

# 2021 Modern Homesteading Meat Goat Basics



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# Are you really, really, ready?



- Are your fences, pens and chutes goat proof?
- Is your grazing land adequate?
- Is your predator control in place?
- In your medicine cabinet do you have?
  - Dewormers
  - Iodine
  - Insecticidal Powder
  - Stomach tube
  - Vaccines
  - Antibiotic Ointment
  - Thermometer
  - Hoof trimmers

## But wait, there's more.....



- Do you have a working relationship with a veterinarian?
- Have you checked to see if there are any zoning restrictions that would prevent you from raising goats?
- Do you have a mentor?

# Fencing, Fencing, Fencing



- **Perimeter fence**

- Smooth Electrified Wire, at least 42 inches tall, 6 to 8 inches near the ground, 8 to 12 inches at the top strands, 6-14-22-32-42-52
- 6x6 Woven Wire, effective, costs at least 5 times as much as smooth wire, horned goats can get caught, place one electric wire about 9 inches from the woven wire at 12-15 inches from the ground, also reduces the forage growth at the fence line
- 6x12 Woven Wire, effective, cheaper, horned goats usually don't get caught

Interior Fences, 2-3 strands of braided wire or tape with step-in posts, electronet

# Upon arrival on the farm



- **Isolate animals for a month!**
- Vaccinate
- Deworm
- Test for certain diseases
- Identification tag

# When are my goats ready for breeding?



- Does age of puberty is 7-10 months
- Ideal breeding weight is 60-75% of adult weight
- Gestation length 146-155 days
- Breeding season is August – January
- Buck effect on estrous is positive
- Buck age of puberty is 4-8 months
- Breeding age is 8-10 months
- Ideal breeding ratio is 1 buck : 20-30 does

# Breeding



- To be profitable a producer must produce the highest quality product at the lowest possible price.
- Select a quality of animal that can perform under your management program.
- Keep production records of your animals (birth, weaning and post weaning growth data)
- Use single buck pastures to determine which sires are producing the best kids
- Does generally deliver single kids first, then twins weighing 4-6 pounds each there after and even triplets

# Breeding



- Do not ignore health and nutrition issues (remember no matter what the registration paper says, a cull is a cull!)
- Evaluate the animals in the environment we expect them to perform in

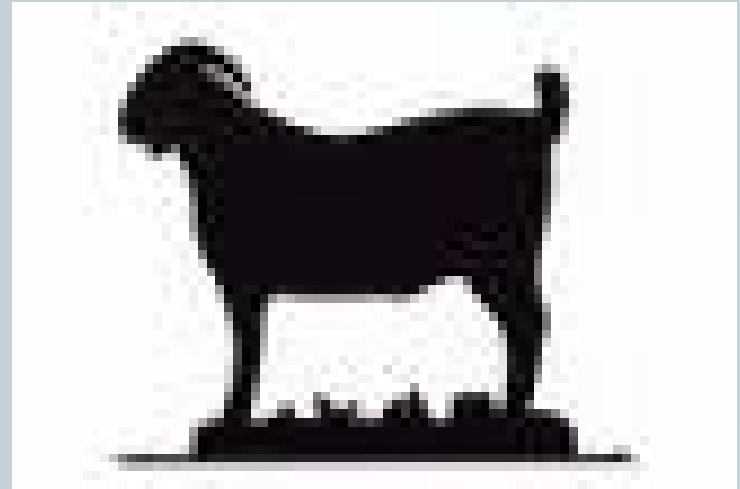




# What is BCS?



- BCS is the Body Condition Score
- This refers to the fleshing of fat cover of an animal
- Estimated on a graduated scale of 1-9
- 1-3 is thin
- 4-6 is moderate
- 7-9 is fat



# Why is BCS important?



- Goats like other livestock need to be scored to know where they are in development
- By constantly scoring livestock you can make a sound management decision on how to handle the livestock
  - *Example: The ideal BCS for breeding a goat is 5-6 so, if your goat is too thin (1-3) it should not be bred.*

# Nutrition



- Remember not all forages are created equal and not all farm animals will do well on that forage
- Problems usually occur when we don't pay attention to the changes of the animal Example: Dry does require 10-12% protein but during lactation they require 14-16%
- Goats are “top-down” grazers start with seed heads and progressively take down the forage
- Goats do not like to graze close to the ground

# Nutrition



- During warm season most nutritional needs are met however, it may be necessary to add minerals
- Late fall and winter offer grass hay plus one pound of 20% protein pellets.
- Feed higher protein hay and corn for pregnant or lactating does
- Remember goats are wasteful, so a green leafy hay is more palatable for a goats nutritional needs

# Nutrition



- Have your forage tested
- Improperly stored forage can lose as much as 50% of its nutritional value between harvest and feeding
- Can do well in intensive grazing management



# Feeding Goats can be challenging



- Feeders are necessary and should be raised off the ground so that goats cannot get into the feeder.
- It is best to remove the feeder after the goats are finished
- Hay should be fed in racks, bunks or along a fence line



# Grazing Management



- Prefer grass over clover
- Prefer browse over herbaceous plants
- Graze along fence lines before grazing the center of the pasture
- Will not graze forage that has been trampled or soiled
- It is better to rotationally graze them in smaller lots rather than one large pasture

# Rules for Goat Health



- Provide proper housing
- Practice good sanitation
- Provide adequate nutrition
- Provide clean water at all times
- Observe how much feed (hay, minerals, concentrates) are left over
- Count and observe your animals daily
- Observe the feces of your animals frequently



# Rules for Goat Health



- Clean pastures and exercise lots
- Become familiar with common diseases and parasites
- Investigate the source of strange smells
- Don't guess, use your veterinarian for diagnosis
- Get on a vaccination schedule (see green laminated card for recommended schedule)

# Deworming



- If possible always weigh animals prior to deworming
- Calculate and inject or drench the correct dosage of the dewormer
- Assess body condition
- Determine the dose according to the heaviest animal in the group
- Make sure the dewormer used is safe for pregnant does if they need to be dewormed

# Deworming



- Know your herd
- Get FAMACHA trained to assist you in evaluating your goats' parasite loads
- Work with your veterinarian to determine fecal egg counts

# Physiological Data



- Body temperature is 101.7 to 104.5 F
- Heart rate 70-80/minute
- Respiration rate 12-15/ minute

# Health



- This is the area that causes the most economic losses and results in the greatest number of people leaving the industry.
- Develop a relationship with a vet before you get started
- Get a vaccination program together with your vet
- Parasite control is critical.

# Health



- Use de-worming products and rotational grazing to help with parasite management
- The hoof walls of goats grow faster than many other livestock thus foot care is critical.
- Foot scald can lead to foot rot if hooves aren't trimmed and cared for (see handouts for details)
- Quarantine and treat new goats for parasites for 4 weeks prior to letting them into the herd

# A healthy goat.....



- Eats well
- Chews its cud
- Has a shiny coat
- Has strong legs and feet
- Is sociable
- Has bright clear eyes

# Signs of a sick goat.....



- Off feed, off water
- No sign of cud chewing
- Stands away from herd
- Rough hair coat
- Abnormal temperature
- Mucous discharge from nose, eyes, or mouth
- Diarrhea, runny eyes, limping
- Hair falling out
- Swelling on any part of the body



# Breeds



- **Nubian**
- Origins in Africa
- Good all purpose breed
- Has an extended breeding season and can be milked year round
- Bucks can weigh 175 pounds, does can weigh 135 pounds

# Breeds



- **Kiko**
- Developed in New Zealand
- Well suited to forage based meat production
- Rapid growth rate and early maturity

# Breeds



- **Toggenburg**
- Origins from Switzerland
- Known as the oldest dairy breed
- Typically weighs 120 pounds
- Excellent milk production and high butterfat

# Breeds



- **Boers**
- Developed in South Africa
- Good body conformation
- Male puberty at 6 months, does at 10 months
- Possible for 3 kiddings in 2 years

# Breeds



- **Spanish**
- Generically used to describe goats of unknown ancestry
- Can survive under adverse conditions
- Excellent reproduction rates
- Includes cashmere goats

# Breeds



- **LaMancha**
- Originated in Oregon, USA
- Good dairy goat in less than favorable conditions
- Produces high butterfat milk, good for cheeses

# Marketing Meat Goats



- Largely influenced by immigrant populations
- US is the top importer of goat meat in the world
- More than 75% of goat meat consumed in the US is imported
- Kentucky is in the top 10 states of meat goat production
- In Kentucky Bluegrass Stockyards auctions and monthly graded sales in Richmond
- Over the fence sales to immigrant populations

# Learn from other goat producers



- Join associations that promote goat production
- Networks can be very valuable
- [www.nkgp.com](http://www.nkgp.com) is the Northern Kentucky Goat Producer's website
- [www.kysheepandgoat.org](http://www.kysheepandgoat.org) is the Kentucky Goat and Sheep development office
- Third Thursday at Kentucky State University next session is March 18 at 11 AM via zoom.....

Zoom: <http://ow.ly/di3p50DuLUN>

Meeting ID: 829 0721 0037 | Passcode : 447660



# Questions

