

## **Introduction**

This annual update report on the state of the U.S. meat goat industry is based on the January 1, 2020 USDA NASS (National Agriculture Statistical Service) Sheep and Goat Inventory Report (reflecting CY 2019 figures). The sampling techniques and analyses and thus their validity remain the same as for the past few years. The data may not be entirely accurate due to variations in collection from the sources, but our working assumption has been, and continues to be, that the collected data are close enough to reality and are based on the same procedures to obtain the data in previous years so they are useful for annual comparisons and to track industry trends. We remind readers that Meat Goat Industry Update, part 2, containing data on domestic slaughter output and on goat meat will be in the June issue of Goat Rancher. Note that the continuing drought and horrendous brush fires in Australia may well impact sharply the volume of goat meat exports coming to the US and possibly the dockside prices at US Ports of Entry. If so, changes in retail prices of imported goat meat may well be in the offing and will be discussed.

## **Meat goat industry**

Table 1 shows the changes in goat inventory from an industry high of January 1, 2008 to January 1, 2020. There was a slight increase in total and meat goat numbers (0.8 % and 0.7%, respectively) from the previous year, but total goat numbers still lag the largest number of total and meat goats in 2008 by 14.7% and 19.3%, respectively. The very slight uptick may be due to higher prices for kid goats in most markets, although regional droughts, older owner ages, labor and capital requirements, and lack of close animal markets remain as impediments to large increases in the goat industries.

Total milk goat numbers again increased from last year and have increased by 36.2% since 2008. Angora goats continued to decrease in 2019 to 130,000 head, with 80.7% of them in Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, and California. The continuing decline over the past 25 years has been due to the discontinuation of the USDA Wool and Mohair Act that subsidized wool and mohair prices from 1954 to 1993

using funds from stiff tariffs on Australian and New Zealand imported wool and mohair and to the increasing popularity and price of plant and synthetic sources for textiles.

The inventory changes in meat goat numbers by state are in Table 2. As expected, Texas, Tennessee, California, Oklahoma, and Missouri continued to have the most meat goats. The increased meat goat population in Texas last year has the Lone Star state accounting for 47.8 % of meat goat numbers and 32.7% of total U.S. goat numbers.

Figure 1 shows the historic numbers of total, meat and other, milk, and Angora goat numbers for the most recent 30 years. We have thought that if U.S. producers continue to market fewer and fewer slaughter goats, there will be increased imports of Australian goat meat to fill the ever-increasing demand from growing populations of ethnic consumers, some of whom prefer meat from older, larger goats. There may also be more health-minded consumers. The continuing droughts in Australia reduced the numbers of feral goats that were harvested in 2018, but didn't seem to have the same impact in 2019. The final 2019 import data will be available sometime in March, but the mostly frozen goat meat imported through November was 36 million pounds, more than the 33.3 million pounds imported in 2018 and so the total imports in 2019 should be closer to the 46 million pounds imported in 2017.

Figure 2 has the distribution of meat goat numbers in each state as of January 1, 2019. As was shown in table 2, the same states continue to have the highest population of meat goats. The percent change in meat goat numbers from 2008 to 2019 are shown in Figure 3 for each state. Although most states have shown decreases in meat goat numbers during the past decade, notably Iowa, Oregon, and Indiana have shown increases in numbers during that time. Figure 4 shows relative changes in meat goat populations and shifts in production among U.S. locations. The reasons for the changes over that decade are not clear,

As described in last year's update report, there are few meat goat herds with more than 1,000 does. There were 136,442 farms with goats (meat, Angora, or milk) and 70% of these were less than 50 acres, according to the 2017 USDA Census of Agriculture. That data showed the average meat goat farm had 15 meat goats and less than 1.5% of goat farms had 2,000 or more acres.

The milk goat industry continues to increase in numbers of dairy goats (Figure 5). This reflects the increased consumption of goat cheese, which has increased the demand for goat milk production. The dairy goat industry has also seen some minor shifts in production and locations as there are fewer milk goat farms, but increased numbers of dairy goats per farm.

Inquiries concerning meat goat startups (logistics and costs) and also marketing opportunities and constraints and probable returns to labor, management, and capital continue. Foundation breeding stock continued to be in demand, with higher prices in 2019 than 2018. Prices are reported for the larger goat auctions at <https://www.ams.usda.gov/market-news/goat-reports>. Replacement stock typically range about \$40 to \$60 per head above similar weight slaughter animals. Dr. Pinkerton regularly reports in his Goat Rancher monthly column on marketing and production, with recent columns on confinement goat operations and profitability of marketing goats at heavier slaughter weights. The industry update report part 2 on the 2019 U.S. goat slaughter and goat meat imports will be in the June issue.

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Table 1. Meat and other goats in the U.S. by class, in 1,000 head (National Agriculture Statistics Service, Sheep and Goat Inventory Report, January, 2020).

Classification	2008 (1,000 head)	2010 (1,000 head)	2015 (1,000 head)	2019 (1,000 head)	2020 (1,000 head)	2020, as % of 2019	2020, as % of 2008 <sup>a</sup>
All goats in U.S.	3,118	3,038	2,650	2,622	2,660	100.8	85.3
All meat and other goats	2,590	2,521	2,125	2,055	2,090	100.7	80.7
Breeding meat and other goats	2,120	2,056	1,719	1,646	1,675	100.0	79.0
Replacement kid goats < 1 year old	391	376	298.5	292	298	100.0	76.2
Does one year & older	1,575	1,526	1,288.5	1,227	1,247	99.8	79.2
Bucks one year & older	154	154	132	127	130	100.8	84.4
Meat and other market goats/kids	470	465	406	409	415	103.8	88.3

Kid crop (born the previous year)	1,662	1,612	1,355	1,267	1,265	99.2	76.1
All Angora goats	205	161	160	137	130	73.5	63.4
All milk goats	323	356	365	430	440	104.8	136.2

<sup>a</sup> The % change is given a percentage of 2008 values because the largest numbers of total goats and meat goats reported by USDA was in 2008. (note that the January 1 figures reported are actually December 31 ending inventory figures for the previous calendar year).

Table 2. Inventory changes, in number and percentage change, of meat and other goats in the top 20 states\*.

Rank	State	2008 head	2010 head	2015 head	2019 head	2020 head	2020, % of 2019	2020, % of 2008
1	Texas	1,030,000	990,000	800,000	740,000	765,000	103.4	74.3
2	Tennessee	124,000	125,000	118,000	89,000	100,000	112.4	80.7
3	California	89,000	93,000	85,000	90,000	87,000	96.7	97.8
4	Oklahoma	115,000	90,000	95,000	80,000	84,000	105.0	73.0
5	Missouri	86,200	84,500	78,600	72,000	75,000	104.2	87.0
6	Georgia	79,000	77,000	67,000	59,000	60,000	101.7	76.0
7	Kentucky	86,000	79,000	60,000	52,000	57,000	109.6	66.3
8	Florida	51,000	60,000	41,000	59,000	46,000	92.0	90.2
9	Alabama	70,000	60,000	47,000	45,000	46,000	102.2	65.7
10	North Carolina	86,500	90,000	43,000	49,000	45,000	91.8	52.0
11	Ohio	50,000	50,000	46,000	45,000	43,000	95.6	86.0
12	Kansas	43,000	42,000	40,000	44,000	43,000	97.7	100.0
13	Virginia	56,000	52,000	46,000	42,000	43,000	102.4	78.8
14	Pennsylvania	44,000	42,000	37,000	38,000	38,000	100.0	86.4
15	Indiana	36,000	33,500	31,000	34,000	37,000	108.8	102.8
16	Iowa	32,000	25,000	25,500	37,000	35,000	94.6	109.4
17	Arizona	33,500	25,000	28,000	33,000	33,000	100.0	98.5
18	South Carolina	40,000	39,000	34,000	32,000	32,000	100.0	80.0
19	Arkansas	45,000	50,000	38,000	32,000	31,000	96.9	68.9
20	Oregon	27,000	30,000	24,000	27,000	29,000	107.4	107.4

\* These 20 states comprise 82.7% (1,729,000) of the meat goats in the U.S. The top 25 states had 1,844,000 goats or 88.2% of the total meat goats in the US, as of January 1, 2020.

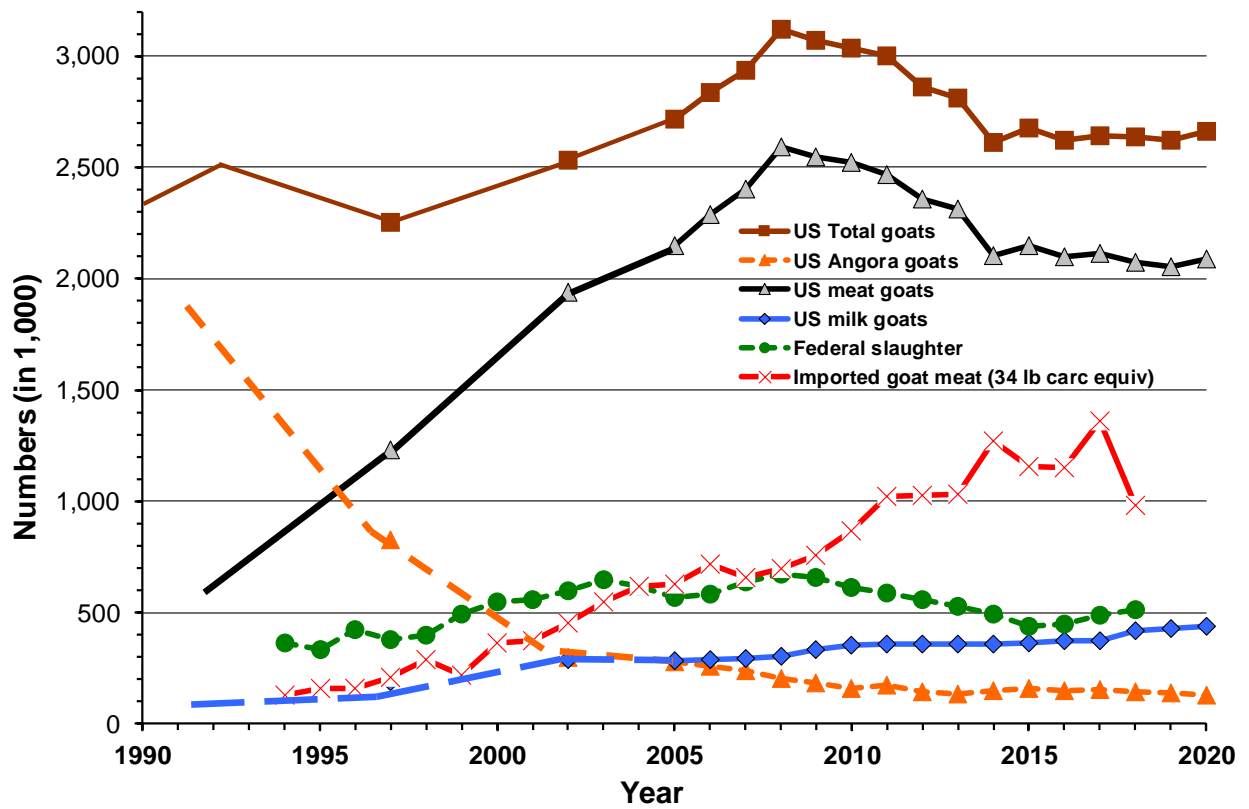


Figure 1. Trends in total goat numbers, meat goats, Angora goats, and milk goats in the U.S. from 1990 to 2020.

## 2020 Meat Goat Numbers, in 1,000s (NASS)

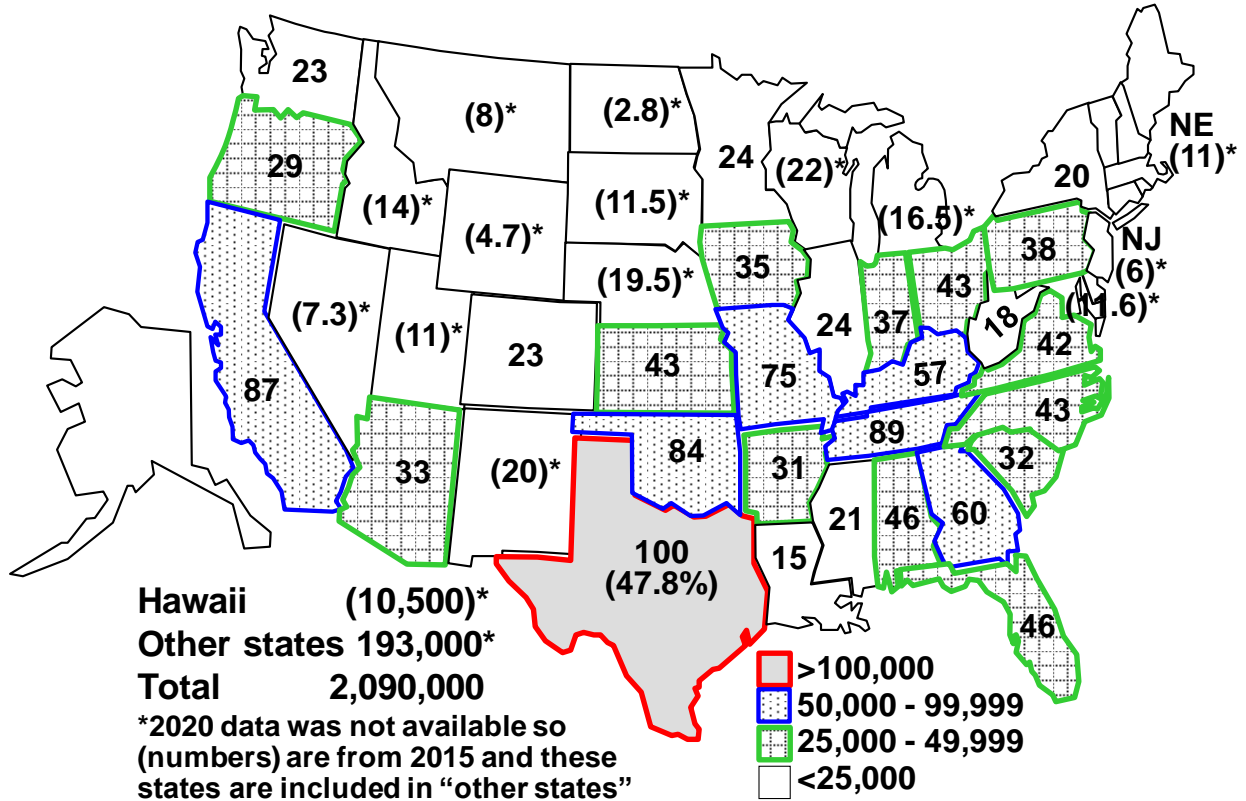


Figure 2. Numbers of meat and other goats by state as of January 1, 2020 (NASS, 2020).

## % Change in Meat Goat Populations 2008 to 2020

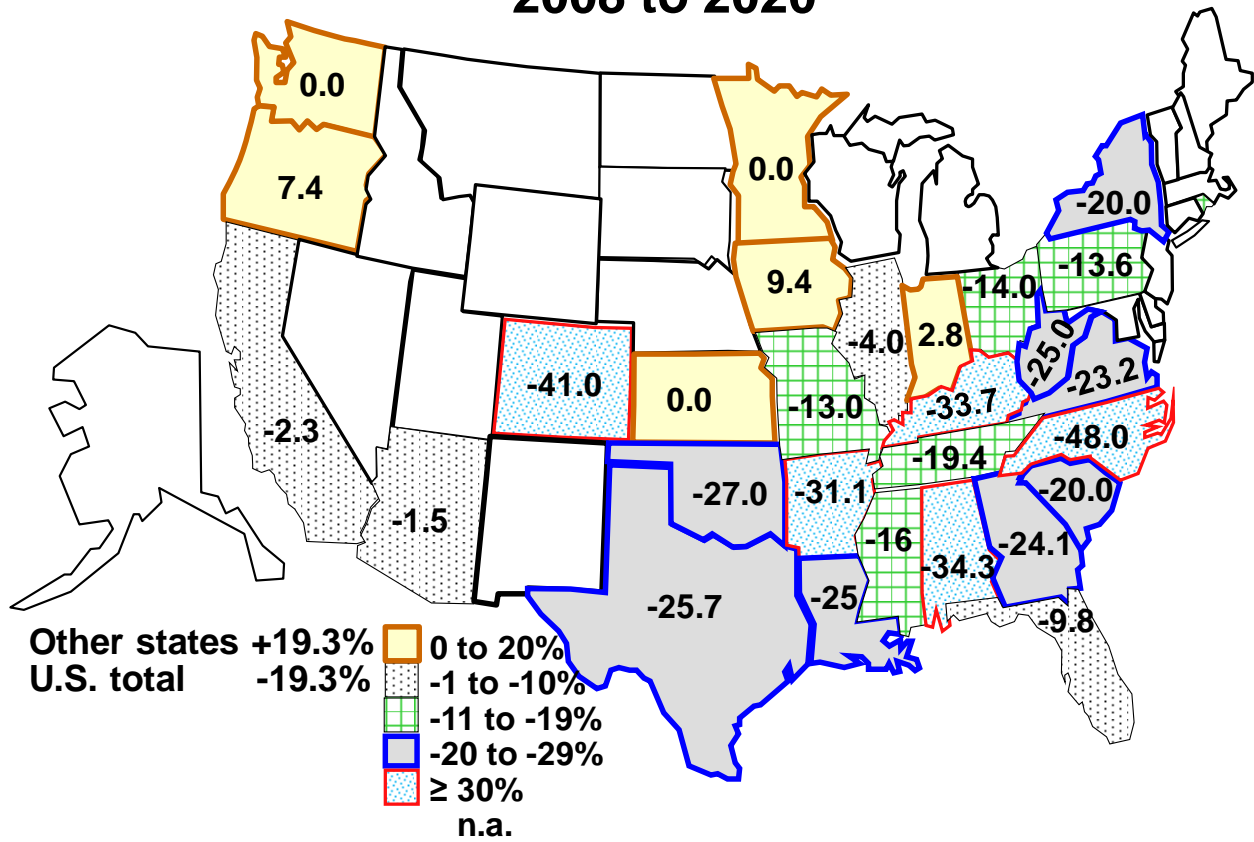


Figure 3. Percentage changes in meat and other goats by state from 2008 to 2020 (NASS, 2020).

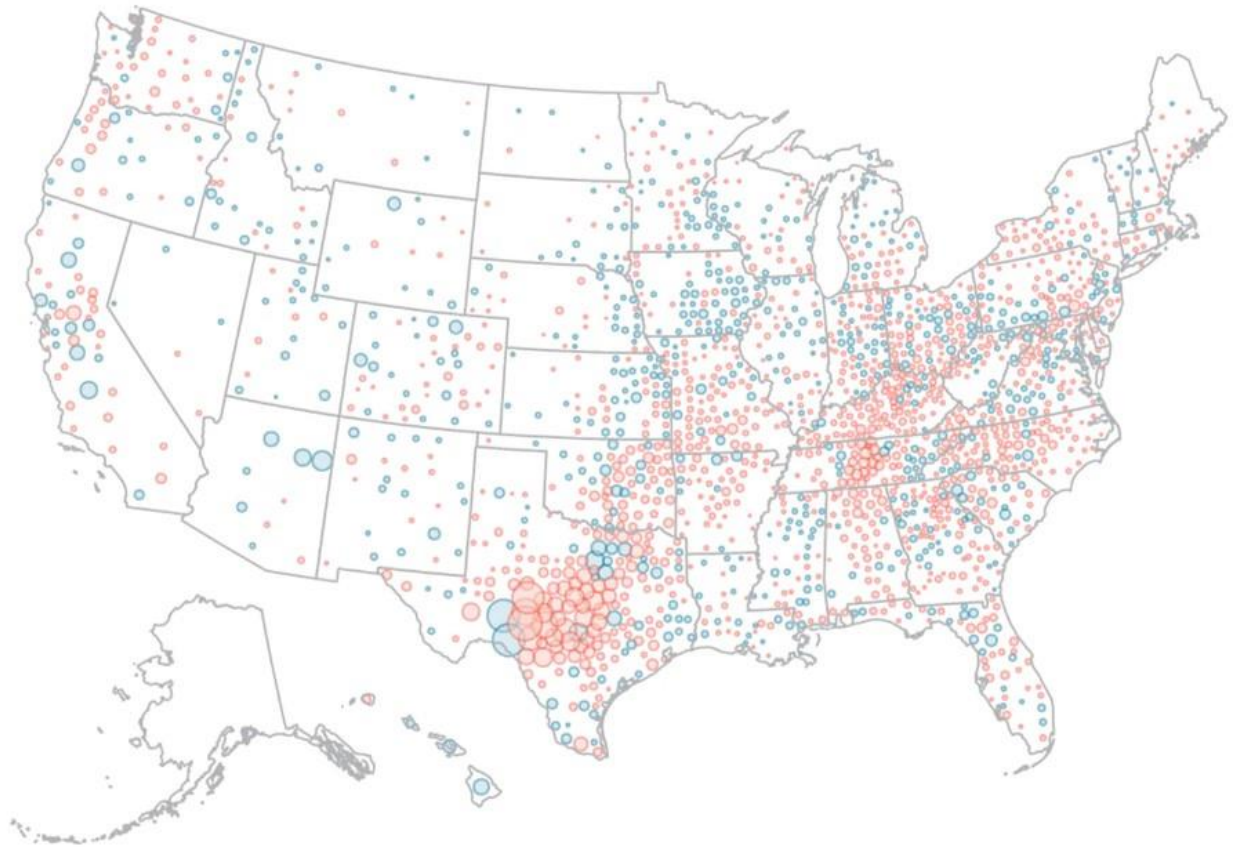


Figure 4. Changes in meat goat numbers from 2007 to 2017 (circles represent % change with decreases in red and increases in blue)(Reiley and Van Dam, Washington Post, 2019).



## 2020 Milk Goat Numbers, in 1,000s, and (% Change from 2015) (NASS)

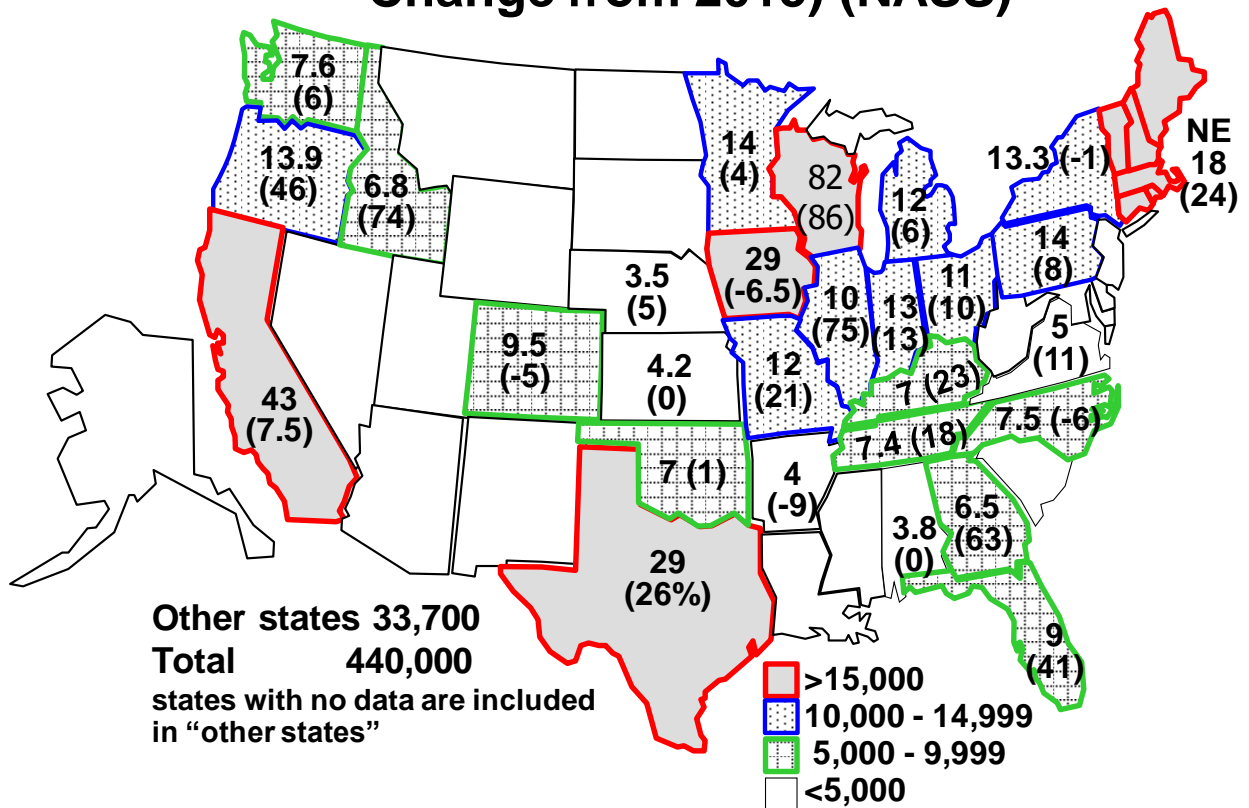


Figure 5. Numbers in 2020 and (% change from 2015) in milk goats by state (NASS, 2020).