



# Local Harvest

Foodlink Waterloo Region • Issue 46 • February 2011

## Features

Local Farm Profile:  
Tosali Farms, Linda &  
Sandy Porter

Fresh in Focus:  
Got Your Goat!

Finding Goat Products  
in Waterloo Region



**FOODLINK**  
P.O. Box 601  
St. Jacobs, ON  
NOB 2N0  
519-513-8998

[www.foodlink.ca](http://www.foodlink.ca)

**Local Harvest  
content, layout and  
editing:**

Anna Contini

Carmen Everest-Wahl

Wendy Koch

## Local Farm Profile: Tosali Farms, Linda & Sandy Porter



*Proud Parents: Linda & Sandy check in on their newborn kids*

Growing up in the country and having worked on his uncle's cattle farm confirmed what Sandy Porter knew from the age of about four – that he wanted to be a farmer. But life took a few twists and turns and it wouldn't be until a few decades later that this dream would be realized. After many years of working in the restaurant business and then in manufacturing, Sandy and his wife Linda finally decided the time was ripe to embark on their farming adventure. They purchased their current property on Kossuth Road in Breslau conveniently situated in between Kitchener, Cambridge and Guelph and began a new chapter of their lives just four years ago.

Linda had come up with the idea of raising goats and after a great deal of research the Porters were convinced that their plan was both sound and viable. Among the advantages to goat farming was the fact that comparatively little overhead capital or expensive equipment was required, and there were few goat farms in Ontario, despite the growing ethnic population. Interestingly, goat meat accounts for 60% of the world's red meat consumption, even though North Americans haven't completely embraced this trend. Sandy is quick to point out that goat meat has more protein than beef yet less fat than skinless chicken so



*Sandy gets a 'kiss' from one of his favourite Saanen goats*

there are the obvious health benefits. He is optimistic that demand for this specialty meat will only grow as people become more health conscious and keen to seek out new local flavours.

The Porters recognized that there was an obvious niche to be filled, but because there were so few goat meat farmers in Ontario, Sandy and Linda would need to do a lot of their own groundwork. They were originally planning to partner with a neighbouring farmer friend named Tony. Hence the name Tosali, which takes the first two letters of Tony's, Sandy's and Linda's name! They discovered that Tosali is the name of an ancient city in India as well as the name of a Brazilian soccer team, so it would resonate well with both of these ethnic groups in addition to Italians, who are also big consumers of goat meat. Although Tony ended up mentoring, rather than partnering, the Porters decided to keep the name.

They began their goat farming venture with the purchase of only a few newborn kids kept in a heated barn. Linda recalls those early days of bottle feeding them all and the angst that they might not survive. They had been warned that the mortality rate amongst kids was a whopping 20%. Goats are very susceptible to pneumonia and disease. To their credit, in the past

*continued on page 2*



## Local Farm Profile continued

four years they have kept the mortality at only 5-10%. For Linda this is indeed the hardest aspect of the job. They name most of their kids and provide them with a very fine life at Tosali Farms. Sandy points out that 70% of the cost of raising goats is in the first month.

The Porters currently raise various breeds of goats for meat only—Alpine, Nubian, Saanen and La Mancha make up the majority. They acquire the kids at only a few days of age and keep them for about four months. “Since they are only with us for 16 weeks, we want to make sure it is a good 16 weeks,” says Sandy. The newborns require the most care and are kept in a heated barn for about a month until they are weaned, and then move out to an open barn where they are fed a special ration developed by the animal nutritionist from a local feed mill. The goats are also given high quality hay and a mineral supplement, both fed free choice. True to their reputation, Sandy and Linda have found the goats to be curious, intelligent, sometimes mischievous, entertaining and each with ‘a personality of its own’. They are rather like human kids in many respects!

While goats are the focal point at Tosali Farms, it is a seasonal operation, with production typically peaking from February to August on a 16 week rotation. For this reason Sandy and Linda have diversified their farm offerings to include beef, pastured poultry, eggs from free range hens, lamb and heritage pork, all produced on site. The past year has been a very busy one on their farm. They have built two new barns, a pig shelter and installed hydro and running water. They began with just one acre of land four years ago but now lease approximately 50 acres of land from their neighbour. Sandy’s philosophy is to “simulate the animals’ natural habitat as much as possible”. He is currently building pens with outdoor access and hopes to soon construct a type of climbing ‘goat playground’ to entertain both visitors to the farm as well as the goats themselves.

Amongst the new farm arrivals are 22 sheep and 9 Tamworth and Berkshire pigs, both heritage breeds. One of the most popular offerings at Tosali Farms has been their free range chickens and eggs. They have a loyal following of customers who refuse to buy their eggs anywhere else!

Now that the Porters have automated milk feeders and more natural ventilation in the nursery barn, they are hoping to bump up their goat production to about 2400 per year. Following their short but pleasant life at Tosali Farms, the goats go to an abattoir in either Drayton or Ayr,

and are often processed at Kitchener Halal Meats or Louro Bros. in Ayr. Many of the goats are also sold at OLEX (Ontario Livestock Exchange). Sandy has tried to gear production to the various ethnic holidays and preferences for different types of goat meat. Easter is a particularly high demand time, especially amongst Italians who prefer a very young milk-fed goat, with a mild flavour. Those of East Indian or Caribbean origin on the other hand will often seek a stronger flavoured meat which is balanced by curry spices.

The Porters have many exciting plans for the future. They would like to acquire females and move towards birthing their own goats within the next five years. Sandy hopes to start with a breed called ‘Kiko’ from New Zealand because they are reputed to be very maternal as well as long-lived and hearty.

Sandy and Linda also look forward to eventually opening a new on-farm meat store, offering a full range of products raised on their farm. Not only will customers be able to purchase goat, beef, lamb, (they can even hand pick their own animal for their freezer order), chicken and eggs, but they will also be able to see how the animals are raised. Given the reputation of goats, it is sure to be high quality entertainment...no kidding!

*Tosali Farms is located at 2119 Kossuth Road in Cambridge. 519-716-GOAT(4628), 519-716-5628 or 519-716-8628. They are open for business Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays year round. ♦*



## Finding Goat Products in Waterloo Region

There are a few local farm markets in Waterloo Region that feature goat products such as meat, dairy and skin care products. If you are up for a new adventure why not consult Foodlink’s 2010 *Buy Local! Buy Fresh!* map for a listing. Please call for hours and availability.



**Oakridge Acres County**  
(Goat Dairy Products)  
2132 Greenfield Road, Ayr  
519-632-7653 | [www.oakridgeacres.ca](http://www.oakridgeacres.ca)



**Charles Quality Meats**  
(Goat Meat)  
1448 Wilby Road, St. Agatha  
519-886-7931



**Winroe Gardens**  
(Goats’ Milk Skin Care Products)  
221 Katherine St. North  
Winterbourne  
519-664-0556



**Tosali Farms**  
(Goat Meat)  
2119 Kossuth Road, Cambridge  
519-716-4628

**New 2011 Listing**  
**The Smiling Goats**  
(Goats’ Milk Skin Care Products)  
7736 Reid Woods Dr., Elmira  
519-669-8837



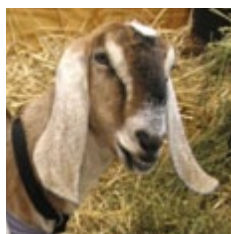
## Got Your Goat!

Goats (*Capra hircus*) have coexisted with humans for thousands of years. Wild goats were easily domesticated by early Neolithic farmers in the area around modern day Turkey, providing a variety of household staples – milk, meat, fibre, skin, bones, sinew and dung for fuel. Today, over 300 distinct breeds of domestic goats can be found around the world, living in environments as diverse as high altitude mountain ranges to dry desert climates.

In this country, the Canadian Goat Association (CGA) recognizes nine breeds, although goat farmers may have additional breeds on their farms.



The **Alpine, Oberhasli, Saanen and Toggenburg** breeds all originated in Switzerland. While resembling each other in shape, they differ substantially in size and colouring. These goats are some of the best milk producers. Pictured here is a Toggenburg.



The **Nubian** is a result of British breeding between African and Indian goats. Their discerning features are their long roman noses and big, floppy ears.



The **La Mancha** breed is Spanish in origin and distinguished by its very small ears. Both the Nubian and La Mancha are dual purpose breeds, raised for both their meat and milk.



Two much smaller breeds recognized by the CGA originated in Africa. The **pygmy**, shown here, is raised mainly for its meat. The **Nigerian Dwarf**, a smaller version of the Swiss breeds, is a dairy goat. However, both breeds are increasingly popular as pets due to their size and temperament.



The last recognized breed in Canada is the **Angora** from Turkey. Unique for its lustrous, curly locks and large curly horns, this goat is sheared twice a year for its hair. The Angora is also raised as a meat breed.

There are almost 2200 commercial goat farms in Ontario, according to the latest statistics from Ontario Ministry of Agriculture (OMAFRA), producing a provincial herd of approximately 77,000 animals. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada reports that goat milk production in Ontario more than doubled between 2004 and 2009. While goats have not been a traditional meat and dairy animal on Waterloo Region farms, their

numbers are increasing and OMAFRA's most recent figures report approximately 60 goat farms in our Region, housing just over 2000 animals.

### Milking it for all it's Worth

The annual milk output for a dairy goat is between 600 and 1000 litres of milk, which is processed into fluid milk, cheese, yogurt, ice cream and other products like curd and milk powder. Anyone who shops at natural food stores or in the natural food section of large grocery stores will have noticed the rise of products made with goat milk. Compared to cow milk, goat milk has similar amounts of protein, fat, iron, and vitamin C. Unlike cow milk, however, it does not contain agglutinin, which means that the fat globules in goat's milk do not cluster together and are therefore easier for the human digestive system to process. Goat milk protein forms a softer curd (the term given to the protein clumps that are formed by the action of your stomach acid on the protein), which also makes the protein more easily digestible.

Goat milk contains only trace amounts of an allergenic casein protein, alpha-S1, found in cow milk. However, both cow milk and goat milk contain similar levels of another allergenic protein, beta lactoglobulin. Goat milk contains about 13 percent less lactose than cow milk and some lactose intolerant people find that they can comfortably consume goat milk.

Although the mineral content of goat and cow milk is generally similar, whole goat milk contains 10 percent more calcium and vitamin B-6, 32 percent more vitamin A, 26 percent more potassium, and 27 percent more of the antioxidant selenium than whole cow milk. It is also four times higher in copper and contains twice as much niacin. Cow milk, on the other hand, contains five times as much vitamin B-12 as goat milk and ten times as much folic acid.

### Getting to the Meat of it

Ethnic demand and social traditions for goat meat (chevon) have traditionally come from the Mediterranean, Southern Europe, the Middle East, Africa, South-eastern Asia, South America, Central America and the West Indies. With a similar protein content to beef but a 50 -60% reduction in fat content, a comparable cut of chevon is appealing to more adventurous meat eaters who also have their waistlines in mind. Young goats taste somewhat like veal, with no gamey overtones. Since chevon is so lean, it can lose moisture and toughen quickly if cooked at high temperatures and under dry conditions. Goat meat is often marinated and is best when braised or cooked with moist heat so it doesn't dry out.

### Additional Uses

Goat milk often appears in skin care products such as soaps, lotions, milk baths and lip balms. The high butterfat content of the goat milk produces a high quality moisturizer that has a similar pH to human skin. The lactic acid in the milk acts as a mild and natural exfoliant in body washes and cleansers, while the vitamins help to strengthen the skin. Goats are also used for their fibers. Mohair, Angora and Cashmere are all derived from these specific varieties of goats. Many of the breeds are dual-purpose and utilized for the production of milk or meat in addition to their warm fibers.



## What's the Difference?

Goats and Sheep are often confused, particularly when it comes to the wild cousins of the domesticated breeds. While they do share many similarities, each is a distinct species. To clarify whether the animal staring back at you with eyes sporting rectangular shaped pupils is a goat or a sheep, ask a few simple questions:

	Goat	Sheep
<b>Tail</b>	Points Up	Points Down
<b>Type of Foraging</b>	Browses leaves, twigs, shrubs and vines, mainly from the top of the plant	Grazes short grasses, clover and broadleaf weeds, mainly close to the soil surface
<b>Behaviour</b>	Curious, independent	Aloof with strong flocking instinct
<b>Horns</b>	Narrow, upright and less curved than sheep	Curled horns in loops on the sides of their heads
<b>Chromosomes (only as a last resort for proper identification)</b>	60	54

## Calabrian Roasted Kid

*Here is a recipe from Southern Italy (Calabria) that features goat, but feel free to substitute veal, lamb or rabbit.*

### What you will need:

- 2 1/4 pounds (1 k) kid or lamb, chopped into pieces
- 1 1/2 pounds (700 g) tomatoes blanched, peeled, seeded and chopped
- 1 onion, chopped coarsely
- Basil, minced
- Parsley, minced
- 1 hot red pepper, or more to taste, crushed
- Red wine (Ciro is a good choice)
- Olive oil
- Salt

### Method:

Using an oven-proof dish, brown the meat in 1/4 cup olive oil, and while it is cooking brown the onion until light gold separately. When the meat has browned, sprinkle it with the wine (a quarter to a half cup should be sufficient), and immediately stir in the browned onions. Stir in the tomatoes, basil, parsley, and red pepper, and transfer the pan to a 350 degree oven for approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes. Roast until the meat is fork tender, spooning the juices over it to keep it moist.

## DID YOU KNOW?

**Scapegoat:** This term describes a person who is meant to bear the blame of others. It derives from a passage in the Old Testament in which a goat is symbolically laden with the sins of others and banished into the wilderness.

**To Get Your Goat:** This term means to really annoy someone. There are a few possible derivations, the first one being the simplest – if I steal your goat and therefore remove your livelihood, you will be more than a little annoyed. The expression first shows up around 1900, where the word goat was prison slang for anger.

**Stemmler's**  
est. 1985

Just 5 minutes from the St. Jacobs Market

**Come see our family owned European style deli, committed to award winning food and service!**

M.S.G., Gluten and Lactose free products.  
No nitrate products available.

3031 Lobsinger Line Heidelberg Ontario, N0B 1Y0  
Tel: (519) 699-4590

www.stemmlermeats.ca