

Antelope Creek

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THE GLOBAL FOOD TABLE

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This article concerns a global view of the world and where the United States fits in regarding food. I hope you enjoy it. It made me think.

If you have a question on goat raising please send me a note via the following address: (if I don't know the answer I will find it for you)

Ranch and Rural Living
P.O. Box 2678
San Angelo, TX 76902
325-655-4434
fax (325) 658-8250

If you have access to a computer and the internet, you may send your questions to me at: ancreek@wcc.net. My website is: www.antelopecreek.com

If you would like to contact me directly you may do so by calling my toll-free number at the ranch which is: 325-453-2863. I normally get to the house after the evening chores about 9 p.m. Please leave a message on the answering machine if I am not there when you call. I will be happy to return your call as soon as possible.

On July 2 last year a lady named Marnie Dobson visited my Antelope Creek Ranch. Marnie was from England and was doing research funded by the Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust. These research grants are given to several people each year to travel about the world doing research on farming and livestock production. They are given a year to complete their project. Marnie's project involved niche markets for goat meat. In searching the web for other Nuffield funded research I came upon a paper by Kate Little entitled "Meat Goats: Sustainable Livestock Farming". I was fascinated by this paper.

In her year's worth of research Kate traveled to Brazil, Holland, England and South Africa visiting farms and observing livestock management practices. One part of

her paper that really made me think was her presentation of the "Global Food Table". As Americans we tend to think that the world revolves around us which in fact it does not. To illustrate this fact consider the following discussion of the global food table. (This observation comes from the book, "Eating Animals" by Jonathan Safran Foer and is published by Penguin Group, 2009).

"Next time you sit down for a meal, imagine that there are nine other people sitting with you at the table and that together you represent all of the people on the planet. Organized by nations, two of your tablemates are Chinese, two Indian, and a fifth represents all of the other countries in Northeast, South and Central Asia. A sixth represents the nations of Southeast Asia and Oceania. A seventh represents sub-Saharan Africa, and an eighth represents the remainder of Africa and the Middle East. A ninth represents Europe. The remaining seat, representing the countries of South, Central and North America, is for you. If we allocate seats by native language, only Chinese speakers would get their own representative. All English and Spanish speakers together would have to share a chair. Organized by religion, three people are Christian, two are Muslim, and three practice Buddhism, traditional Chinese religions or Hinduism. Another two belong to other religious traditions or identify themselves as nonreligious. If seated by nourishment, one person is hungry and two are obese. More than half eat a mostly vegetarian diet, but that number is shrinking. The stricter vegetarians and vegans have one seat at the table, but barely and more than half of the time any one of you reaches for eggs, chicken, or pork, that will have come from a factory farm. If current trends continue for another twenty years, the beef and mutton you reach for will also do so. The United States is not even close to getting its own seat when the table is organized by population, but it would have somewhere between two and three seats when people are seated by how much food they consume."

I found this discussion to be very enlightening and food for thought. The next time you think the world revolves around you consider the global food table.

As another illustration of thinking the world revolves around Americans consider the following story. Several years ago I happened to be in Capetown, South Africa at the same time that the Super Bowl was taking place. I was staying at the downtown Capetown Holiday Inn which contains 550 rooms. I remember going down to the lobby and asking

the person at the reception desk what channel was carrying the Super Bowl. Due to time differences the Super Bowl would be coming on at 2 a.m. in South Africa. When asked for the channel the receptionist said "Sir, we have soccer, rugby and cricket." I know that I told her as I had been watching these sports on the television for days in my room. I ask her for the channel carrying the Super Bowl again and she said, "Sorry Sir there is not interest in the Super Bowl here." I ask her how many Americans were staying in the hotel at that time and she told me that I was the only one. It would seem that the rest of the world goes on without us and could care less what we like to do or watch.

Until next time-----

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