

## West Virginia State University Extension Service keeping specialty foods in West Virginia

### Changing appetites: Keeping specialty foods in West Virginia

- WHO:** West Virginia State University Extension Service
- WHAT:** Seminar on raising goat and sheep for ethnic markets
- WHEN:** Saturday, June 27, 2009, from 9:30 a.m. until Noon
- WHERE:** Mullens Opportunity Center in Mullens, WV

This interactive seminar is designed to educate consumers, farmers, and producers on the benefits of locally producing and distributing more alternative/ethnic foods for the people of West Virginia. Dr. Almeshia Brown with West Virginia State University Extension Service will be facilitating the seminar. Goat, lamb, and sheep are the current target ethnic food; however a diverse focus group has been formed to discuss educating the public on the demand for other food choices as well.

While West Virginia farmers raise a number of goat and sheep, producers usually export these animals to larger metropolitan areas with the greatest public demand. During WVSU Extension Service's research, it was observed that a number of West Virginians who attend local mosques, synagogues, and international markets in the region are not having their dietary needs met. Individuals often choose to purchase food over the Internet or undergo costly travel out of state to meet their dietary needs. With West Virginia's strong agriculture, it is possible to produce and distribute these foods within the state. There are numerous opportunities to expand on locally grown agriculture and WVSU Extension Service is committed to educating citizens on the potential market of locally produced and distributed foods.

"We work here, raise our families here, pay taxes here, and therefore why not get fresh locally grown food that meets our dietary needs here as well?" said Brown. "It creates a more welcoming environment not only for producers native to the Mountain State, but also to other people who have moved to the region and have come to call West Virginia home. It's a win-win situation, especially in our current economy."

There is no fee to attend the seminar, however it does require prior registration by **4:00 p.m. on June 18th**, as a selection of refreshments will be provided for guests. Please contact Deborah Jolly at (304) 204-4007 to register.



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