Goats 101: What should I consider before raising goats?

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Overview

- Breeds
- Housing
- Fencing
- Animal Husbandry
- Management through the year
- References
Breeds

• Meat Goats
• Dairy Goats
• Dual Purpose
• Fiber
• Companion Animals

• [http://www.ansi.okstate.edu/breeds/goats/]
Meat Goats

- Boer
- Spanish
- Kiko
- Myotonic
Boer

- Does are not good mothers, but are low maintenance.
- Kidding can be 200%
- Extended breeding season making possible 3 kiddings every 2 years.
- Weaning rates of 160%
- Excellent Carcass traits
- High growth rates: gains of 0.3-0.4 lbs/day.
- Does 200-225 lbs; Bucks 240-300 lbs.
Spanish

- Spanish explorers brought goats as a meat source.
- The trend for smaller, more agile goats was dominant in the wild.
- Size varies greatly due to climate, terrain and available breeding stock.
- Body shape, ear shape, horns, hair and color are not consistent.
- Low productivity
- Less kids per doe
- Does 130 lbs; Bucks 200lbs
Kiko

• “kiko” means flesh or meat.
• Crossbreeding feral does with Anglo-Nubian, Toggenburg and Saanen bucks, with further cross-breeding in the second and third generations.
• Good on pastures
• Hardy
• Lean Carcass
• Good mothers
• Resistant to parasites
• Does 107 lbs; Bucks 220lbs
Myotonic Goats

- Tennessee Fainting Goats or Wooden Leg goats
- Indigenous to the U.S.
- Selected for meat production are heavy rumped, deep chested animals.
- Good for crossing with Boer or Kiko
- Can produce two kiddings a year.
- Good mothers.
- Not good climbers or jumpers.
- Does and bucks medium size
Fiber Goats - Angora

- Mohair Production: 5.3 lbs per shearing twice a year.
- Good browsers
- “Delicate” animals
  - Susceptible to internal parasites
  - More care for newborns
- Does not good mothers
- Kidding rate of 60-70%, well managed 100%
- Does 70 to 110 lbs; Bucks 180 to 225 lbs.
Companion Goats - Pygmy

- Small breed
- Short legs, large torso, broad head
- Can be used for meat
- Main color is grizzled, all colors acceptable for breed.
- Bucks have beards
Management Practices

• Housing
• Fencing
• Husbandry Practices
• Breeding
• Kidding
• Weaning
Housing
Housing
Fencing

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Animal Identification

“Number 87”

Goat's right ear  Goat's left ear

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Hoof Trimming
Disbudding
Castration
Teeth

Kid <1 yr old

One yr old

Two yr old

Three yr old

Four yr old

8 1/2 yr old

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Body Condition Score

• Ranking from 1 (thin) to 5 (obese)
• Feel along spine, rib cage, and loin
• BCS of 3 would be ideal
Body Condition Score
Breeding and Reproduction

- Goats are seasonal in their breeding habits.
- Goats are most fertile in the fall.
- Seasonality varies by breed and goat.
- Estrus cycle lasts ~21 days.
- Pregnancy lasts about five months.
- Goats usually give birth to 2 to 3 kids.
- Litter size is affected by breed, age, season, and nutrition.
- Doe determines number of offspring; buck determines sex of offspring.
Kidding

- Most does kid on their own without the need for help.
- Most kids nurse on their own without the need for help.
- It’s best to leave doe and kids alone unless there is a problem.
- Check doe if no progress 1 hour after water bag breaks.
- After 30 minutes of trying to help with a difficult birth, seek qualified help.
- Make sure kids get adequate colostrum within 24 hours.
- Feed week kids via esophageal tube.
Weaning

• Health Issues
  – Dry-off does
  – Coccidia
  – Internal parasites
  – Overeating Disease

• Facilities
  – Ensure secure fences

• Nutrition
  – Good quality pasture
  – Possibly supplement for energy

• Post-Weaning
  – Use records to help select kids to keep, does and bucks to cull
  – Attempt to market kids at least before next breeding season starts
Records

• Calendar
• Paper
• Computer
  – Excel file available at eXtension
    • Kid Data Sheet, Post Weaning, Inventory, Treatment Sheet, Breeding Sheet

• Important thing – KEEP RECORDS!
Management through the year

Meat Goat Management Wheel

Instructions: Set date of kidding time (step 1a) first to determine approximate dates of other management steps.

1. Buck management
2. Evaluate does body condition
3. Synchronize does
4. Flush and deworm does
5. Breed does
6. End flushing
7. Remove bucks
8. Vaccinate does (30 days before kidding)
9. Prepare for kidding

Vaccination 14 - booster due
Kid check; 11 - monitor regularly
Feed 13 - requirements
Wean 15 - (optional)

Additional meat goat information is available online at extension.missouri.edu/913.
References
Questions???