

Goat breeders

(Continued from Page A26)

instead. Mrs. Smith's ulcer is long since cured, but the goats are permanent members of the Smith household.

Of all the places their goats have ended up, the Smiths are especially proud of the ones that went to Panama recently.

All the factors that make goats attractive in this country are doubly important in a developing nation. Many fruits and vegetables

grow in great profusion in this tropical republic, but a lack of animal protein in the diet has led to malnutrition and a high infant mortality rate. This is especially true in the rural areas, where many households are headed by women.

There's no grain to feed chickens in Panama, but a goat can live nicely on the grass that grows

freely. Goats are small enough to be handled easily by women and children, are inexpensive to start and maintain, and they can provide a continuing source of protein in the diet even if people don't have refrigeration.

The Smiths donated two of their finest kids to Panama two years ago at the suggestion of Delaware Extension dairy specialist George Haenlein. Haenlein is involved in the Partners of the Americas program, in which Delaware, as Panama's partner state, takes part in a continuing educational

and cultural exchange designed to help improve the nutrition of the developing nation.

While other University of Delaware faculty members are working with rabbits and various types of plants and seafood as improvement of the Panamanians' diet, Haenlein is concentrating on goats and cows.

For the last two years the Smiths' two donated kids have been under Haenlein's care at the University of Delaware Experimental Farm, waiting for Panamanian officials to come for them and take them to their new home. Although the wait was long, the goats didn't waste the time. In the interim, the twosome became a threesome.

It takes more than a group of healthy animals to start a goat enterprise in Panama. It takes know-how as well. Three Panamanian officials arrived at the University of Delaware recently: director of the Panamanian goat project, Thomas Bendiburg; Dr. J. Medrano, a veterinarian; and Mr. A. Gomez, a dairyman.

The Panamanian's did not just pick up the goats to take them home. Haenlein led them on an intensive tour of dairy goat farms and goat cheese factories in

Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia. They viewed slides and films about goat breeding and management, and they planned a follow-up seminar for agriculture teachers, Future Farmers, and others in their own country who could spread this information to the rural poor.

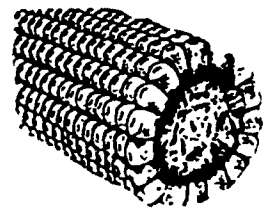
Haenlein was asked to return to Panama in October to lead the seminar, which will be held through the auspices of the Agency for International Development and the Partners of the Americas Program.

Bendiburg noted that wild goats can be found on islands off the West Coast, descendants of animals who were brought to the area and later abandoned by Spanish settlers who required goats' milk for disease prevention during long ocean voyages.

These animals could provide a base for a goat industry in Panama, but they would need genetic upgrading by cross-breeding with U.S. proven stock. Such stock was donated by the Smiths and their friends David and Mildred Perrine of Clayton, Delaware.

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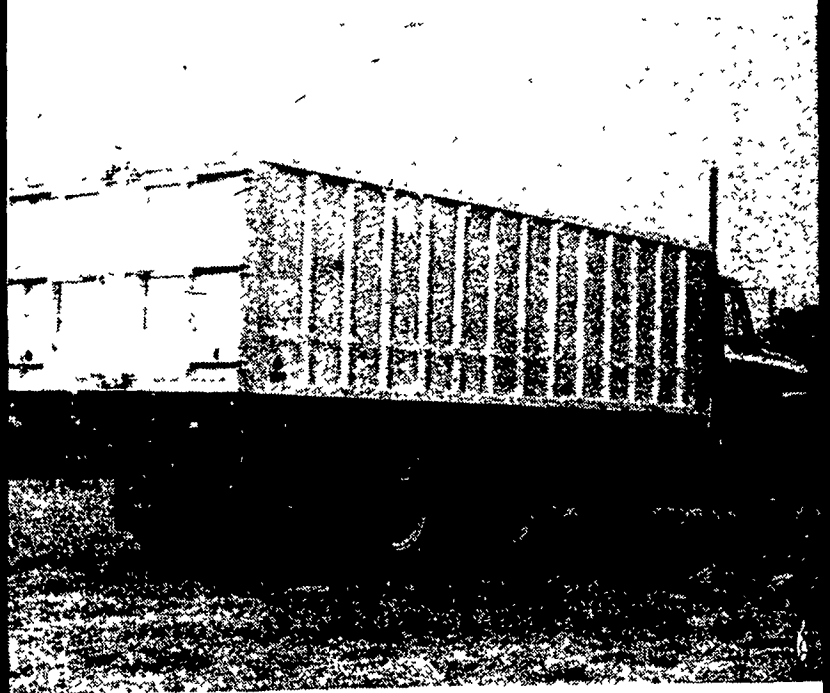
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