

2025

Animal Science and Forages

Improving Animal Health & Marketability



When goat and sheep producers need help across the state, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama Extension) staff at Alabama A&M University are there to assist them. For over a decade, the animal science and forages team, led by scientists such as veterinarians, has engaged in timely research that results in healthier animals and greater economic impacts for small farmers and producers.

Breeding for Parasite Management

Studies like the Breeding for Sustainable Control of Gastrointestinal Parasites in Meat Goats make it possible to train small ruminant producers about best management practices to minimize losses due to parasitic infections. Parasites can cause extreme weight loss, poor meat quality, and weakened immune systems that make animals more vulnerable to diseases and higher mortality rates. Through this project, producers can improve herd health and make their animals more marketable by selecting breeds less prone to gastrointestinal parasites.

Small Ruminant Program

The Small Ruminant Program enables landowners and small-scale producers to focus on goat and sheep health, nutrition, effective marketing strategies, and regenerative agricultural practices that are environmentally friendly.

Alabama Goat and Sheep Summit

The Alabama Goat and Sheep Summit allows Alabama Extension and other professionals to address common challenges of small ruminant producers and farmers. The Summit is held at AAMU facilities like the Winfred Thomas Agricultural Research Station, and it includes lectures, hands-on demonstrations, and tours to explore the latest agricultural research projects. Youths are also invited to participate in farm tours, hands-on experiments, and other activities designed to spark an interest in agricultural careers.



5,394
participants



1,276,674
indirect contacts



85%
Summit attendees
learned parasite control



46%
Summit attendees learned
agribusiness diversification

The latest Alabama Extension at Alabama A&M University program impacts reported from 2024 program implementation.

2024 Program Impacts

- 5,394 participated in animal science programming activities.
- 1,276,674 indirect contacts were made through digital media, including radio interviews, online publications, and community-based activities, such as the North Alabama Ag Expo and Earth Day events.
- 85% (102 of 120) of Alabama Goat and Sheep Summit participants found the event successful in learning more about parasite control; 46% (55) learned more about diversifying small ruminant agribusinesses; 44% (53) increased knowledge of silvopasture management; 34% (41) increased knowledge of poisonous plants; 28% (34) increased knowledge of breeding management; and 13% (16) learned how to manage pests.

By learning and implementing best management practices, small farmers and animal producers can run a successful agribusiness that results in increased revenue.

