

Brazilian Kids Say Bye to Coke and Hi to Goat's Milk

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Monday, 08 August 2005

More than 60 thousand children and youngsters in 348 public schools in 26 municipalities located in the semi-arid region of the Northeastern Brazilian state of Paraíba will be the beneficiaries of an improved school lunch program.

The Goat's Milk project, developed by the Food and Nutritional Security Council (Consea), will supply these students with milk produced by small-scale livestock breeders.

According to the president of the Paraíba Consea, Marçal Cavalcante, the idea is to improve the quality of the food served to these students and generate employment and income for small-scale rural producers.

Cavalcante says that the substitution of items on the menu will assure a school meal of better quality.

"The milk will be collected from the small-scale producers of the region and delivered to the municipal schools with the addition of chocolate and strawberry flavoring.

"Goat's milk, which is second in quality only to breast milk, will replace artificial fruit drinks and soda pop, which have no nutritional value whatsoever."

According to Cavalcante, the desire of the government through this project is to improve the conditions under which goat's milk is produced and commercialized, thus enabling small-scale livestock breeders to invest in their properties, including the acquisition of equipment.

"This is generating work and income in the area of family farming. It is helping school administrators concern themselves with school lunches."

There are eight milk processing plants in the semi-arid region of Paraíba. Half the amount paid to the small-scale breeders comes from the Zero Hunger program.

The initiative is part of the Family Farming Program and is administered in Paraíba by the National Supply Company (Conab). US\$ 998 thousand (2.3 million reais) are earmarked for the program.

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