



Preface

Goats provide food and fiber to many people of the world, as well as imparting other social and economic benefits. Nonetheless, there is much less known about nutrient requirements of goats than of cattle and sheep. Hence, there is need for more research of the nutrient needs of goats, along with increased employment of most appropriate sophisticated, state-of-the-art techniques of study. But, because goat research at many locations around the globe has been conducted in recent years, it is also desirable to compile these existing findings for use in developing accurate nutrient requirement expressions. To do so, a competitive grant (USDA Project Number 98-38814-6241) entitled “Nutrient Requirements of Goats: An Update and Reevaluation” was received in 1998 by the E (Kika) de la Garza American Institute for Goat Research from the United States Department of Agriculture 1890 Institution Capacity Building Grant Program, which this Special Issue of *Small Ruminant Research* is an endproduct of. Sincere appreciation is expressed to this program for support of such an important endeavor.

Investigators in the original proposal were A.L. Goetsch, T. Sahlu, M.L. Galyean, C.L. Ferrell, F.N. Owens, and Z.B. Johnson, each making important contributions throughout the life of the project and providing insight for each report in this Special Issue. However, the bulk of the work on individual studies was conducted by Drs. J. Luo, I.V. Nsahlai and J.E. Moore. Because of the integral roles of the project participants, including inputs early in the project that facilitated later studies, it was appropriate to list everyone as authors. However, this does not imply that in every instance there was perfect agreement among all authors. Relatedly, one of the most exciting

aspects of this project was working with so many experts, occasionally with different views on particular points.

There are different means of determining expressions of nutrient requirements of livestock. Ones described in these reports were thought logical given the information available. There was an intent to develop expressions that would be useful in the field. However, goats like other ruminants are not simple animals and, likewise, in some cases most accurate descriptions of requirements may be more complex than desired energy and protein requirements as well as food intake were addressed; however, insufficient new data concerning mineral and vitamin needs were available to improve upon past reviews and recommendations. It should also be mentioned that, when thought beneficial, there was an attempt to put forward frameworks for expressing some requirements based on limited data or with extrapolation from data with other ruminant species, in order to facilitate future enhancements for greater accuracy.

In order for nutrient requirement expressions to be of value, they must be readily accessible to potential users and reasonably simple considering audience diversity. Therefore, a web-based goat nutrient requirement calculation system was developed as a complement based on findings of the project described in this Special Issue. Programming was performed by Dr. T.A. Gipson of the Institute. The system is available at www2.luresext.edu/goats/research/nutreqgoats.html.

This Special Issue consists of 10 papers, nine pertaining to specific investigations and the first a summary, each reviewed as a normal scientific manuscript submission. Hence, they are products of not only the listed authors, but also the very helpful comments,

suggestions and criticisms of *Small Ruminant Research* editorial board members and ad hoc reviewers. Moreover, special thanks are extended to the Associate Editors for Nutrition, Drs. Nissim Silanikove and George Haenlain, and to the Editor-in-Chief, Dr. David Sherman, who gave considerable time for preparation of this issue. Similarly, there is great appreciation for the hard work of *Elsevier* staff, most notably Mrs. Nienke de Jong, Manager of the RUMIN Editorial Office, and Dr. Lisa Colledge, Publishing Editor.

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