

“Are Meat Goats for Me? An Introduction to Raising & Producing Meat Goats”

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CFAES



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Female Goat - Doe or Doelings

Male Goat - Buck or Bucklings

Young Goat - Kid



GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Female – DOE

Reproductive Aspects –

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| • Age of puberty | 7 – 10 months |
| • Breeding weight | 60 – 75% of Adult weight |
| • Estrous cycle | |
| • Length | 18 – 22 days |
| • Duration | 12 – 36 hours |
| • Signs | Tail Wagging, Bleating, Mounting |
| • Ovulation | 12 – 36 hours from onset of heat |
| • Gestation | 146 – 155 days |
| • Breeding season | August through January
(not always) |
| • Seasonal anestrous | Feb – July *(not always)* |

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Male – BUCK

Reproductive Aspects –

- Age of Puberty
- Breeding age
- Breeding season
- Breeding Ratio

4 – 8 months

8 – 10 months

All year

1 Buck : 20 – 30 does



UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS

Goats adapt well to most environments

They do very well in hot environments

Have ability to conserve water



UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS

- Goats have a much broader range of plant preference than many other small ruminants
- Goats are excellent browsers
- Forage from top down
- Great biological controls for undesirable plants
- ie. Thorn bushes, multiflora rose, honeysuckle



UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS

Goats are very adept at selecting the most nutritional plants or parts of plants

Because of foraging characteristics, meat goats fit well in many grazing areas including those that are of poor or fair quality

Goats can efficiently convert vegetative matter into meat and milk, requiring little need for other feed sources such as corn or processed feeds

MEAT GOAT BREEDS



provided by Dr. An Peischel

Goats of all breeds may be raised for meat production

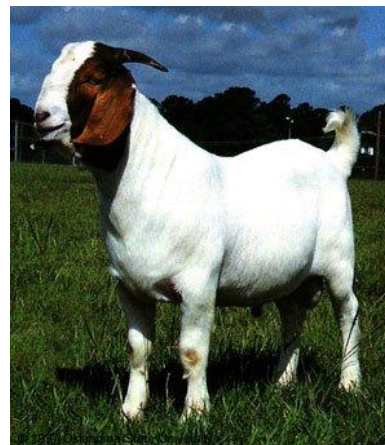
Meat goat carcasses are generally leaner and more muscular than dairy goat carcasses

Typical goat breeds used for meat production

- South African Boer Goat
- Kiko
- Nubian
- Myotonic
- Spanish



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BREEDING AND SELECTION

Multiple Births

Twice a year kidding

Rapid Growth

Good Confirmation



BREEDING AND SELECTION

- Wean kids when they weigh 30-50 pounds and are 4-5 months old
- Return doe kids to breeding flock when they reach 2/3 size of mature or are one year old
- Polyestrus – rebreed while nursing a kid
- Continuous breeding season is discouraged because it subjects underdeveloped doe kids to buck
- Meat goat kids may breed as early as 4 months of age; typically 7 to 12 months
- Body weight and condition are more important than age in determining estrus

Doe management

Body Condition Score Program

- Areas to monitor:
- Tail Head Pins Edge of loin
- Back Bone ribs Hocks
- Shoulder Loin



Doe Management

Body Condition Score cont.

- Scale or Score
- Thin 1 to 3
- Moderate 4 to 6
- Fat 7 to 9



Doe Management

Recommended Body Conditions:

- Start of breeding season 5 to 6
- End of pregnancy 5 to 6
- Never score 1 to 3
- Pregnant does should not be 7 or above toward end of preg. (risk of preg. Toxemia)
- Body Score of 5 to 6 should not drop off too quickly in early lact.



Kidding Management

- Keep does on pasture close to house
- Feed at night – tends to affect time of birthing toward early morning hours
- Good to kid in pens
- Kidding area should be very clean and dry
- Following birth – dip navel cord in iodine and be sure the kid receives Colostrum

Kidding Management

Weaning of the kid

- Let kids graze along side of the doe as long as doe is in good condition. Don't impair next breeding season
- Weaning is usually 3 to 5 months - remove from adults
- Weaning is very stressful to kid
- Coccidia generally shows up at weaning
- Introduce weanling diet prior to weaning

PASTURE AND MANAGEMENT

We are finding a good pasture can handle 7 to 10 full size animals/acre

Typical stocking rate is 5 to 7/acre



Supplemental grazing in stubble fields, corn fodder, wheat pastures or winter rye can extend grazing season or/and boost nutrient levels

Goats complement sheep and cattle

Excellent browsers – brush and other less desirable plants

PASTURE AND MANAGEMENT

Grazing Goats have been observed to:

- Select grass over clover
- Prefer to browse over herbaceous plants
- Graze along fence lines first before grazing center of a pasture
- Refuse to graze forage that has been trampled and soiled.



NUTRITION CONSIDERATIONS

Salt and mineral blocks

Or

Free Choice Mineral Supplement

Protein Tubs

Balanced Goat diet @ ½ pound/day during the kidding season (lactation)
(Pre breeding “Flush”)

Condition of Doe, Number of kids nursing etc.. Need to be considered

Quality Forage program will take care of other nutritional needs

FENCING AND SHELTER

Require tight fencing

TYPES OF FENCE

Net Fencing – Woven Wire- High Tensile and Electric

Require little shelter

Shade, wind breaks most of year, Don't like rain

Extreme cold, Extreme heat – open shed providing 10 to 12 sq ft/does



Predator Control

- Predators include:
- Coyotes, feral dogs, packdogs, Black Vultures
- foxes, eagles, and owls
- Don't forget that harmless – pet dog,



Predator Control

- Special fencing
- Donkeys
- Llamas
- Night penning
- Guard dogs (probably most preferred)



Health considerations

In General, the diseases of farm animals can vary mainly according to:

Species susceptibility

Cross specie contamination

Breed

Individual genetics susceptibility

Production & Management practices

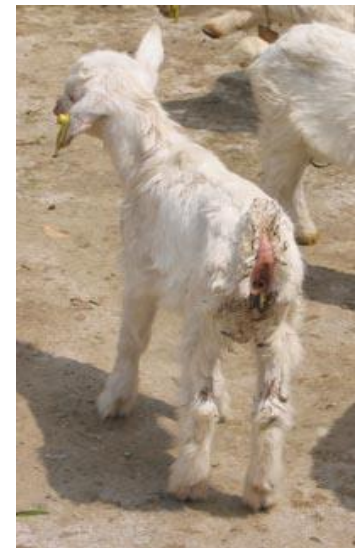
Season & maybe other factors

HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

- * Internal parasites
- * Coccidiosis
- * Enterotoxemia – CDE

Perferinges - C: Struk, kid dysentery
D: Overeating disease, pulpy kidney
E: Tetanus toxoid

- * Bloat
 - Mastitis
 - Abortions caused by Chlamydia, Leptospirosis
 - Caseous Lymphodenitis



Health Considerations

Good vet/client relationship

Hoof and feet care and management

--- Foot rot, scald,

Hoof Trimming

GOAT MEAT CHARACTERISTICS

Cabrito – kids harvested within the first week of birth

Chevon – older kids harvested close to or after weaning

Typical size preferred is 40-90 pounds live, 20-50 pounds carcass



BUDGET ITEMS

\$150 to \$400/doe

higher for registered purebreds

\$400 to \$1000/buck

higher for registered purebreds

3 kid crops possible in two years – Highly managed, Condition score of does very important

Target 150-200 percent kid crops

Budget for pasture, salt and mineral with limited corn

Balanced diet for does during kidding season and a little at breeding

Good fencing up front

1 buck/25 does - Assume 2nd Buck to control inbreeding



It's QUESTION TIME!!

L. Tony Nye

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