

ASECAUM: Cooperative structures supporting French mohair production

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French mohair is produced on about 250 farms, representing some 30 t per year. The entire production is sold direct, as finished products straight to the consumer. Mohair producers, as is common in French agriculture, have a strong history of cooperation.

This talk describes the various cooperative organisations which underpin the industry, helping farmers with genetic improvement schemes, technical training, sales, processing and marketing of processed mohair.

ASECAUM is an interprofessional Association which brings together 4 distinct interest groups :

- farmers who produce mohair
- farmers who produce breeding stock
- processor cooperatives
- marketing cooperatives

The aim of ASECAUM is to help these different groups to work together to direct production and ultimately to improve the farmer's income.

For some time, the European subsidy played an important role in the geographical distribution of herds. The success of the direct sale of mohair means that the subsidy is now of secondary importance and herds are increasingly developing outside these grant areas. In addition to European support, certain administrative regions have run specific schemes to support diversification products. From such sources, farmers can obtain grants for genetic improvement, the farm shop, advertising, etc...

Producers of Angora goats pay a contribution towards the operation of UPRA, the buck testing, and genetic improvement scheme. They participate in collective advertising by a contribution per kilo.

Farmers are also obliged to contribute to the National Association of Angora Goats' Breeders (Union representation, administrative help, Training)

The processing structures received, in certain cases, aid at a regional level when they were first set up, within the context of aid to industry and job creation, but they are now totally independent.

They participate closely in the running of the Interprofessional Association, with a contribution per kilo processed - and they also support the UPRA with a contribution per kilo processed

The Marketing Structures, both Individual or Collective have received aid from time to time at regional level, essentially for the setting up of their advertising material.

ASECAUM survives on contributions from the processing cooperatives and on the transfer back by the National Association of Angora Goat Breeders of a share of the farmers' contributions. ASECAUM, which is a national structure recognized by the Ministry of Agriculture, is authorized to request grant aid at national level for the benefit of each of the groups belonging to it. For example, and it is a very recent example, the ASECAUM obtained grants from the state for the Angora section of Caprigena France, for the setting up of a station for the control on performances of male Angora goats, and to communicate on the theme of genetics and quality.