

Meat Goats

4-H livestock projects

January 2005

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Beginning Your Meat Goat Program

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Selection

Good genetics are very important in all show animals, try to buy from reputation herds. Line bred goats can be more predictable than others.

Remember what you see is what you get

1. What to look for?

- A. Muscle-Top must be flat, no dips or breaks. Hip can have a gentle slope, as level as possible. Hind leg as deep and thick as you can find. Forearm is a good indication of muscle in young thin goats. Width of body cavity is also a good indication of a frame that can provide for a good heavy muscled goat.
- B. Design-Profile should be long and level in the lines. Top and underline should be straight without and dips or breaks. Shoulders should be smooth and flat, not round and bold. Feet and legs should be correct. Do not start with goats that are cow hocked on rear legs or in at the knee on the front legs. All feet should point forward.
- C. What to cull for?- Too narrow (body not wide enough to have muscle) Poor structure (weak top, uneven underline, coarse shoulders, incorrect

legs). Loose hide meaning wrinkles, (the hide should be tight and thin).

Feeding

1. Feed a complete feed. (the following are example of complete rations and are only suggestions, other ration can work just as well)

Acco-Express a good grower. Can be used to increase fat

Acco-Developer a good maintainer ration

Surefed-Intimidator an excellent muscle builder

Moormans-Goat Grits an excellent feed with palatability. Can be used to increase palatability of the feed. (makes the feed taste better)

A good combination feed

1/3 Intimidator

1/3 Express

1/3 Goat grits

2. Supplements expensive to feed, but can have benefits

Oxy-gen-increases muscle tone and leanness

Showbloom-maintains leanness

Remember nothing can replace a good feed schedule.

Do not get them too fat

Show Goats should be fed on an incline to increase muscle in legs. Feeders need to be above animals head and a step built for them to stand on with front legs. This also means owner must be present during the feeding period.

Ideal wt. for most judges is between 80-95 lbs.

This weight should be obtained between 8-11 months of age

Show Goats should gain between 1/4-1/2 lb. per day

The above gain should be obtained with 3-4lbs of feed per day.

Free choice rough alfalfa can be fed.

Exercise

Purpose-

Keep them lean.

Control weight gain.

Builds stamina.

Builds muscle.

A good meat goat looks athletic.

Ways to exercise.-Chasing in a track or exercise pen. Leading or walking at a fast pace.

Treadmills will also work.

Many top showman use chase pens or track built to work goats at a fast pace for a short period. Some also use dogs to exercise them in these pens.

Learn to keep good records of gain, health, exercise, and volume of feed. This can help you make decisions on this project as well as others.

Facilities

Keep them Dry!

1. Goats need enough room to be goats. One goat should have no less than 15 square feet of pen.

2. Shade-10'x15' shed on one end of pen, providing shade from the heat and wind break from north wind. Preferred structures will provide dry place to rest and eat. *Water should not be kept under shed.*

3. Pen should lead to exercise track or pen. (if you do not have area to exercise consider building one)

4. If dogs are used to exercise do not pen them beside goat pens. Muzzles might need to be used on dogs to protect the goats.

5. Fill pens with sand or good clean soil, wood shaving should not be used, some goats will browse on wood chips and increase unwanted volume.

6. Electric fence will work for pens, but not exercise track. Six wires starting about 4 inches from ground and continuing about every 6 inches all hot.

Shows

1. How you do at the show starts no less than 4-6 weeks before you get there.

2. Melt down- Lack of moisture in the muscle.
Caused by stress or holding water too long.

Ways to control melt down

Keep water in their system
Leave home fresh
Haul your goats

3. Drenches at shows

Sugar
Amino acids
Vitamins
Hydrates

Custom drenches include Fire water, and For-
sure

4. Shear monthly- remember to brush and use covers if the weather requires.

Misc.

1. Fungus can be a problem- Always treat goats when leaving any show. A good treatment is chlorox and water, mix a mild solution and spray on all goats being exhibited as you load goats to return home.

2. Kidney stones can also be a problem. Keep Ammonium- chloride on hand to feed if needed. If you notice your goat struggling to urinate then it could possible have kidney stones

3. Shearing before shows can be any length form 3/8 inch long beef heads to surgical blades which basically leaves nothing. Always consider the weather condition after you shear.

Everything included in this guide is suggestion only if you have a successful program now then I would not change anything. The following pages are for your use, to help you make the best of your Meat Goat project

The best way to increase your ability to win is luck and the best way to increase your luck is hard work.