

WELCOME TO THE ECO GOAT PROGRAM



Goats have been multiplying and roaming unchecked on many remote Greek islands, resulting in the desertification of landscapes and the loss of crucial biodiversity. Now, a new initiative launched by Ikaros Adventure Tours and Ecotourism Greece plans to remedy the problem.

THE CHALLENGE

After studying the phenomenon of shrinking forests on the Greek Islands, we were alarmed to find that a major contributing factor to this problem is the overpopulation and overgrazing by wild and domesticated goats. These animals graze indiscriminately on vegetation growing on the mountainsides and destroy the local biodiversity, leaving barren terrain in their wake.

Because the activity of these compulsive foragers remains unchecked by predators that once existed in the wild such as wolves, bears and even lions or tigers, the result is quite devastating to the complex ecosystems on the mountainside. Trees lose their shrubbery and the complexity of the soil eventually degrades, causing subsequent decrease in plant and animal biodiversity.

THE SOLUTION

The Eco Goat program promises to halt the degradation of flora and actively stimulate reforestation, supported by the proceeds from selling organic goat milk and meat. It sets specific criteria for raising the goats in a humane way under a system that provides benefits to local communities through the sale of organic, free-range goat products and contribute to reforestation.



KEY PRINCIPLES

- The goats will be raised in large designated shepherded zones contained within sturdy fences that are made using renewable and recycled organic materials.
- The goats will be treated humanely and will be able to roam free within these designated zones. They will be provided with adequate shrubbery to graze on and plenty of water.
- The plots will be planted with young trees that will be protected by special bamboo fences. The trees will be monitored and protected for at least two years until they are capable to defend themselves against hungry goats.
- Goats will be able to feed naturally in their environment yet will not be able to reach the trees in the reforestation program. No pesticides will be used in the program and any fruit-bearing trees that are planted will be certified as organic.
- Goat populations will be controlled, slaughtering only animals that are needed for consumption and in a humane manner. Meat and skins will be sold locally as much as possible to support the Eco Goat program.
- We will strive to ensure that the goats lead a healthy life and receive regular checks by a licensed veterinarian.
- Shepherds will be educated on the project and on treating the goats with respect.
- All parties involved in planting trees or producing goat products through the Eco Goat program will earn the right to display the Eco Goat sign.



GOAT PRODUCTS

Many small businesses and farmers will benefit from the Eco Goat program which promises to boost traditional professions and local economy. The Eco Goat label will be promoted as a seal of quality on all products derived from goats.

MEAT



Goat meat from goats fed on a completely natural diet, without hormones or antibiotics, will be supplied to local butcher shops and restaurants. It will also be supplied to organizers of religious island festivities and carnivals. Goat meat will also be used to lessen the dependence on non-local meat, especially beef.

BACKPACKS



Handmade natural goatskin backpacks have been part of the island's tradition for many years. Today, these backpacks will be part of the Eco Goat supply chain and will contribute to minimizing organic waste created from animal byproducts.

MILK



Goat's milk, which is arguably the healthiest type of milk, will be marketed as a viable alternative to cow's milk, not only to locals (who are already familiar with its benefits) but also to restaurants and to tourism businesses on the island such as hotels.

SOAP



Goat milk soap is considered a healthy, natural alternative to other soaps as the milk is reputed to have certain health properties that benefit the skin. These soaps can also be combined with local herbs and olive oil to create a luxurious soap product that can be featured in the island's shops and hotels.

CHEESE



The manufacture of local organic goat cheese known as Kathoura will be encouraged and manufacturing processes will be as natural as possible.

FERTILIZER



Goat manure makes excellent fertilizer, especially if the goats have enjoyed a natural diet. Goat manure fertilizer yields healthier crops and plants. It doesn't attract as many insects as other animal fertilizers. In addition, it is not deleterious to plants in the same way that manure from horses or cows is.

BECOME A PARTNER

Help us plant trees and grow them beyond their critical stage so they can contribute to island reforestation. Partners are encouraged to buy a set of five trees at 50 euros and a set of 10 trees at 100 euros, complete with the bamboo protection system.

Collected revenue will go towards promoting Eco Goat reforestation Events where volunteers take the purchased saplings and plant them in the designated zones. They will spend just half hour to plant and protect each tree in order to guarantee the survival of each sapling.

The Eco Goat program was conceived by Ikaros Adventure Tours with the support of Ecotourism Greece and green-guide.gr.



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