-October 2007)
 - 135 Eid (December 2007)
 - 115 Safari restaurant and grocery sales (2007)
 - 45 Wholesale (2007)
 - 22 Misc sales (2007)

In 2006 the group was selling the majority of goat meat to Mexican families. By the summer of 2007 this market basically disappeared due to deportation or relocation of some of the key customers. One customer hired and trained to delivered meat for the group had many community contacts. He disappeared after leaving the truck he was using for delivery in owners driveway. He later called from Mexico stating he was sorry but had “immigration troubles”. He is a great worker and very much missed.

Stage 5: Twelve presentations, interviews or workshops were provided for 697 attendees. Two websites www.spiritofhumane.com and www.browseandgrass.org (separate funding) were launched and one other is in process for *Safari Halal Meat*. Information collected includes:

- 100% of the producers stated they learned information of value from their experience.
- 75% of the producers (12 of 16) stated they would continue with the project goals (with modifications) for another year.



Shireen Pishdadi from the TAQWA Food Cooperative
speaking to producers after the conference
Meat Marketing: some of your business
Presentations or Interviews

Date	Topic	Location	Number
2/3/2007	Marketing Goat Meat <i>GrassWorks</i>	2007 WI Grazing Conf, GrassWorks, Stevens Point, WI	53
2/15/2007	Marketing Goat Meat <i>Focus on Goats</i>	Department Agriculture Trade Consumer Safety Conference, Madison, WI	300 +
3/8/07	Meat Goat Marketing	Agri-View, Section B, Don Johnson	unknown
3/23/07	World without Borders WPR interview	Radio interview with Shireen Pishdadi from the Chicago Muslim community and TAQWA food cooperative	unknown
3/24/07	Meat Marketing: some of your business	WITC Conference Center, Rice Lake, WI (Organization and facilitation)	42
5/12/07	Somali Rural Residents MN, WI	Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, Minneapolis, MN	22
5/26/07	Living off the Land. <i>Multi- species grazing and parasite control</i>	Sustainable Grazing Group, Dodgeville, WI	12

7/12/07	Goat Discovery Day	DATCP Menomonie, WI	15
9/6/07	Spooner Field Day <i>Meat Goats</i>	Robin Trott Dairy Goat Farm	47
9/12-14/07	Risk Management Strategies for Beginning and Small Farmers Conference <i>Marketing Meat Goats 2 sessions</i>	USDA, Growing Power, SARE. Milwaukee, WI	44, 52
10/31-9/3/07	Farm Forum Booth and Producer Report	Columbia, Missouri	72
11/13/07	NCR-SARE Administrative Council Meeting	Des Moines, Iowa	38
		Total:	697

Brochure 4-sided

What this means to you...



Our members make a commitment to you to NOT use pesticides on our land and to use no animal byproducts as feed.

No antibiotics or hormones are fed to our kids or lambs.

When you buy from Browse and Grass Farmer members you support environmentally friendly, sustainable agriculture, healthy, relaxed animals and the rapidly disappearing family farm.

Our Brand:



Shepherd Song

Browse & Grass Farmer Association
823 Main Street
Boyceville, WI 54725
Shepherd@shepherdsongfarm.com
Tel: (715) 265-7637



Browse & Grass Farmer Association



Raised naturally on pastures, meadows and woodlots



High-forage diet with absolutely no animal by-products, antibiotics or growth hormones.



Our group consists of independent sheep and goat producers whose animals are raised naturally on pastures, meadows and woodlots.

Our Mission

Our mission is to:

- Implement and maintain the use of sustainable, ethical and holistic practices to provide food choices that meet our consumer's, values, religious criteria and will also provide a living wage for our producer members;
- Provide food related information, education and technical support for producers and the broader community;
- Collaborate with researchers, educators and diverse community members to increase understanding of food values, traditions and religious requirements pertaining to food.

Pasture Raised: We believe pasture raised is absolutely, without a doubt, better for the animals, better for the environment, better for your health...which is better for you! USDA defines "pasture raised" livestock as spending over 51% of their life on pasture. Our lambs and goats spend 90 to 100% of their life on pasture.

Quality of Life for Livestock: Our livestock spend their days in the open air and sunshine grazing our lush, green pastures. Our young stock spend the majority of their time safe with their mothers within the protective flock learning to choose from a diverse forage menu much like the joy we experience at a well stocked salad bar.

Humane Handling: Our animals are humanely treated from birth to harvest following not only scientifically proven humane principles but also with the "Spirit of Humane" in mind to actively improve their quality of life through the reduction of fear, discomfort and avoidable stressors. They routinely carry out their natural behaviors such as grazing, browsing, lactating and exploring their environment as appropriate to their species.

Farmers: We are small, family farmers. We use sustainable farming practices that improve the soil, increase bio-diversity, and are beneficial to our environment. We use conservation and preservation methods. In practices this means what is taken out of the environment is put back in, so land and resources such as water, soil, and fertility can be replenished and are available for future generations.



We believe in paying our producer members a fair amount for their products and services to compensate for their extra skill, labor and the commitment it takes to meet these values.