

West Virginia State University Extension Service keeping specialty foods in West Virginia

Changing appetites: Keeping specialty foods in West Virginia

- WHO:** West Virginia State University Extension Service
- WHAT:** Seminar on raising goat and sheep for religious slaughter
- WHEN:** Monday, January 12, 2009 at 12 Noon
- WHERE:** The Islamic Center of West Virginia in South Charleston

This interactive seminar is designed to educate consumers, farmers, and producers on the benefits of locally growing and producing more alternative/ethnic foods for the people of West Virginia. Ms. Susan Shoenian from the University of Maryland Extension Service will be presenting the seminar. Halal foods are the current target ethnic food; however a diverse focus group has been formed to discuss educating the public on the demand for other food choices as well, such as Kosher foods.

While West Virginia farmers raise a number of goat and sheep, producers usually export these animals to larger metropolitan areas with the greatest public demand. During West Virginia State Extension Service's research, it was observed that a number of West Virginians who attend local mosques, synagogues, and international markets in the Charleston area are not having their dietary needs met. Individuals often choose to purchase food over the internet or undergo costly travel out of state to meet their dietary needs. With West Virginia's strong agriculture, we have the ability to grow and produce alternative foods in our own state. But opportunities are not being presented or pursued.

The Islamic Association of West Virginia has agreed to be the host site for meetings to facilitate this program. The seminar does require prior registration by **January 2**, as a catered specialty foods lunch will be served. The seminar will meet at the Islamic Center of West Virginia at 1 Valley Drive on the corner of Kanawha Turnpike and Valley Drive in South Charleston (located one block before the turn to Marshall University Graduate School).

For more information and to preregister, please contact Dr. Brown at (304) 541-3301 or abrown23@wvstateu.edu.

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