

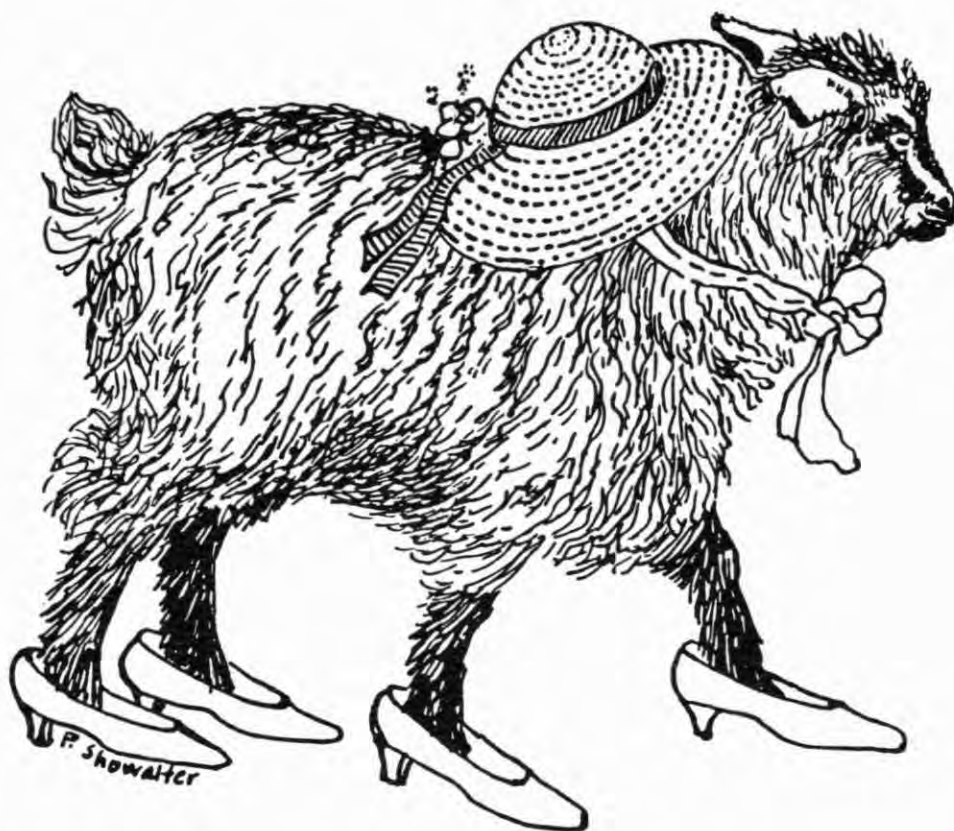
CASH MIRROR



VOLUME THREE, ISSUE TEN

AUGUST 1992

3rd Annual Fiber Seminar



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September 6 & 7

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CASHMIRROR

CASHMIRROR REFLECTING THE CASHMERE INDUSTRY

Published each month by: **THE FARM**, P.O. Box 639, Toledo, Wa. 98591 206-864-4200, Fax: 206-864-4201

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No responsibility will be taken for material while in transit or in this office, although it will receive maximum care.

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Dear Editor,

I have a suggestion that I hope will make it easier for us to present our product to the public so they know what we are talking about.

I suggest the American cashmere industry bag the misnomer "cashgora" and come up with a new term. "cashgora" implies a cashmere-angora cross which is something we do not want to promote.

Our readers who have a solid understanding of what "cashgora" is, and its uses, should forward their suggestions for renaming this product to CashMirror.

Sincerely,
Nancy Showalter
Pasco, Washington 99301

Dear Editor,

I read with great interest the article on AI in last month's CashMirror. When I considered the results, I questioned the recommendation of putting your buck in a can. Why go to all the expense of collecting semen from your buck if the best AI team is able to achieve only one take in two years. I would be interested in

hearing some AI success stories before putting old Bill in the can. If there are any relatively successful AI stories send them to CashMirror or me or both. Thanks from Nebraska Western Cashmere!

John Harris

Dear Editor,

I haven't placed myself in front of the word processor to create words for CashMirror, but I do have an idea for one of those experts out there. Your good reprint from GoatKeepers Magazine reminded me that I would love to read a detailed description of jaw defects. I really don't know how tightly the teeth should conform to the dental pad - or how old a kid must be for an evaluation to be accurate. Most kids do weird things with their mouths. So how do I know what is really bad and what is just kid perversity?

Perhaps there are other things related to conformation or fiber which we could track from birth. What about the theory that kids born with straight hair ultimately produce finer cashmere than do wavy or curly haired kids?

Getting good photos of my bouncing babies is no small trick. It's like photographing the wind. Here is a favorite if you can use it.

I promise to put my mind to work on words.

Best regards,

Marilyn Ackerly

June 20, 1992

Dear Editor,

Angus Russell's fascinating article on the Scottish cashmere industry (CashMirror, June 1992) has prompted me to work at verbalizing ideas which have been simmering in my mind since I heard Terry Sim's presentation at our Eastern Cashmere Association workshop.

Clearly the key to the successes of the Scottish Association is cooperation among members. One of the best examples is the breeding program: the farmers were willing to contribute their best animals to create an elite herd of 385 does. That is amazingly far-sighted cooperation. However, I don't think we can assume that Scotsmen are more rational or less competitive than we are. They simply acknowledged that it was in their best interest to pool their resources in the hope of creating something they couldn't accomplish individually.

I am coming to see Cashmere America as the vehicle for this kind of cooperation in the U.S. In any other context - including CaPrA or our regional organizations - we remain individual breeders in competition for a limited number of live animal buyers. I value my membership in CaPrA and in the ECA, but I see the limitation of those

organizations. They provide education, a forum for discussing ethical issues, and camaraderie. They do not bind us together as an economic unit.

Before Cashmere America, the Co-operative presented itself as a possibility, I had begun to envision the cashmere industry as something out of Charles Dickens. There we were, the laborers, creating a product which we could not control. Our lot was to accept pennies for the raw product while, down the line of capitalistic creativity, somebody else made the profit. Suddenly there is another option. It is now possible to envision the grower, the spinner, and the knitter as part of the same cooperative effort, following the fiber from the farm to finished garment and sharing the profits. Good grief, it's a nineteenth century dream of industrial unionism - and it just might succeed.

Marilyn Ackley
Bessey Place Cashmere
Buckfield, Maine

FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR

Not too long ago a group of cashmere breeders were approached to see how they felt about participating in the Wool and Mohair Act. I remember the outrage, "No Government Subsidies - the cashmere industry has to make it on its own!"

Government grants - government subsidies, a rose by any other name is still a subsidy.

To some it seems a

grant is o.k. and the Wool and Mohair Act is not.

Good grantwriters are experts at convincing benevolent grantors or government agencies to give them money to support them or their group's mission and goals. The grant writer's story explains the most needy, the most distressed, the most innovative or the best new ideas in the world.

The Wool and Mohair act on the other hand taxes imported wool and mohair to reimburse domestic growers as an incentive to grow and sell at competitive rates.

There are a wide range of grant opportunities, but my experience with grants is specifically in the economic development or sociology arena.

Grants are a good idea if they indeed accurately reflect the picture they paint. However, I have seen some proposals that are not what they seem. Some groups submit a request for dollars that may or may not be for a laudable cause, support a real market opportunity, or are a real innovation.

I believe grants are a good idea for the right project, but as a consumer of products

or marketing schemes that are often supported by grant dollars I say, "buyer beware." When someone says to me "I'll do this for you if you give me support money" I will always ask them to "qualify that statement." In other words, is the true benefit for you the grantee or for those you intend to serve.

The Wool and Mohair Act serves no one manager - the money serves as an incentive to all growers for domestic production - period!

Carefully crafted words of the grantwriter are designed to sell, but that doesn't make them gospel. A grant proposal supported with the biggest names, the most cooperation, the smartest newsletters, the thickest portfolios, the most newspaper coverage, and a wide array of credentialed educators and business people does not make it the truth. It is simply called "grantsmanship." I believe this is true because I have written and seen other grant proposals.

On the other hand the Wool and Mohair Act just focuses on selling fleece in a fair and competitive market - no jive, no exaggeration, no grantsmanship, no preferences - just produce and sell fleece.



Wool & Hooves

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More Lumps and Bumps

by Miriam Jeswine
Glacier Cashmere Oregon

Last month we talked about the big, disgusting and serious abscesses that goats sometimes develop. Those were the serious ones, like Caseous Lymphadenitis and Mycoplasma. This month we'll look at the little bumps, the ones that are less horrifying.

The localized lumps and bumps include things like infected salivary glands. These show up anywhere on the jaw, usually are small, and when they drain, the material inside is grayish and truly disgusting smelling. Usually these are staphylococcus infections and don't amount to much. Once they drain, there isn't much need to do anything but swab them out with something antibacterial and give a shot of long-acting penicillin.

Another localized, self-limiting bump may appear after an injection, usually an immunization. It might be the result of a subcutaneous shot which was not really subcutaneous, but ended up between some skin layers. There isn't anything to do, but to be sure your shots are really under the skin. You can tell if you move the needle sideways and it moves freely. If you can't move the needle sideways, you are between the layers. Still another injection abscess is the sterile abscess that is the result of the immunization. For some reason, the goat makes an abscess on the spot. It goes away after awhile,

sometimes a long while. Again, nothing to do here. Massaging injection sites immediately after giving the shot might help prevent them.

Occasionally a lactating doe will develop flat lumps on her teats and foreudder. These irregular thickenings in the skin occur

when her udder is full. They disappear once she is milked or nursed out. For some reason, the milk in the udder stimulates a kind of histamine reaction, similar to hives. The thickening is actual swelling of the skin and it can make milking or nursing rather difficult. This is not a serious



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81811 Lost Creek Road
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condition, but more of an eccentricity.

A final localized type of bump is that caused by the demodetic mange mite. It is small, from pinhead to about the size of a dime, flat on top, and you only notice it when there isn't much hair to cover it, such as after shearing. Demodetic mange is really not very contagious, and usually there are only a few. The bumps can be cut open, revealing a thick grayish matter containing tiny insects. Painting the open sore with iodine can help prevent infection. On the other hand, ignoring it doesn't cost anything, and the end result seems to be about the same, except that the goat is less annoyed. The chief problem with demodetic mange is that it spoils the hides if one is selling them for tanning. A larger bump can hang the clippers up during shearing and cause a second cut. If, for some reason, a lot of goats have a lot of these bumps, consider the possibility that you might need to modify your management practices, give the goats more room, cleaner surroundings, and/or better feed.

In fact, most health problems can be prevented by consistent good management. This means a clean, uncrowded place to live and a steady diet that meets the animals' needs. Then, if goats do get sick, they don't generally get very sick, or stay sick for very long. Any time there is a problem that can affect the whole herd, take steps, in cooperation with your veterinarian, to change your management to improve the

lives of your goats and prevent problems. It's cheaper than medication and digging holes to bury the casualties.

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Breeders Showcase 1992

Fleece test results must include date and age of the animal at shearing.

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Veterinary Advice from Dr. Kay Orlando

Reprinted with permission from Pygmy Goat Memo, Spring 1992

Q. One of my does was recently diagnosed as having ear mites. I was totally unaware that such a condition existed in goats! How common is such an infestation, and how contagious is it?

A. Most of us know that dogs and cats can get ear mites, too; although the condition is not common in pygmy goats. The problem is caused by a mite, Psoroptes cuniculi, which can also infest the ears of domestic rabbits. (This is not the same mite that effects dogs and cats.) Mites are contagious among animals in close contact with one another. As in other parasitic conditions, there is probably a difference in individual susceptibility. The mites cause an irritation and infection in the ear canal which can become severe enough to cause a middle ear infection. Fortunately ear mites are treatable with a variety of medications.

Q. Our local feed mill doesn't carry any sort of goat feed. How can I determine what constitutes a proper formula for a custom-mixed feed? Should dry does and bucks get the same type of feed as lactating does and kids?

A. This question would be much easier to answer if all goats were housed under the same conditions, and lived in the same type of climate with the same type of local

vegetation. Unfortunately, there is a wide diversity of conditions under which individual herds are kept.

My best advice would be to consult your own veterinarian, a local dairy, or dairy goat facility. Fresh palatable feed, low in molasses content, is a priority. Since growing kids, lactating does, and breeding bucks need a ration higher in energy and protein, the concentrate will have to be adjusted depending on the quality and protein content of the roughage being fed. If the majority of roughage fed is a lower protein hay, then the concentrate should have a higher protein level (16-18%).

I have access to good, high protein alfalfa hay, and so I feed only small amounts of a 9% protein concentrate with no molasses. My goats do well and look good on this feeding program. This leads to one way to tell if you are providing the proper diet for your goats. Are they bright and healthy, not too fat or thin? Are they eager to eat the ration? Are the kids growing well? Are the bucks maintaining their weight during the breeding season? Are digestive upsets at a minimum?

When you have a feed mill custom mix feed for you, never purchase more than you can use in a month to avoid

spoilage and mold problems.

Q. I understood enterotoxemia to be primarily a problem with growing kids. Is it necessary to vaccinate adult goats for this disease?

A. Enterotoxemia (or "overeating disease") occurs as a result of an overgrowth in the bowel of a bacteria, Clostridium perfringens. The most common cause is engorgement with a high carbohydrate feed source, such as a grain concentrate or milk. While this is most common in kids, especially singles or bottle babies, adult goats can also overeat. Vaccination of adult goats accomplishes two things: protection of the goat if it accidentally gets into the grain bin; and protection of a dam's newborn kids through antibodies in the colostrum.

Q. I'm just learning to trim goat's hooves, and it seems I often nick a hoof and draw blood. Should I always give a tetanus booster when this happens? How often is it safe to give a tetanus booster?

A. Tetanus should be boosted yearly. However, if you know of an injury and it has been 10-11 months since the last tetanus booster, (or you can't remember or don't know when the last booster was given), go ahead and booster the goat.

While it is pretty safe to give tetanus boosters more often than once a year, it is unnecessary - especially from the goat's point of view!

Q. We show goats at a local fair, and it's a lot of fun. However, after a week at the fairgrounds, a lot of our animals seem to have runny noses. They aren't seriously ill, and don't seem to be running a fever or to be "off feed". It's been suggested that we vaccinate our goats for a bovine disease called IBR. What is IBR? Can it affect goats? Is the vaccine safe for goats?

A. IBR stands for "infective bovine rhinotracheitis". It is an acute contagious viral infection of the upper respiratory tract. IBR, as well as other respiratory virus of cattle such as Parainfluenza-3 (PI-3), can occur in goats. Most all these respiratory viruses cause a "cold-like" syndrome, which can progress into a pneumonia. Stress plays an important part in development of symptoms.

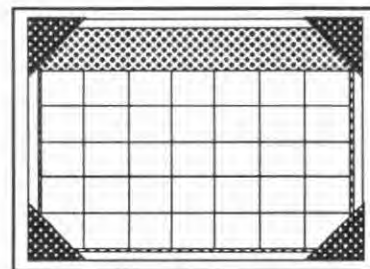
One of the most effective and safest vaccines on the market is a combination of IBR and PI-3 in a nose drop, given to goats at 1/4 the bovine dose. Vaccination of the entire herd (not just the show goats) is worthwhile, and will markedly reduce the incidence and severity of such respiratory conditions. Even with the vaccine, however, expect a certain degree of trouble with upper respiratory infections after shows or fairs.

Q. Is there any easy way to determine if a goat is pregnant? Would the tests designed for human home-use (such as "EPT"), give valid results for goats?

A. In-home pregnancy tests for humans are accurate only for humans and other primates. Ultrasound is probably the best means of diagnosing pregnancy at this time. It can be done 30 days after breeding, 45 to 70 days being the best "window" in time to count kids. But accuracy is very dependent on the ability of the technician operating the equipment, and the duration of pregnancy.

I just delivered a litter of puppies from a bitch that was deemed "absolutely not pregnant" with ultrasound at another clinic.

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CALENDAR

August: Northwest Fair held in Lynden Washington. Contact Linda Pardon 206-724-5371

August 5-8, 1992 Fiberfest 92-Kalamazoo, MI - Angora Goat, Wool Sheep, Llama, Angora Rabbit, Kalamazoo Fairgrounds, Kalamazoo, MI. Contact: Lyn Briel (616) 765-3047.

August 12, 13, 14, and 15, National Symposium on Dairy Goat Production and Marketing. Dr. T.H. Teh, E. de la Garza Institute for Goat Research, P.O. Box 730, Langston, OK 73050 405-466-3836

August 20-30, Missouri State Fair. Contact Diane Larkin, (816) 826-0570

September 6 and 7, 1992: Whatawhata Fiber Seminar and meeting of the Northwest Growers Association, St. Mary's Convention Center, Toledo, Wa. 206-864-4200

October - Texas State Fair, Dallas, Texas.

November - CaPrA Conference - San Angelo.

Use of Superior Sires for Artificial Insemination in Goats

By Dr. Helen Schwartz, Sheep and Goat Specialist Lincoln University

The primary reason a cashmere producer should practice artificial insemination is to promote a more favorable economic environment. Genetic improvement in a herd of goats can be achieved faster when selection efforts are concentrated on the male side.

What are the outstanding characteristics in a buck within a breed that make him valuable and worth the risk of using his semen to potentially improve the economic advantage in the herd? The value of the buck may be measured in terms of how much money you can expect to get from his offsprings. This may be sale of breeding stock, or cashmere. Prepotent bucks are those that put his "stamp" of his characteristics on his offspring to such an extent that they resemble the parent. This is often accomplished through "inbreeding or line breeding". Inbreeding, when intense, produces a buck with more "like genes" on the chromosomes that he receives from his dam and his sire. One set from the dam, the other set from the sire. The term for "like genes" is called homozygous. When the parents are very "unlike" in characteristics, the single set of chromosomes that come together (ova and sperm) at fertilization will be different and we call this "heterozygous" and these animals do not breed true.

Is inbreeding harmful? It can be, but that depends upon how many deleterious genes the parents are carrying. Inbreeding affects traits of reproduction more negatively than traits such as cashmere. As observed in goats and other mammals, inbreeding brings together harmful genes (located on the chromosomes) that are expressed as autosomal recessive and the result may be defective legs, mouths, hernias, etc.

The use of records for measurement of fiber production is essential in identifying individuals that are superior in the production and quality of saleable products. The dairy cattle industry has been the most successful in the use of records in ruminants in increasing production of milk that is not produced by the male. One reason for the phenomenal success is the progeny testing of the bulls that do not produce milk to determine if males from production pedigrees of sires and dams could transmit this superior performance of milk to his daughters. This required six years of testing the bull to get the results of his daughters performance before they offered his semen for sale. Or in other words, to show that he was prepotent and could transmit his estimated genetic worth to his daughters. If the bull was not the genetic composition estimated from the

records of his sire, dam, grandsires and Grandams in milk production, he was not permitted to extend his genes to his potential daughters through the sale of semen. All breeders of commercial animals can learn a lesson from the practices of the dairy cattle industry in identifying superior sires through progeny testing or measuring the performance of the offspring before offering semen for sale. This applies to milk, mohair, cashmere and meat production.

Other characteristics should not be overlooked and prior to offering the sale of semen of show winners or sires of individual superiority in traits produced in both the male and the female such as meat, mohair or cashmere, bucks should be progeny tested. Traits that can be measured in both sexes allow faster progress because the traits can be measured in both males and females which shortens the generations compared to a trait such as milk production that is only produced in the female. To escape the horror of transmitting deleterious genes that are autosomal recessive to half of the offspring, a sire should be mated to 36 of his daughters to show him free of deleterious autosomal recessive genes or chromosomal abnormalities such as translocation. The autosomal recessive genes are covered up by the autosomal dominant

genes and the likelihood of bringing these genes together without the deliberate attempt to inbreed is not very great. If none of the offspring show any negative characteristics from this testing, the sire is considered free of any deleterious genes with only one chance out of a hundred that his autosomal recessive genes were not uncovered.

At this point, we are ready to offer semen that should be predictable in performance in his offspring and superior in the trait being measured.

Artificial insemination is time consuming and management dependent. The use of semen from a particular sire should be done following careful evaluation of the individual, his sire, dam, grandsires and grandams. Evidence of production testing and records on pedigrees was found as long ago as 1832 in a preface to the list of Thoroughbred horses in Prussia which contained the statement: "Unless herdbooks continue production tests, they will be useless and without interest, since they will contain only names, of which no one knows anything and which means nothing." That was 159 years ago and today there are registration papers still void of records of performance information.

In summary, only meritorious sires should be used in an artificial insemination program. Traits considered superior in economic importance should be identified and measured. The goat industry can benefit from the use of AI by keeping good

records and evaluating them wisely. The wise use of AI will make raising goats more profitable for the production of cashmere fibers.

Jay Lush stated in his book on Animal Breeding Plans (1949): "There may be nearly enough registered sires to supply all the demand which exists or can be aroused by good salesmanship, but there are not enough highly meritorious sires." He made that statement over 50 years ago. Merit can only be determined through record keeping and the wise use of the records to identify superior bucks that are worthy of semen collection for extended use. This is imperative if genetic progress and increased cash flow is to be enjoyed with the present technology of artificial insemination in a goat enterprise.

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CASHMIRROR

Understanding Fiber Measurement

Part 3: Test Report Statistics

Written by John Fitzgerald

Whatawhata Fiber Testing Authority New Zealand

The consequences of an objective fleece test can be far reaching, depending on the emphasis that you place on the data included. Fleece test results have been used as part of sale and purchase documents, and for the retention and culling of animals in selection of flocks. Perhaps you are trying to confirm a hunch that you have about a buck's fleece production based on your classing knowledge. What does your fleece test tell you and what doesn't it tell you?

I shall deal first with the information that can be derived from the test result, and the influence of a number of factors or details that should accompany the result.

SAMPLING: Since the entire fleece is not tested, methods have been devised to produce a random sample, which provides a result with a high likelihood of representing the total fleece. Because sampling of the fleece for measurement does contribute significantly to the total variation between repeated measurement of the fleece, it's very important that a consistent method is used if you are comparing animals. I shall discuss sampling error in detail in another article, but stress at this stage that the standard error associated with the test method used at Whatawhata relates to one incorporating a random grid fleece sampling

technique. We, therefore only have an idea of how well a random fleece sample represents the fleece. We do not know how well a combed sample, midside sample, 3 point (shoulder, midside, rump) sample or a sample from a dehaired fleece represents the total fleece. Be consistent in your sampling method and compare like with like.

AGE OF ANIMAL: It is clear the fleece characteristics change as the animal ages. Other influences that are important are liveweight and season. The most dramatic change occurs during the first 12-15 months when the fleece is still maturing. Fiber diameter will increase with age, and down yield may reduce. However, total down weight will tend to increase with age. Repeated test results processed through this laboratory strongly support the research evidence of Dr. Restall and Pattie, that animals providing finer fleece at their first shear will still be providing finer fleece at their 3rd or 4th shears. A word of caution however. The magnitude of the change in fleece structure can differ considerably in animals between the first and second shear and diameter shifts of up to 3 microns can occur over this period. Of course our data does not take into account differences other than age that may be contributing to these changes, but whether there is a

trigger or not, a varying percentage of animals in different flocks do exhibit this undesirable trait.

Another consequence of first shear fleece is that it is sometimes difficult to obtain a correct yield of down. Differentiation of the guard hair and down is not as marked as in older animals, and the down separation process is therefore not as effective. Where the fleece is difficult to dehair in these cases, the fiber diameter standard deviation and coefficient will be higher and a tail of fibers in the 30- 40 micron range will be apparent on your fiber diameter histogram. Given that a proportion of animals (up to 50% in some flocks) do not exhibit poor differentiation at first shear however, means that efficiency of dehairing can be considered as a trait rather than a failing in the test method.

In summary, the age of the animal must be known when selecting for desired diameter and interpreting your result. The reliability of the first shear result should be carefully considered given potential diameter changes during those early months, and given the accepted difficulty in dehairing fleece characteristic of this age.

Sex: Research trials, both in Australia and New Zealand, have established that there is

no significant difference in down diameter between bucks and does. NZ research trials conducted by Dr. Murray Bigham at Whatawhata have established however, that yearling does do have significantly higher yield of down in the fleece and the down was higher than yearling bucks. Bucks have a heavier total fleece and grow more hair.

However, as selection usually takes place within each sex group, no adjustment for sex should be necessary. Our fleece testing data, although not subjected to the rigors of a balanced experimental trial, do strongly support the contention that no non-genetic "sire effect" in diameter is evident and should not be assumed when selecting or buying bucks.

DATE OF SHEARING/PERIOD OF GROWTH: The seasonal pattern of down production in cashmere-producing goats commences around the summer solstice and ceases near the winter solstice. A small proportion of goats in a herd may continue with a varying level of cashmere reproduction all year round. Generally, the cashmere is harvested once a year, so that the fleece represents the annual production. Maximum benefit is obtained in terms of selection for fiber production when a consistent shearing/sampling date is maintained. Note the date of the previous shearing, if appropriate.

Note, also whether the test data relates to fleece production from a single shearing or combined double

shearing particularly in younger animals. Data should therefore be available on the period of growth of the fiber that was measured. Care should be taken when interpreting data relating to combined multiple shearing results. This is often a genuine attempt to express the fleece production history of an animal but it does introduce new variables into the preparation/measurement procedure.

SAMPLING MEASUREMENT

TECHNIQUE: As I have mentioned the type of sample received can have an influence on the result although in terms of within flock selection, it will be minor providing it is consistently employed. The method of fiber diameter measurement is determined by required sample processing. Currently if you seek a down yield/weight and diameter measurement on your raw sample, the fiber diameter is measured on the dehaired product. If you require diameter only, the sample is not dehaired first. This is a potential source of variation between two measurements. However, the result from both samples relates to the fiber population up to 40 microns. Trials carried out at Whatawhata do show however, that the finer animals in a flock will be identified correctly, whether the fiber diameter was measured in a raw or dehaired sample. The raw sample on average had a slightly higher standard deviation (+0.5 microns) and a higher means fiber diameter (+0.3 micron). I would not recommend,

however, that direct comparisons be made using an adjustment. Once again, compare like with like.

APPLYING OBJECTIVE FIBER TESTING RESULTS:

1. Objective measurement in your flock.

Fleece production is affected by both genetic and environmental (phenotypic) factors. The bottom line is that if you wish to sustain the level of fleece production in your flock or move towards a specific goal, be it heavier fleece, or finer fleece, you must have a clear selection strategy. An animal's own performance in isolation is a very poor estimate of its breeding value and can be considered unreliable. You may not have the necessary information yet to establish breeding values or in fact to identify generic ability but the principles involved in establishing these parameters can be applied in a simple way on the farm. They simply involve the expression of an animal's performance in relation to the flock mean.

For does, this could be simplified even further and a ranking procedure adopted on the raw data for the key traits. Use objective fleece measurement sparingly on your doe flock. Research work has established that the genetic correlation between down length and cashmere down weight is sufficiently high to make down length measurement an excellent indicator for identifying high down weight producers. A down separation measurement could be used periodically as a

reference point. However accurate fiber diameter measurement is important and is carried out most effectively using laboratory methods.

Eye Assessment of fiber diameter is usually only adequate for independent culling purposes. Independent culling is where single traits are used in isolation from a breeding index by having a minimum level of phenotypic performance above which an animal must perform. Fiber diameter coefficient of variation should be treated in this way.

The emphasis should instead be placed on objective measurement as a selection tool for your bucks. The same principles of flock screening for down yield and diameter should apply. Commercial producers are more likely to purchase bucks however than breed their own but whatever course is chosen it is more effective to achieve genetic progress is selection of bucks rather than does, and this is where your investment in fleece testing should be directed. Accurate assessment of top producers will reap the greatest reward. As for does, for traits such as mean fiber diameter, that have high heritability, performance testing that provides breeding values based on an animals performance which are compared to others reared under a common environment can be considered quite reliable. To achieve a worthwhile rate of gain, however only a small proportion, potential bucks should be selected. In a single flock situation this would require a high minimal flock size to achieve the numbers.

In summary, measurement on doe flocks is used to establish flock averages, and this should be reflected in the extent of fleece testing that you employ. Performance testing can be used on farm to identify high producers amongst your bucks but the effectiveness of this is often inhibited by flock size. Accurate fleece testing is more important as is the maintenance of a good record of environmental factors such as age of dam and birth type. Generally however you would be advised to consider using bucks from other sources as a means of increasing genetic variability.

2. Objective measurement and between flock comparisons.

An accurate objective measurement technique is clearly an advantage when you wish to remove any doubt surrounding assessment per se. Within your flock situation, even where you are not using objective measurement, you are seeking accurate ranking on one or more traits. The criteria that you use may not be the same used by other producers. However as stated previously, measurement of any animals performance is isolation is a poor estimate of its breeding value. The most common reason for assessing between flock performance is when you are purchasing potential sires for your flock. Your initial "short list" of potential bucks can be derived from the objective fleece data. The important information is subsequently how that animal performed in its own flock assuming that environmental

factors had a common influence on that flock.

The information may be performance-based and balanced for factors such as birth date, birth type. For traits with moderate to high heritability this may be quite reliable. More valuable comparisons can be made if the progeny of sires have been tested. In these instances the bucks have been randomly allocated to does and perhaps also different environments also. The performance of progeny is used to rank the potential sire. Sire-referencing schemes use this principle to improve buck performance under potentially different environmental situations.

Commercial farmers should perhaps expect to pay more for bucks whose breeding value, derived using this process, has been proven by performance testing or progeny testing. For your own flock it is the difference between the potential sires performance and the performance of its flock rather than its performance per se that will benefit your own flock performance.

The extent to which you wish to employ an objective fleece testing service will vary with your overall breeding objectives. It must compliment your breeding/management decisions and not drive them. The genetic principles involved can be quite involved and this article only briefly touches on them. I would strongly recommend Drs. Restall and Pattie's "Cashmere - A How to Primer for U.S. Producers" as a source of further reading on this broad topic.

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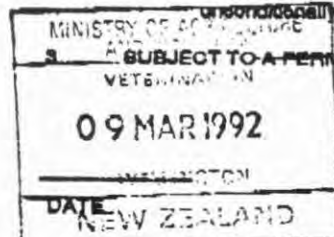
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K. Mulqueen
K.A. MULQUEEN BVSc MRCVS
AUTHORISING OFFICER

Fiber Blending and Down Fibers

By Laura Dahl:

The article presented is an excerpt from a fiber book compiled by a study group of the Skagit Valley Weavers.

The author, Laura Dahl raises primarily Angora goats on her Sedro Woolley, Wa. Farm, but she also has a few sheep and angora rabbits.

Laura is an accomplished spinner, weaver, and knitter. She also custom dyes yarns. She has created and sells a knitting kit of hand spun, hand dyed yarns called "Rapunzel's Choice" to stores in Washington, Oregon, Montana, California and Idaho.

Following is the second in a series about cashmere fiber by Laura Dahl:

There are many reasons to blend different fibers. Each Fiber has unique qualities making it well suited to some uses and less suited to others. Combining fibers can often take advantage of the most desirable qualities of each fiber. The blend can be tailored to best suit the end product.

When composing a blend with specific attributes consider the following list.

Warmth (even when wet): All animal fibers, especially angora, qiviut, cashmere and silk.

Softness: Angora, down fibers*, alpaca, fine wools, kid mohair, cotton.

Elasticity: Wool especially merino and other fine crimp fibers. (The synthetic nylon is included in the list.)

Fuzzy texture: Mohair, angora, samoyed dog down. Other fibers can produce a fuzzy halo if spun woolen, especially down fibers.

Smoothness: Silk and synthetics.

Crispness: Linen and ramie.

Drape: Wool, silk mohair, rayon and linen.

Memory: Wool, polyester, acrylic, acetate. (Also good crease retention.)

Elegance or opulence: Cashmere, silk, angora, kid mohair, and merino wool.

Strength: Mohair, silk, linen, alpaca, nylon, and polyester.

Abrasion resistance: Mohair, silk, long wool, linen, ramie, polyester.

Wrinkle resistance: Protein fibers, polyester, acrylic, and acetate.

Reduce static electricity: Plant fibers and wool.

Coolness: Cotton, linen, ramie, and rayon.

Absorbency: All natural fibers.

Moisture repellency: Nylon, angora, and wool.

Fast drying: Plant fibers and polyester.

Breathability: All natural fibers.

Fire retardant: Mohair

Shine: Mohair, metallics, long wavy luster wools.

Sheen: Silk, linen, rayon and ramie.

Decreased Luster: Wool, Llama, and down fibers.

Decreased weight: Mohair and cotton.

Increased weight: Mohair and cotton.

Decreased required twist in spinning: Wool, long alpaca and llama.

Reduce slipperiness of spinning fibers: Wool

Economy (stretch a small quantity of luxury fiber with the least dilution of character): Wool and cotton.

***Down fibers include the under coats from:** cashmere, qiviut, camel, some dog breeds and yak.

Considerations for Blending:

Nearly any fibers can be successfully blended. However, several considerations are in order when planning proportions and blending methods. Fibers that behave differently from each other can

create pitfalls for the unaware. On the other hand, careful blending can enhance performance and beauty. Samples greatly reduce surprises.

When spinning, weaving or knitting be aware that:

- Fibers blend most effectively if they are the same length.
- Slippery fibers may migrate to the surface and hide other fibers.
- Fuzzy fibers may hide other fibers with their halos.
- Some fibers shrink more than others which is especially important when different fibers are plied together or large areas of one fiber are placed adjacent to another fiber in knitting or weaving.

Fibers can be blended several ways:

- Picking, carding or spinning them together.
- Plying yarns of different fibers (or blends) together.
- Yarns of one fiber (or blend) can be knit or woven with yarns of other fibers (or blends).

Down Fibers

Animals fibers are made of the protein keratin. Keratin is composed of carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen and sulfur. It is sulfur that makes animal fibers susceptible to moths. (Silk is protein keratin. Keratin is composed of carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen and sulfur. It is sulfur that makes animal fibers susceptible to moths. (Silk is a protein fiber but lacks sulfur.) All protein fibers are harmed by strong alkali cleaning agents and

chlorine bleach. Protein fibers have good resistance to mildew.

Down fibers include the fine under coats of the cashmere goat, camel, musk ox, yak and some breeds of dogs. Some of the characteristics that define them as a family are listed below.

In general down fibers:

- have a very soft hand
- have a high insulating capacity, making them very warm.
- are very fine; 12 to 19 microns
- are short; three inches or less.
- are less elastic than wool. (woolen spun yarns will enhance elasticity.)
- lack or are low in luster
- are very absorbent.
- have a high affinity for dye.
- have poor resistance to sunlight
- have poor resistance to abrasion, making them especially susceptible to mechanical damage in the fiber preparation process and more prone to pilling
- felt easily: stored fibers may felt if compressed, fiber or yarn will felt if agitated when wet.
- have smooth scales, making them slippery to spin.
- spin most easily using Mabel Ross' long draw, a woolen method, or short-draw, a semi-worsted method, from thin rolags (puni's).
- are difficult to spin from combed top, unless blended with another fiber of similar length that is less slippery (for example merino wool).
- require a high twist because they are short and slippery.
- are best plied for balanced, soft yarns with structural integrity.
- require a slack adjustment to

the spinning wheel

- are usually spun fine because they are very warm and often limited by supply or budget
- are overpowered by color and to a lesser extent by texture, so are best used in subtle color schemes and textures. (Color overpowers texture and fiber, texture overpowers fiber.)
- positively beg to worn next to the skin.

By Laura Dahl

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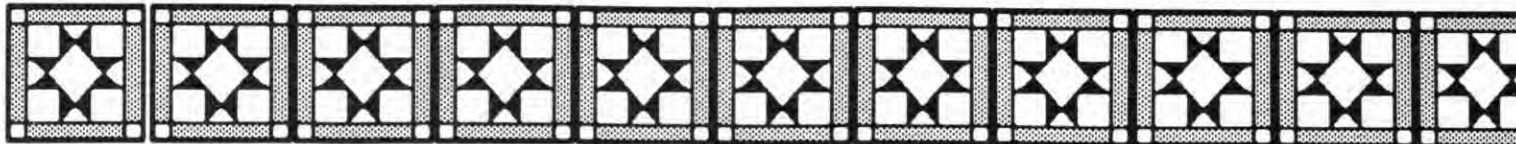
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