***Lesson 15: Goats for Fiber – Teacher’s Guide***

**Estimated Time for Completion – approximately 60 minutes**

**Student Learning Objectives:**

* As a result of this lesson the student will…
  + Explore the goat fiber industry in the U.S.
  + Examine goat fiber production methods.
  + Understand the advantages and disadvantages of goat fiber production.

**Purpose:** What kind of fabric are you wearing right now? Is your clothing made out of cotton? Maybe it is even made out of sheep wool. Cotton and sheep wool are very common clothing fibers, but fibers derived from goats are often seen as being even more extravagant. What is it about goat fiber that makes it so desirable to consumers?

**Directions:** Go to the following website: http://www.agmrc.org. Click on Commodities and

Products, Livestock, Goats, Goats for Fiber. Use the information along with any other needed research to answer the following questions.

1. What qualities make cashmere so desirable for clothing material?

* First, select the “Commodities and Products” link.
* Then, select the “Livestock” link.
* Select “Goats”
* Select “Goats for Fiber”
* Look in the “Introduction” section to find the desired information.

1. Where is the majority of goat fiber sold? Why do you think this is so?

* First, select the “Commodities and Products” link.
* Then, select the “Livestock” link.
* Select “Goats”
* Select “Goats for Fiber”
* Look in the “Marketing” section to find the desired information.

1. Why could goat fiber be considered a value-added product?

* First, select the “Commodities and Products” link.
* Then, select the “Livestock” link.
* Select “Goats”
* Select “Goats for Fiber”
* Look in the “Production” section to find the desired information.

1. What can a producer do to add value to the fiber they are selling?

* First, select the “Commodities and Products” link.
* Then, select the “Livestock” link.
* Select “Goats”
* Select “Goats for Fiber”
* Look in the “Prices” section to find the desired information.

1. What is the primary difference between mohair and cashmere?

* First, select the “Commodities and Products” link.
* Then, select the “Livestock” link.
* Select “Goats”
* Select “Goats for Fiber”
* Look in the “Production” section to find the desired information.

**Reinforcement Activity: Comparing Apples and Oranges (sort of)**

For this activity, you will be comparing the profit potential of sheep and goats. You will need to first find useful information about both types of fiber producing animals, then make a decision on which animal you would rather purchase for fiber production. Information you should find for both animals includes:

1. What is the average production of fiber per animal per year? (How much is shorn at a time, and how many times are the animals sheered each year?)
2. What is the fiber valued at for each animal?
3. What can be done to add value to the fiber of each animal? How much value does this add?

Now using the above information, and any other information you find to be important (feeding costs, meat production potential), write which animal you think would be the most profitable to purchase, and defend your reasoning.