

Small Ruminant Characteristics and Production System in Jordan

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Livestock in Jordan includes dairy cattle, small ruminants (sheep and goats) and poultry (egg layer and broiler). The total number of sheep and goats is about (1.85) million, 1.4 million for sheep and (0.45) million for goats.

Awassi sheep is almost the only breed in Jordan. It's a dual -purpose breed (meat and milk production). And well adapted on the local environment. Sheep and goat are kept in Jordan for meat and milk production and are scattered from north to south with high density of sheep at the desert, while high density of goats in mountains area.

Number of sheep has increased gradually since 1930; this number was doubled in 1960 and 1989 as a result of applying the subsidy policy, which encouraged farmers to increase sheep numbers. Meanwhile; forages production decrease and the rangeland deteriorated. In 1995, the subsidy was stopped, consequently; sheep and goat number have been decreased almost 30%.

The main livestock production system is the transhumant system, where flocks move along distance far away from the village, the second system is semi sedentary, where flocks stay inside the village borders and the third system is the mixed farming (the integrated system).

The common available sources of feed for sheep are rangeland, shrubs, grasses, cereal stubble, barley, wheat bran, vegetable residues and the agricultural by products. The NCARTT implement adaptive researches program for the development of integrated crop—livestock production and transferring various technologies to be conducted with sheep owners. Most important constraints of livestock sector are the shortage of animal feed (especially roughages), high production cost, and marketing problems.

Key words: Jordan, Sheep, Goat, and System.