



Goat Production Basics

Future Farms 2008

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Introduction

- Information sources
 - Goat business
 - Goat management
 - Health management
 - How to get into goats
 - Summary
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Visit Goat Institute

- Field day last Saturday in April
 - Workshops Parasite control, AI
 - Web site WWW2.luresext.edu
 - Producer web-based education program
 - Newsletter signup list
 - Fact sheets/handouts
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Internet Information

- Lot of good information is available on the web.
 - No responsibility for information-some information is half-baked and some fully baked
 - Rely on University web sites and breed/producer group web sites
 - List servers for goats, meat goats, small ruminant veterinary medicine
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Goat Magazines

- Meat Goat Monthly 915-655-4434
 - Ranch and Rural Living 915-655-4434
 - The Goat Rancher 888-562-9529
 - The Goat Magazine 866-221-4628
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Advantages of Goats

- Consume all types of vegetation
 - Good meat market
 - Suited to small farms
 - Suited to limited resource producers
 - Low start-up cost
 - Co-species grazing
 - Early puberty and high reproductive rate
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Why Have Goats?

- Low cost animal farm enterprise with reasonable rate of return
 - Clearing brush and weeds
 - Cheap animal to have around
 - Cheap way to ranch
 - Grass pastures are more suited to hair sheep
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Production Cycle

- Breed Dec 10
 - Kid May 10 When Forage is Available
 - Wean August? October?
 - Castrate?
 - Market?
 - Vaccinate early April before kidding
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Sample Meat Goat Budget

- Income
 - 1.5 kids/doe weaned
 - -.25 kids for replacement
 - 1.25 kids to sell
 - 55lb kid @\$.90/lb=50.
 - .20 cull for \$20.00=4.00
 - Total Income \$54.00
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Meat Goat Budget Expenses

- Fencing \$3.-5./doe
 - Pasture 5.-15.
 - Health 3.-8.
 - Buck service 2.-3.
 - Replacement 5.-15.
 - Winter feeding 8.-25.
 - Minerals & water 6.-10.
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Meat Goat Budget Summary

- Income \$54.
 - Expenses \$30. - 81.
 - Profit \$24. – (27.)
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Profitable Commercial Meat Goat Production

- The secret to making money on commercial meat goats is to not spend very much on them-not that you can starve a profit out of them.
 - The manager must minimize the resources required (feed, medicines & dewormer, fencing, predator control) and provide them from cheap sources
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Co-species Grazing

- Minimal dietary overlap

Cattle consume grass, lesser amounts of forbs and browse: Sheep consume grass, considerable more forbs, less browse and sedges: Goats browse, grass and some forbs.

- Complimentary grazing relationship

Pasture Stocking Rate

- Start with a small group of goats, let them multiply and sell goats when they run out of brush
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Feeding Concentrate Diets to Meat Goats

- Expensive
 - Goats are not as well adapted
 - Poor feed efficiency
 - Not economically sustainable
 - By-product feeds may be economic
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Sample Goat Wintering Programs

- Forage-stockpiled pasture or hay
 - Do not feed round bales on ground
 - Range cubes, pellets or whole shelled corn
 - Appropriate mineral supplement
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A Goat is Like a Cow

- Same nutrients are required
 - Require copper
 - Require fiber in the diet
 - Susceptible to acidosis
 - Susceptible to coccidiosis
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A Goat is Not Like a Cow

- Nutrient requirements are poorly defined
 - Poorly adapted to concentrate diets
 - Subject to acidosis/founder
 - Susceptible to enterotoxemia
 - Urinary calculi potential
 - Internal parasite/dewormer resistance
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Goat Management

- Parasites
 - Predators
 - Perimeter fences
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Predators

- Guard dogs
 - Llama and donkeys
 - Night lot
 - Electric fence
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Internal Parasites

- Worm control program
 - Cull wormy animals
 - Fecal egg counts
 - Internal parasite workshop
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New Fences

- Net wire fence with barbed wire on top
\$4,000/mile materials
 - Sheep and Goat wire 1047
 - 8 strands of barbed wire with stays
 - Electric Fence 4 strand 30" high
 - \$1,500/mile
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Converting Old Fences

- Sheep and Goat wire
 - 3 extra strands of barbed wire & stays
 - 1 or 2 strands of electric fence on outriggers
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Rules for Electric Fence

- Put up with quality materials
 - Train animals to it
 - Daily, check and maintain 4500 V
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Goat Health Management

- Goats are naturally healthy except for what man does to them
 - Stress
 - Shipping
 - Poor nutrition
 - Parasitism
 - Bringing new animals in
 - Environment
 - Cull
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Special Problems in Goat Medicine

- Scarcity of good goat vets
 - Scarcity of approved drugs
 - Integrity of goat traders
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Vaccinations for Goats

- Enterotoxemia 'Overeating'
 - Tetanus
 - Caseous lymphadenitis
'cheesy gland'
 - Soremouth
 - Abortion diseases-
Campylobacter, Chlamydia
 - Blackleg
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When to Vaccinate

- Prior to weaning
 - Four weeks later
 - Annually 4 wks before kidding
 - Bucks annually
 - Abortion diseases as per vet prescription
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Where to Vaccinate

- Subcutaneous 3/4" needle
 - Three sites
 - Just behind elbow
 - Side of brisket
 - Top of neck below jaw
 - Pull up tent of skin
 - Inject into tent
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Getting Ready for Goats

- Visit goat producers, auctions
 - Collect information from the Web, Langston and producers groups
 - Make a business plan and budget
 - Buy from a reputable producer
 - Be prepared for arrival of goats
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Visit Goat Producers

- Why do they have goats?
 - What is their animal management plan-
breeding season, kidding date, weaning,
pastures, fence, wintering, predators
 - What is their health program-vaccination,
diseases treatment/prevention, worms
 - Animal sales
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Visit Goat Auctions

- Meet other goat producers
 - What do goats sell for
 - Why do certain breed, class, sex bring more money
 - Quality factors
 - Seasonal price patterns
 - What to look for in an animal
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Producers Group

- Promote goat production
 - Meet other producers
 - Participate in activities
 - Newsletter
 - Locate sources of animals
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Purchase from Reputable Producers

- Locate breeders with your type of production system and breed
 - Select healthy, physically sound animals
 - Expect to pay a premium price
 - Start early locating animals
 - Expect more problems with animals bought from auctions
 - Start small
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Locate Sources of Feed and Supplies

- Visit local feedstore/ag supply
 - Dewormer, vaccine, medicine, corral panels, feeders, waterers etc.
 - Locate feed/hay
 - Mail order vaccines/dewormers
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Prepare for Animal Arrival

- Pasture fenced for goats
 - Predator control
 - Waterers/feeders
 - Vaccination/deworm
 - Handling facilities
 - Coccidiosis prevention
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Jim and Mary Daniels
Blue Ribbon Boers
Earlsboro, OK



Blue Ribbon Boers

- In Goats for 13 years
 - Bought cheap dairy goats to clean brush
 - Bought a Boer goat and liked them
 - Got into showing after watching a show
 - Sell registered and show goats
 - Made good money from goats
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Blue Ribbon Boers

- Have recently reduced herd
 - Concerned about high feed prices
 - Concerned about reduced demand for goats due to high feed prices and increased number of show goat producers
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Dave and Dottie Warner
Chandler, OK



Dave and Dottie Warner

- Got into goats to clear brush on pasture
 - Started commercial goats, upgrading with Boer
 - Recently purchased expensive registered animals at a reduced price
 - Goats are the cheapest way to convert land to pasture without inputs
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Dave and Dottie Warner

- Started with a brushy pasture and now have a groomed Bermuda pasture with no spraying, no mowing, no fertilizing. Now fencing next brushy area for goats
 - Working on direct sales of goats to ethnics
 - Now have 300 head of goats
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Dave and Dottie Warner

- Important for farmer to manage (adjust to changes in economics and grain prices) instead of doing things “right”.
 - Have to be innovative and reduce purchased inputs. Does not purchase hay, but stockpiles hay for his goats and feeds supplemental protein.
 - Runs stockers with goats to utilize grass
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Shane and Maxine Vernon

Niotaze, KS



Shane and Maxine Vernon

- 3 herds, Vegetation management, Commercial meat, Registered/show
 - Initially to control *Sericea lespedeza* on ranch with 100 does
 - Opportunity to sell show wethers as FFA and 4-H shows have grown
 - Variety of breed/crossbred animals
 - Profitable goat operation
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Conclusion

- Get informed
 - Get planned
 - Get ready
 - Get goats
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