

A publication of the Market Information Service (MIS) - Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
"Linking the market and primary producers"

SHEEP PRODUCTION



The introduction of tropical sheep, as a new opportunity for farmers under mixed farming systems, was a step towards in raising the level of productive efficiency of the traditional farming system. The establishment of sheep production systems that were efficient and sustainable would enhance household food security, generate some form of income to rural households, and offer some Employment opportunities.

Samoa imported Fiji Fantastic sheep from Fiji for the first time in August 2004. The importation consisted of 40 in-lamb ewes and 4 rams. The cost of the sheep was US\$85,000 (US\$2000 or SAT5700/head). The second shipment arrived in October 2014 with a flock of 150 animals. The sheep were transported to the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Production and Health Division's research station at Avele. This Sheep Industry Plan sets out the 2005 - 2014 Blueprint for development of sheep farming in Samoa.

After these two shipments from Fiji (Fiji Fantastic breed), the Ministry decided to expand more on the sheep industry by importing the Black Head Dorper, from Southern Australia in mid-2015. This importation consisted of 14 animals (10 ewes and 4 rams) and it was funded under the Samoa Agriculture Competitiveness Export Project (SACEP). The main focus of this shipment was not only to boost the sheep industry further but also for research purposes and observation in terms of their adaptability to the local environment and performance under confinement.

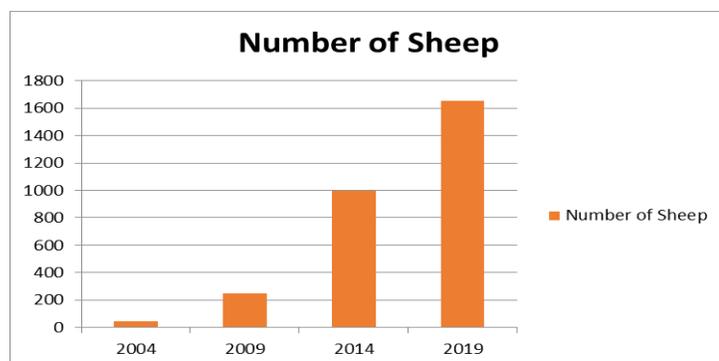


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Local Production

Since 2004, the number of sheep according to the Livestock Headquarters records was 44 and has increased to a total of more than 1600 in 2019 as indicated in the Agriculture Census 2019-2020. In 2019, there were about 1,654 sheep available in the country which indicates a better development of the industry from 25 years back.



Development of sheep farmers was a critical success factor in enhancing optimal growth and sustainable development of the sheep industry in Samoa.

Approximately 160 registered sheep farms with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries by the end of 2020. It is estimated that each farm operator required to invest approximately SAT\$4,500 for livestock and will be required to establish night paddocks and night houses before distribution of sheep from the central flock.¹

National Composition.

In the 2019-2020 Agriculture census, 1,654 sheep were recorded with 1,143 in Upolu and 511 in Savaii. The largest sheep herd was recorded in the North West of Upolu region with 538 sheep followed by the Savaii region as mentioned above. It appears that most of the sheep farmers reside in the main island of Upolu; however there is a big improvement in the number of sheep farms in Savaii since 2004.

National sheep count from the Agriculture Census 2020.

Region	Total	No. of Lambs less than 1 year old	No. of Femal Adults	No. of Male Adults
Apia Urban Area (AUA)	243	10	17	14
North West Upolu (NWU)	538	27	45	39
Rest of Upolu (ROU)	362	18	28	29
Savaii	511	27	51	44

Source: Agriculture Census 2020, SBS, MAF & FAO.

But that does not count the government flock operated by MAF, if we include the MAF flock, there would be a record of 1,939 sheep (285 sheep in Gov. farms-MAF).

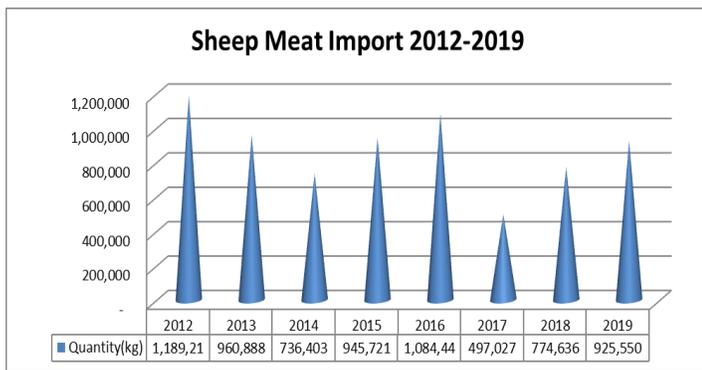
Market Information

Retailers sell domestic mutton at an average price of \$10.50/ kg DWE (a 54 percent gross profit, depending on mutton cut), which competes well with imported frozen mutton cuts selling for up to an average price of \$23.95/kg DWE.

Total quantity of imported sheep meat that was made available for public consumption is estimated at 925 tons and value at about \$9.7M SAT (C.I.F.) for 2020. That is, about 899 tons sheep meat or 88% of total quantity sheep meat is imported from New Zealand and Australia. Locally produced sheep carcasses sourced from MAF/APHD are sold at \$10.00/kg price.²

¹ MAF Annual Report 2019-2020

² Export Monthly Report from SBS & Monthly Meat Data from APHD



Introduction of domestically produced mutton would compete well with the low-quality cuts being imported, which retails are well over \$5.00 per kg; some 40 percent higher than the beef retail price. Sheep producers have two sales channels: sheep for mutton or as breeders.

The latter option is a viable one as increasing numbers of household request breeding stock to start their own flocks. Yearling breeding sheep (35 kg LW) sell at \$4.27/kg DWE (81 percent gross profit), whereas mutton sheep sell at \$5.85/kg DWE (149 percent gross profit). Selling breeders is therefore the less profitable option. However, the price of breeder sheep does not reflect market rates and should be increased to a 14 percent premium over mutton sheep. This is important, especially in introducing private sector sheep multipliers who would sell breeding stock instead of mutton sheep. Doing so would provide the incentive to sell breeders instead of mutton sheep, thereby contributing to a much needed increase of the national sheep flock.³

Sheep Farming Problems

There has been no big problem with diseases seen in rearing sheep in Samoa yet. Common problems in livestock rearing like mortality at birth, and during the 1st week after birth for the weak ones or poor mothering ability for the young mothers, also poor ewe (mother sheep) nutrition and lack of vital nutrition in their diets like calcium for strong bones and magnesium for blood development.

Monitoring of any worm infestation was a priority. Fecal samples collected and tested regularly for worm counts was a control measure taken, to ensure that the animals are free from these internal

parasites. Sometimes pneumonia became a problem if the flocks left out late at night or not housed in time so that they won't catch a cold.

Comparisons with other Pacific Island Countries

After 25 years Fiji has a national flock (Fiji Fantastic) of 5000 – 6000. Recently, Fiji has exported small numbers of sheep to Samoa and Tonga (44 to each nation). Countries like Tonga and Papua are not successful developed due to the return on investment which has been particularly poor. In 2019 Fiji exported more than 11 tonnes of frozen, boned sheep for a total value of US\$121,348 (SAT 317,332). The average age of sheep in Fiji has steadily increased and this export reflects a concerted effort by Fiji to move toward a better age structure in their ewe flock through high culling of aged ewes from their national flock. Currently, Fiji's sheep development project receives US\$58,000 operational costs per year, which is just over 75% of the annual meat value produced.

In PNG's case high death rates of young and adult sheep from internal parasite infections associated with intensive sheep rearing systems severely reduced the number of sheep available for sale or distribution to smallholders from government stations. In both countries, lack of private ownership and private benefit from sheep farming activities led to a less than optimum level of management responsibility. (Sheep Industry Development Plan)

Developments

The Government of Samoa adopts sheep policies and management practices that will create an environment for commercial sheep production and will lead to high productivity and return on investment. The APHD facilitate the development of few commercial sheep farms that will be capable of generating cash income on a long term basis, rather than a large number of small sheep farms with a focus on family food consumption or small one-off sales of sheep meat.

³ Samoa Livestock Production and Marketing

Table 1: Average Prices at the Local Markets

Commodities (SAT\$/lb)	July 2020	August 2020	Lowest price for 2020 to date	Highest price for 2020 to date
Taro	2.97	3.06	0.89	1.06
Banana	1.36	1.09	1.05	1.36
Taamu	4.64	5.17	0.90	2.29
Coconut	1.04	1.06	2.27	3.06
Breadfruit	1.31	1.11	3.56	5.32
Yam	4.22	3.58	3.47	5.97
Head cabbage	9.89	8.63	3.54	5.30
Tomato	12.08	14.57	4.32	9.82
Chinese cabbage	5.99	4.32	4.34	8.78
Cucumber	4.18	3.48	8.63	14.71
Pumpkin	4.13	3.58	12.08	19.92

Source: Samoa Bureau of Statistics

Table 2: Foreign currency per tala (ST\$)

July-August 2020	USD\$	NZD\$	AUD\$	YEN\$	FJD\$	EURO
1 Samoan Tala SAT\$ =	0.3824	0.5352	0.5127	39.1200	0.7855	0.3080

Source: ANZ Exchange Rate

Market Link Newsletter

This newsletter is published bi-monthly and it seeks to assist stakeholders (farmers, consumers, wholesalers, policymakers) make informed market and marketing decisions based on credible, relevant price and supply information. Help us, help you by providing constructive feedback on market information issues that will improve the service which will lead to growing a healthy and wealthy Samoa. For more information contact the Policy Planning and Communication Division and ask for Taimalietane Matatumua.

Disclaimer

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You can contact us by phone, fax and email or come down and visit us. We are located on Level 1, TATTE Building, Sogi or you can write to us at:

Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
P.O Box 1874
Phone: (685) 22 561
Fax: (685) 28 097 Email: tai.matatumua@maf.gov.ws