



**UF | IFAS**  
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA



# SHEEP AND GOAT INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

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II Small Ruminant Short-Course – Sep 29, 2023

Gainesville, FL, Sep 29<sup>th</sup> 2023

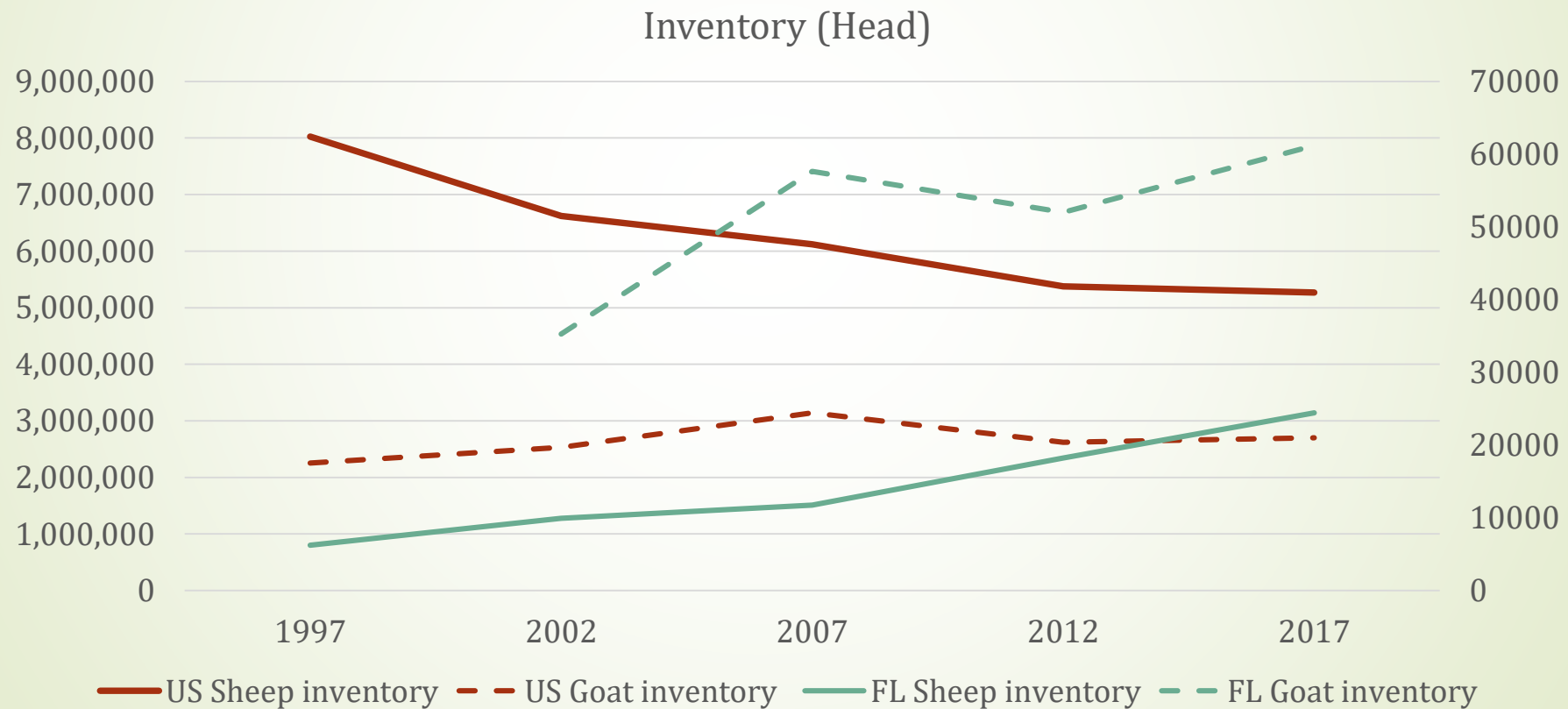


# Our research in perspective

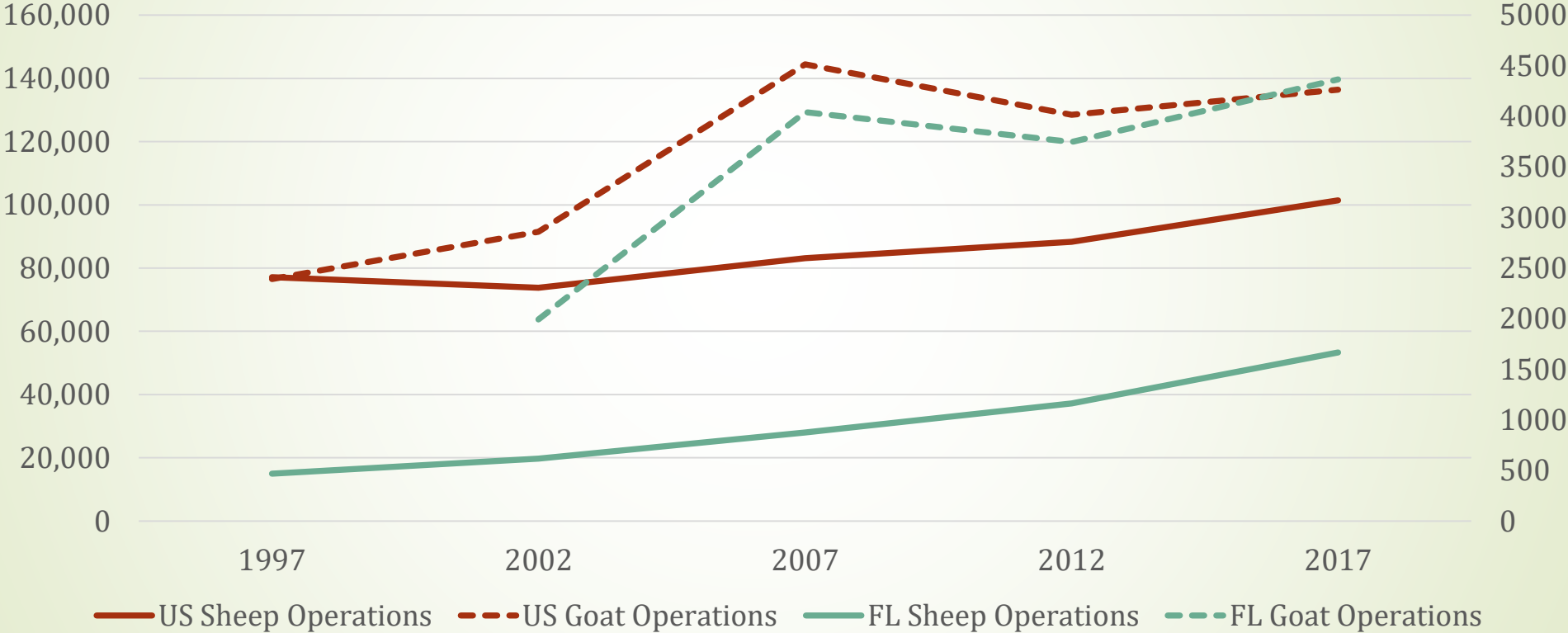
- **Producer survey (online)**
- **Processor survey (phone interviews)**
- **Focus group and interviews**

# General aspects of sheep and goat production in the state

From USDA Census



### Number of operations



# Florida by county

## *Top inventory*

### Goat

- MARION
- VOLUSIA
- ALACHUA
- COLUMBIA
- GILCHRIST
- LEE
- HILLSBOROUGH
- SUWANNEE
- POLK
- LEVY

### Sheep

- MARION
- LAKE
- MIAMI-DADE
- BROWARD
- HILLSBOROUGH
- ALACHUA
- POLK
- VOLUSIA
- COLUMBIA
- SUWANNEE

## *Top growth*

### Goat

- SEMINOLE
- GLADES
- CLAY
- LEON
- PUTNAM
- MANATEE
- OKALOOSA
- BROWARD

### Sheep

- LAFAYETTE
- WALTON
- GADSDEN
- DUVAL
- WASHINGTON
- ST. LUCIE
- HARDEE
- BRADFORD
- HAMILTON
- BAY
- SANTA ROSA

# Current status of sheep and goat industry

	<b>Sheep</b>	<b>Goat</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>Number</b>	
Operations	1666	4366
Inventory (head)	24504	61159

~85% of inventory < 50 acres

~90% of farms < 10 acres

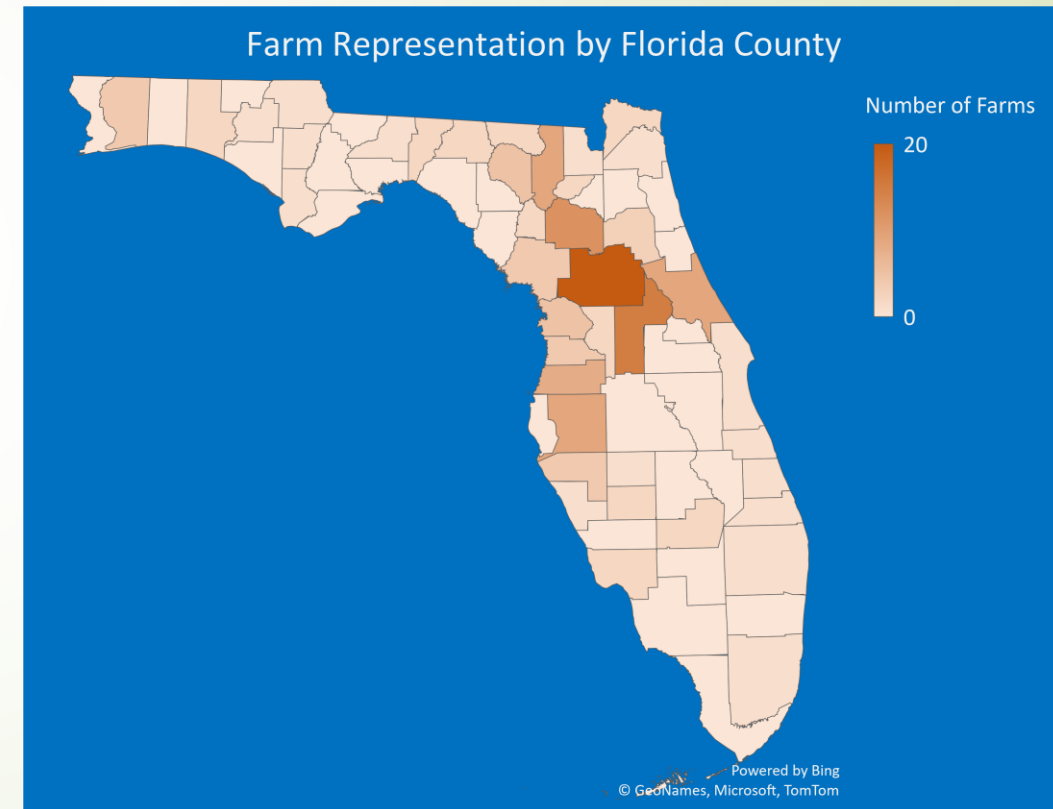
~89% of farms < \$10,000/yr

# Producer Survey

## Demographics

- Over 50% lower end in experience
- Mostly small size operators
- Few large-scale w/ 100+ acres
- Most respondents reported lower end of 2019 revenues (83% <\$10,000)

New, hobby farmers or supplementary income



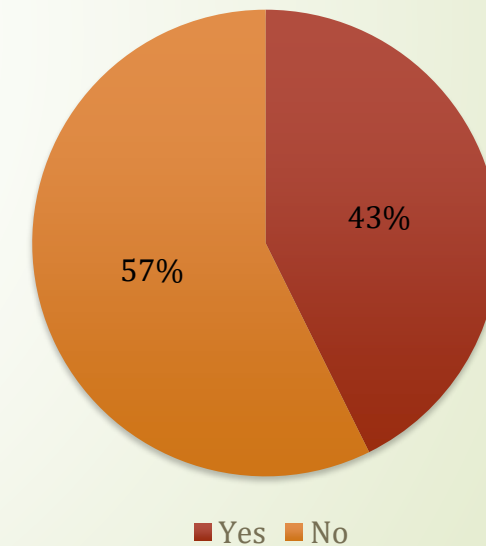
## Processing

- Generally, **access is not limiting but currently options insufficient.**
  - Most are selling direct to buyers, on hove
- 69% prefer USDA Inspected

## Challenges

- Access not always easy (driving ~200 miles)
- Affordability for cut/wrap/vacuum pack
- Not always a nearby USDA Inspected facility
- Wait times → animals over age
- Inconsistent/ bad cuts, inconsistent availability

## Are your current options for meat processing meeting your needs?

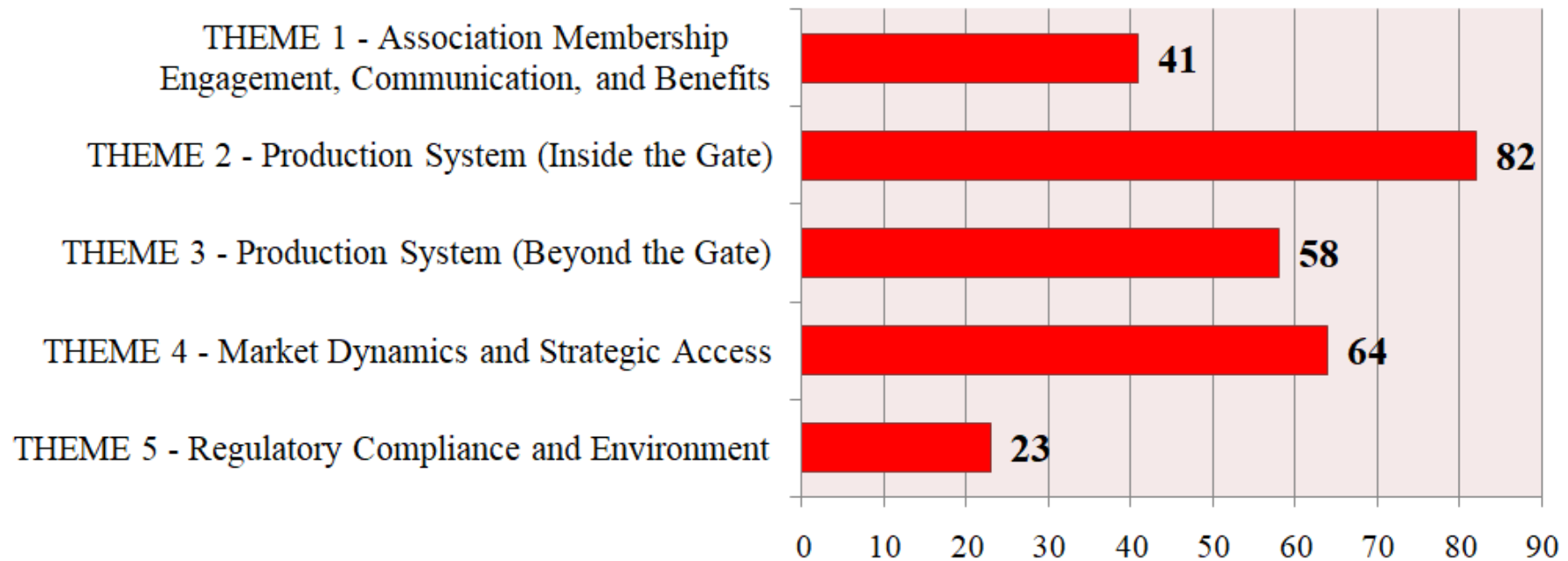




# Processor survey

- 19 facilities contacted, 13 provided some level of answer, 3 indicated processing lamb or goats.
  - From respondents neither presently have organic, Halal or Kosher certifications, but are interested in obtaining.
  - Custom butchering represents 50-74% of total animals slaughtered.
  - Fee structure
    - Facility 1 - \$100 per animal
    - Facility 2 - \$0.80 per lb.
- Lack of facilities, lack of interest





# Theme 1 - Association

- Essence – **education and network**
- Need for engagement
  - Current members to take leadership and initiative
  - Younger generation to be more active
- Improve communication channels
- Look for opportunities to keep relevant

"education doesn't stop"

"having the connections and helping each other"

"really hard" to find dedicate individuals to take leadership roles

can't assume "everybody is on Facebook"

"keep it relevant."

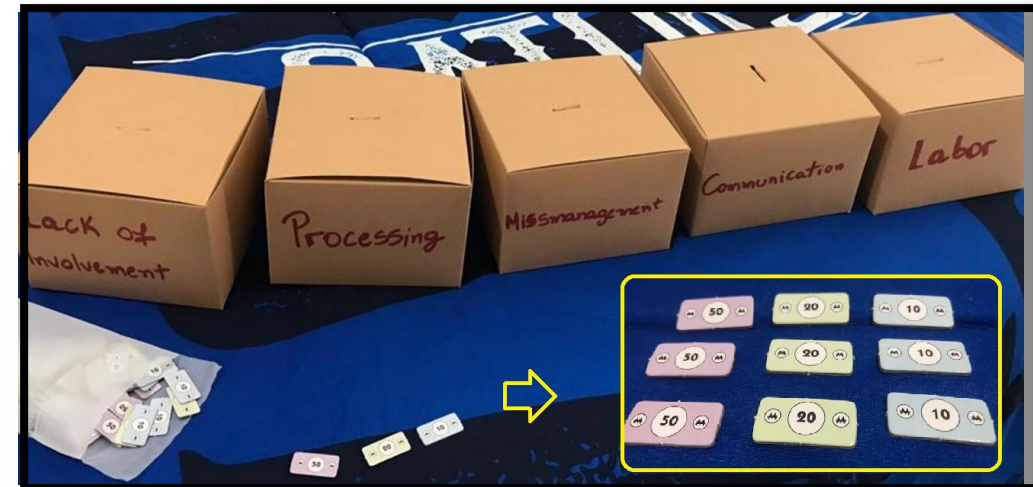
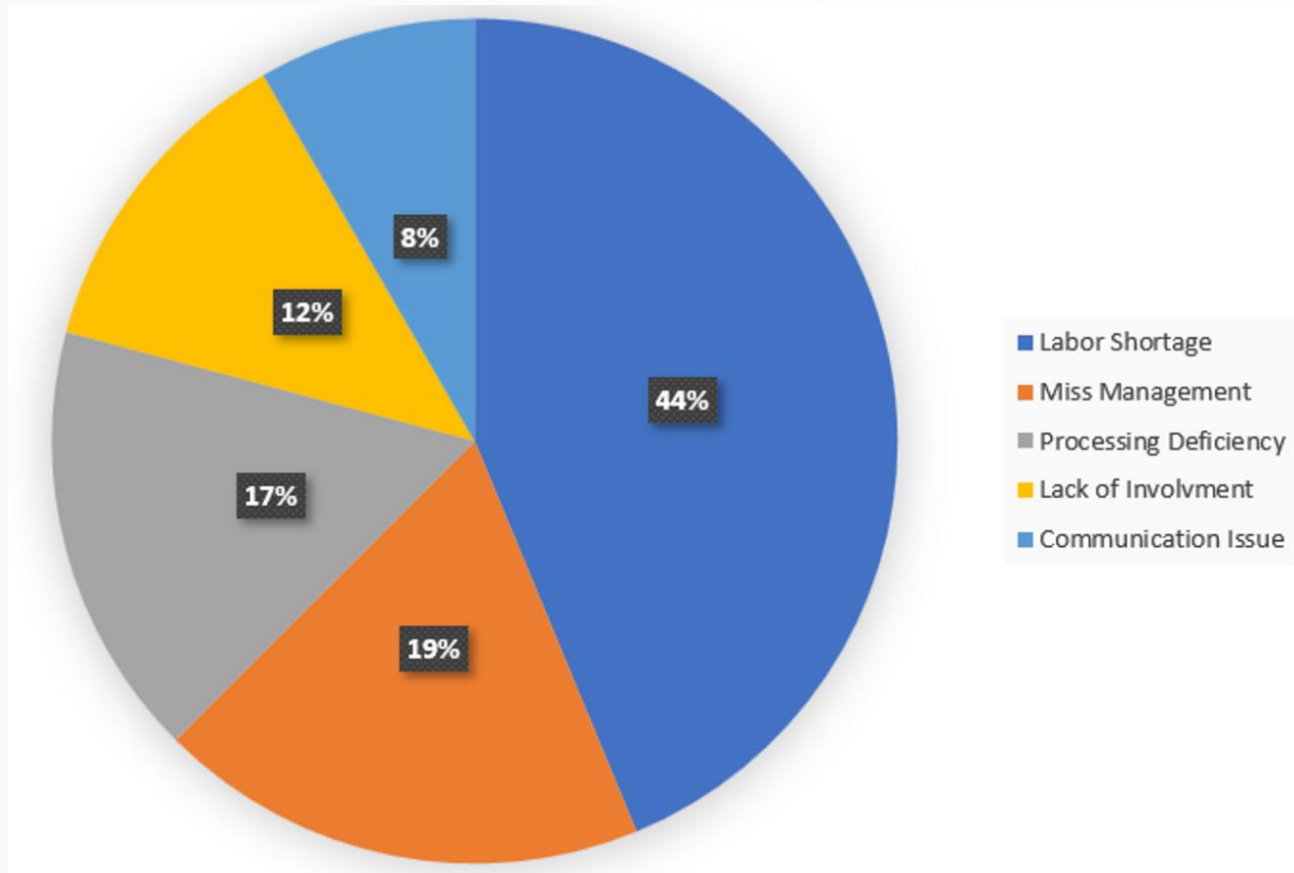
## **Theme 2 – inside the gate**

- **Lack of labor** as main limitation
- “Common” production challenges
  - **Parasites**
  - Genetics
  - Feed/nutrition
  - Pasture management
  - Cost of production

## **Theme 3 - outside the gate**

- Technical assistance is lacking – but role of university is important – training and engagement needs
- Supply challenges for small buys (bargaining power)

# Priority election



Picture: Luiz Felizardo

# Needs and opportunities

## **For the association**

- Renew interest – engagement from current members on leadership positions
- Youth engagement
- Explore market and purchasing opportunities as a group

## **For producers**

- Sheep and goat industry expanding
  - Opportunity for different markets – genetics and meat

## • **For extension**

- Increasing number of farmers and inventory
  - Need for knowledge and assistance
- Lack of engagement
  - Need to rebuild trust and connection
  - Enhance training and experience
- Great opportunity for 4-H to engage with youth



FORAGE TEAM

Thank you!

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