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ANGWIN AND DEER PARK INVADED BY HERDS OF HUNGRY GOATS

ST. HELENA, Calif., September 1, 2005 – The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) and the Napa County Fire Department announced today a herd of 600 goats were eating their way toward St. Helena Hospital and Pacific Union College as part of a planned assault on wildland fire in Napa County.

Mark Barclay, St. Helena Battalion Chief for the CDF and overall manager of the goat program, is enthusiastic about the instant results he is getting. “Goats are designed as eating machines and are the perfect tool to remove ladder fuels, the most dangerous types of vegetation that spread wildland fire,” says Barclay. “Ladder fuels include brush like poison oak, various varieties of broom, young oak tree shoots and manzanita – just the foods goats love to browse on.”

The goal of the Angwin and Deer Park goat program is to reduce the fuel load around St. Helena Hospital and Pacific Union College so they can be more easily defended in the event of a wildland fire.

The goat herd is owned and managed by Goats-R-Us, a family-owned business in Orinda, California. Owner Terri Oyarzun says goats are the perfect solution for the type of vegetation and terrain in Napa County. “God made goats for this job,” says Oyarzun. “They eat like a lawn mover without all the noise; they work in steep terrain without getting tired; and they enjoy the variety of plants we have to offer. On the average, a herd of 300 of our goats can clear about one acre a day.”

The goats are well cared for and tended on-site by a professional shepherd accompanied by two of the Oyarzu family dogs. The working method is quite simple. A portable fenced paddock is erected around the area to be cleared. This guides the goats and provides protection from predators. When one area is finished the goats are moved to a new paddock and a new meal opportunity.

If you happen to be driving in the Angwin and Deer Park area between now and mid-October, don't be surprised if you turn a corner and are confronted by several hundred happy but hungry goats.

The Angwin and Deer Park goat program is part of the larger Napa Firewise effort to prepare the residents of Napa County for the eventuality of wildland fire. More information about Napa Firewise can be found online at www.co.napa.ca.us or by calling 707-967-1426. For information on Goats-R-Us, visit their website at www.goatsrus.com or call 510-526-3337.

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Digital photographs of the goat herd are available on request by contacting Roger Archey, 707.255.7667 or rarchey@balzac.com.



Goats eating brush near Angwin, Napa County