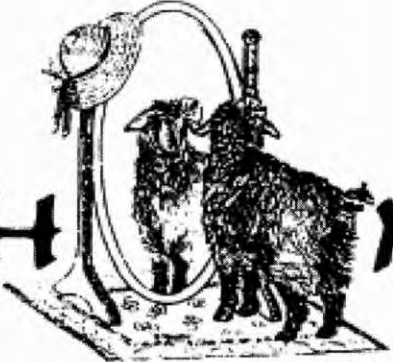




# CASHMIR MIRROR

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Volume 8, Issue 9

July 1997

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The monthly magazine devoted to cashmere goats and their fiber



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# CASHMIRROR

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### Cover photo:

Paul Johnson, Goat Knoll

"Blackberry eats same."

# The Bucks Are Coming!—Next Issue!



The boys sniff the air--checking for pheromones



Black Gold patiently waiting for "the season"

## Breeders Showcase Issue

Coming August 1997

Deadline for ads, photographs and copy:  
July 31, 1997

We will print lots of extra copies of the August 1997 issue and distribute them as promotional material at fiber and goat gatherings in the US and Canada. As usual, there will be a good deal on advertising—both display and classifieds. We can help you design and lay out an ad, usually at no additional charge.

## Get the word out!

Let others breeders and new cashmere producers know what you have for sale or rent. This is the time of year when producers "shop for bucks" for purchase and for rent.

### Special Advertising Rates for August 1997 issue

#### Display Advertising:

|                |      |
|----------------|------|
| 1/2 page       | \$65 |
| 1/3 page       | \$50 |
| 1/4 page       | \$35 |
| Business cards | \$20 |

#### Classified Advertising:

25 cents per word (1/2 price!)





# Reflections

by Linda Fox

Have you noticed how the best things in life are often the surprises? You make plans, lay foundations and scheme with the best of them, but the good stuff is usually outside the plan. Perhaps it's the element of surprise that makes it special, or maybe it's just Someone's way of saying, "Go ahead, do your scheming, but I still provide the special things."

Like our new surprise lamb on June 29<sup>th</sup>. We came trudging up the hill after a long day of fencing, dragging our come-along and bucket of fence clips, headed for a cold glass of iced tea on the deck. I glanced in the upper field which presently contains our sheep, yearling bucks and wethers, llama and alpaca. (It's a diverse field). Following big, unsheared Brownie, was a little black spot. "That's not supposed to be there!"

We raced to the field and discovered the black spot was a new black ewe lamb which had probably been born earlier in the day. And we hadn't even known that Brownie was pregnant! This will encourage us to shear our sheep before July 4<sup>th</sup>! Brownie had given birth to triplets in late December and after she and we finished mucking things up, we had lost all three of the lambs. A hasty review of the records showed that all ewes and their lambs had gone back in the pasture with Old Black Joe, the not-so-old black ram, on February 1<sup>st</sup>. We had noticed Joe sniffing Brownie's rear and duly noted it in the records—"Joe was sniffing Brownie's rear—they don't breed in Feb.—right?" Wrong!

We named the little black lamb June and she has been a joy. Since we are long past our spring babies (both sheep and goat), we have more time to play with June and, as a result, she is friendlier. The other lambs are going to the locker this week, but I don't believe I'll be able to part with June.

Another special surprise came last weekend. Someone dumped two small kittens on our road late Saturday night. The neighbors found them and brought them to our common fence. They held the two little white-ish balls of fluff over the fence and called, "Paul, Paul, look what we found." (They know who's the softy at our house!) We went to the fence to retrieve the kittens. We're down to one housecat, which, being Mickey, is plenty, but we have seen mice in the barn. Perhaps the kittens could live in the barn. They'd certainly be better off there than in the road ditch or at the pound.

Deirdre and Imus love the barn! Even though the barn is a long distance from the house, they make no attempt to follow us home. We come in the barn door, and fluffy, long-haired, Siamese-ish Deirdre pounces on our foot from behind a hay bale. We call Imus, but he's too busy chasing his orange, raccoon-patterned tail in the workshop area to come see us right now. We'd forgotten how much fun it is to watch kittens play. Especially if they can play in an area where they can't destroy things. I still have a box of broken ceramics waiting for a tube of super glue left over from Mickey's kitten days.



June

Another surprise came summer before last when my mother and I were picking blackberries down by the pond. We discovered a large patch of mint. This, in itself, was a great find. However, we also noticed that the pond was surrounded by wild roses whose seeds were red and plump. We added a pile of mint and rose hips to our blackberry buckets. From our find, we made a delicious pot of rose hip and mint tea. Now, in addition to having a fresh mint supply, each year, I know when the blackberries by the pond are ripe, to also harvest the rose hips and a bundle of mint for a special pot of tea.

I always look closely for special surprises on Easter; it seems to be a day conducive to surprises. One year I found a Mallard duck egg on the path going down to the pond early Easter morning. Last year, Easter morning, I saw a small brown baby rabbit jump back into a brush pile on a morning walk. This year, one of our does gave birth to twins in the barn while our Easter company watched in awe.

I've noticed that since the special surprises cannot generally be recreated, you need to enjoy them to the fullest when they seek you out. One evening, last fall, just before sunset, while wandering around the upper woods, I discovered a trail I hadn't found before. I followed it for a distance toward the south fence. All at once, I was in another world. It was a dense forest of tall oaks with poison oak vines at their bases, shoulder-high and some climbing on up into the tops of the trees. The poison oak was a bright red color and the sunset made it even more brilliant. I wandered in my fairyland until the sun went down. A week or so later I dragged Paul and his camera up to the area, but I couldn't even find the trail. Everything looked different. Perhaps, like Brigadoon, it only appears every third Thursday of months without an "R"—or something.

So, I guess I'll continue to plan and scheme, like usual. But, I have a feeling the valuable stuff will continue to be the unexpected, unsolicited gifts.

## When Readers Talk...

Letter to the editor:

I would like to take a moment and commend Paul on the article about poisonous plant and how they affect our herds. And thanks for pointing out the many physical attributes that protect them from being poisoned. However I noticed that the focus was on the poison far more than the animals that ingest it. I would like to point out that goats have been roaming this earth for countless centuries. In fact archeologists are finding goat droppings in with some of the ancient digs. The fact that a goat has survived so long supports the fact, that it is a survivor. In order to survive it has developed a natural ability to test and not eat things that are foreign or not good for them. This fact is supported by my own personal experience.

In 1991 when our first cashmere arrived from south Texas, I thought there was something wrong with them because they would not eat the bermuda grass and clover that was plentiful in our pasture. They went directly for the cedar, oak, poison oak, poison ivy and sumac in the pasture. After calling the rancher that sold me the animals I was reminded that it can take a goat up to a year to acclimate itself to the new foliage and grasses available. In fact it took almost two years before our goats were taking full advantage of the pastures and foliage available.

After spending some time caring for these animals and then moving them to another environment, supported this theory even more. I can only assume that goats have a inbred ability to know what is good for them, and through a process of elimination they select and eat what is available at specific times of the year. In fact here is an example: Our pasture is spotted with a leafy weed that has never hurt my animals. However I have seen them pass it by a number of times. They will first sample like they were about to take a bite, and then will turn to another greenery. This will go on until in one fall swoop the

weed is gone. I can only reason that they sample and eat what they know is good, and then as conditions of the pasture change, they will come back around eating a different type of grass or foliage. I also believe they apply this process to poisonous plants as there may be a time when the plant will not be toxic to them. I agree that springtime is the most dangerous time for poisons as they are growing and strong with plenty of all they need to be toxic. During this time of the year it is very important to keep the animals on a maintenance feed so that the impact of winter feeding slowly wears off and normal grazing resumes. I also feel that animals grazing and wintering in warmer climates do not experience the drastic change to the lush greenery.

In addition I would like to say that care must be taken when planning a long term breeding program. It is possible to breed the natural ability to survive right out the animal. As breeders we have a responsibility to preserve the natural instincts of the animal while improving the product. Deviation from this responsibility produces animals that do not mother, graze, or fend for themselves correctly, producing yet another generation of hot house hand fed animals.

Red Nyland  
Just Kidding Cashmere  
Caddo, Oklahoma  
June 27, 1997

-----  
DEAR SIRs,

GREETINGS FROM MONGOLIA.

WE KINDLY ASK YOU TO PUBLISH OUR OFFER ON YOUR MAGAZINE. ALSO COULD YOU SEND US THE ADDRESSES OF MAIN WHOLESALERS OF DEHAIED CASHMERE. WE WOULD LIKE TO OFFER YOU MONGOLIAN DEHAIED CASHMERE.

Continued on next page

## CASHMIRROR

### Readers Talking Back

Continued from previous page

HERE FOLLOWS BRIEF INFORMATION OF OUR GOODS OFFERED.

1. MONGOLIAN DEHAIRD CASHMERE, LIGHT GREY 9 BALES
2. MONGOLIAN DEHAIRD CASHMERE, BROWN 29 BALES

#### QUALITY DESCRIPTION

1. HAIR CONTENT: 0.5%, NOT MORE
2. FINENESS OF FIBRE: 15-16.5 MICRONS
3. LENGTH OF FIBRE: 38-43 MM
4. MOISTURE REGAIN: 16.0%

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED BUYING ABOVE GOODS WE WOULD BE GLAD TO PROVIDE YOU WITH MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ON YOUR REQUEST. IF YOU ARE NOT INTERESTED ABOVE GOODS WE KINDLY ASK YOU TO RECOMMEND US OTHER COMPANIES WHICH MAY INTEREST OUR GOODS. THANK YOU. WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU SOON.

YOURS FAITHFULLY,

ODGARIG BAATAR  
MARKETING DIRECTOR  
ECHO CO., LTD  
PG BOX 183  
ULAANBAATAR 48  
MONGOLIA  
FAX:+976 1 310959  
EMAIL: YFSMEC@MAGICNET.MN  
June 11, 1997

Re: SELL-USA-Cashmere Lots Stored in Italy

We are a well-established China-based de-hairing factory and currently we have following cashmere/wool and yak lots stored in Italy open for quick sale:

The lots stored in Bruni & Paolo s.n.c., Prato, Italy:

5ME940047 22MM, White, 3737KG, 49 BLS, \$32/KG  
5ME940022 24MM, White, 2010KG, 26 BLS, \$32/KG  
5ME94003 32MM, White, 2000KG, 28 BLS, \$25/KG  
5ME940049 26MM Yak, 980KG, 13 BLS, \$15/KG  
GX058 26mm White, 3000KG, 40 BLS, \$20/KG  
SME940020 22MM Grey Cashmere Waste, 1192KG, 16BLS, \$8/KG Or Best Offer

The lots stored in Biella Transport s.r.l., Biella, Italy:

KVY96042 36MM White, 100% Cashmere, 1500KG, 20 BLS, \$95/KG  
KVY96045 36NM White, 100% Cashmere, 1500KG, 20BLS, \$95/KG  
5ME940025 32MM White, 8%wool, 1141KG, 16BLS, \$59/KG

All the above lots are open for quick sales on a first-come and first-serve basis. If you need the samples of the above lots, please contact Wayne Zhang at our USA Sales Office by fax: 818-458-2299 or Tel: 818-286-3386. The arrangement will be made for your prompt inspection and sampling of the lots you are interested in.

Best Regard,

Wayne Zhang, Sales Manager  
China Jingxin Goatswool processing Factory Inc.  
China Jingxin Goatswool Inc.  
1115 Univ. Vlg.  
East Lansing, MI, USA 48823  
June 5, 1997

Ed Note:

*Do we know what this all means? Nope. But, we thought you might find it interesting. If anyone wants to buy a few bales of cashmere, these might be options. Let the buyer beware!!!*



# A Report

## 1996 VI International Conference on Goats

Beijing, China

by Jerry Laker, Macaulay Land Use Research Institute, Scotland

The increasing research interest worldwide in the goat is reflected in 167 papers presented for publication in the proceedings of this meeting, the sixth in the series of conferences of the International Goat Association. The goat is being increasingly recognized for the key role that the species can play in systems for sustainable agricultural production in some of the least-favored environments around the world. At the conference, some 92 presentations were given in 9 sessions covering Production Systems, Genetics and Breeding, Nutrition and Feed Resources, Economics and Social Issues, Products, Environment and Ecology, Pathology and Health and Reproduction. In addition, 6 workshops were held on Reproduction Techniques for the Tropics, Fiber Measurement, Boer Goats, Worm Control, Gender Issues and the International Committee for Animal Recording (ICAR) and 2 roundtable sessions on Cashmere Goats and the Management of Small Ruminant Genetic Resources. Over 500 delegates attended the conference, representing 36 countries.

In comparison with previous conferences, a strong emphasis was given to production by goats of specialty fibers, reflecting in particular the present level of interest in cashmere production in China. In total, some 70 papers included in the proceedings relate to cashmere and Angora production, with 47 of these papers reporting research on goat fiber in China. The reports from China cover work on genetic selection, fiber biology, the influence of environmental factors on fiber quality and descriptions of the

fiber characteristics of a number of indigenous goat breeds.

The Chinese production of cashmere has been expanding rapidly over the past decade, from 3000 tons (raw combed down) in 1985 to its current highest ever level of 7300 tons from 52 million goats (42% of the total Chinese goat population). Growth of the Chinese cashmere industry is expected to be maintained in the medium term. Faced with problems of overgrazing, considerable work is currently being directed at improving the genetic potential of local breeds to improve per capita production. Cashmere provides an important contribution to the local economy, when it is realized that the average monthly income in rural areas is less than US \$100.

Papers presented from outside China addressed some of the key issues for fiber producers in Australia, New Zealand, Europe and the United States viz. what effect do environmental conditions have on fiber production and quality, what is the potential for manipulating fiber growth by nutrition and hormone administration, and what benefits are to be gained from international exchanges of genetic material, such as South African Angora and Boer goats?

Just as goat fiber production is becoming more widely established in extensive farming systems, so the important role that meat and milk goats play in the small-farm economics of tropical developing countries is being recognized in research. In Asia, goats had the highest rate of population growth of all

the domestic ruminants (3.3%/yr.) between 1983 and 1993. There is a strong tendency for the contribution that goats make to rural economies to increase with decreasing quality and viability of feed, with the result that goats tend to be the species of the most crucial importance to the poorest sectors of the rural society and are a central element in small-farm production systems. A number of development projects were reported in Africa and Asia in which goat production has been enhanced as a means to improve the incomes and nutrition of small farmers and their families. In many parts of the world it is women who carry much of the responsibility of goat farming, and it is crucial that gender issues be taken into account in the planning of extension work aimed to increase the technical skills of goat keepers.

Nutritional studies in the goat have attempted to improve the utilization of low-quality forages by goats. It was reported that digestive efficiency is very similar in goats and sheep. Digestion of organic matter may be slightly higher in goats, but there is no evidence to indicate that goats are better able to digest fiber. Similarly, digestibility and utilization of nitrogen are generally similar in sheep and goats, though there is evidence that, when offered low-protein diets, goats may have a more efficient nitrogen utilization than sheep. The goat's skill at selecting components in the available forage diet that are nutritionally more valuable and to adjust feeding behavior as in response to seasonal variation, which enables the species to obtain adequate nutrition in situations where food is scarce, was reviewed in several papers. Diet selection by goats can have a marked effect on vegetation composition and this characteristic can be effectively exploited as a significant product in addition to

Continued on next page

## Beijing Conference

Continued from previous page

the value derived from sales of meat, milk, skins, etc. Two aspects of goat diet selection may make positive contributions to grazing systems. Goats actively avoid clover in grass/clover swards, allowing the proportion of clover to increase and thereby improving sward composition and the forage quality available to other subsequent grazing livestock. Goats also consume larger proportions of browse than other species and can, given appropriate management, be used to eradicate unwanted woody and weed plants or incorporate productive shrubs, such as gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) into a sustainable grazing system. The importance of appropriate management was dramatically underscored by a report from Botswana of the serious and widespread overstocking by goats and cattle on communal lands, which is leading to deforestation, soil degradation, erosion and desertification.

The control of intestinal parasitism of goats has received much attention, particularly in view of increasing numbers of reports of anthelmintic resistance. This problem was extensively discussed in a review paper in which recommendations are made to alleviate or avoid resistance. The session on pathology addressed a number of other diseases including caseous lymphadenitis, peste des petits ruminants, footrot, mastitis and hereditary goiter. Importantly, attention was given to ways of improving systems of animal health care in developing countries.

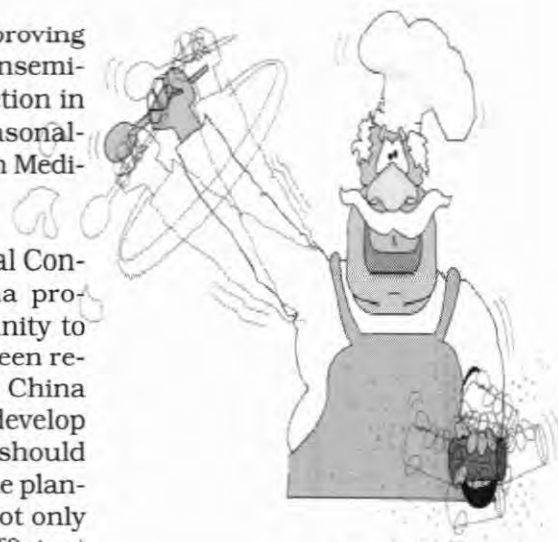
A key element in genetic improvement projects is the adoption of advanced reproductive techniques, to enable cost-effective transport of genetic material internationally and to assure rapid dissemination of superior genotypes within a breeding population. Reported

work examined ways of improving the efficiency of artificial insemination and embryo production in goats, and investigated seasonality of reproductive activity in Mediterranean areas.

Holding the VI International Conference on Goats in China provided an excellent opportunity to make useful contacts between researchers at a time when China is increasingly keen to develop such opportunities. Praise should go to all those involved in the planning of the VI ICG. They not only succeeded in providing efficient organization of the 500 delegates, but also successfully completed the task of publishing the proceedings (published in 2 volumes) which will undoubtedly provide key sources for researchers and extension workers for many years.

### YEAR OF THE GOAT BETHEL, MISSOURI LABOR DAY WEEKEND

The World Sheep, Fiber Art and Flower Festival is holding its 18th annual event this Labor Day weekend on August 30, 31 and September 1, 1997 in Bethel, MO. The Year of the Goat is featured and all breeds of dairy, white and colored Angora, Kinder, Pygmy, Nigerian Dwarf and Boer goats will be on display. Programs for each breed will be delivered by the breeders in the One-Stop Learning Center. A style show, goat cookout, milking demonstration, goat cheese making demonstration and other activities for the youth are planned as a high point in the festival in 1997. For further information on the festival, booth space or a catalog, write to: Karen Arment, President, Route 1, Box 238, Shelbyville, MO 63469 or call (573) 633-2652.



## Recipe! CHEVON CHOPS WITH STUFFING

6 shoulder chops cut 3/4 to 1 inch thick  
1 package cornbread stuffing mix or other  
1 cup skim milk  
2 tablespoons butter or margarine  
1 can whole corn with red and green peppers

Place a tablespoon of butter or margarine in a skillet and brown the chops over a medium heat until caramelized or pleasantly brown. Remove the chops and turn down the heat. Add milk, butter or margarine. Milk will scorch if heat is too high. May bake in the oven. Stir in corn (do not drain) and crumbs from the mix and blend well. Add the brown chops on top of the stuffing and cover and cook over very low heat for 10 minutes. If chops are not tender, add some water and simmer or bake until chops are desirably tender. Serve with corn stuffing on the bottom and chops served over the stuffing.

Great flavor and superb chevon.

*This recipe reprinted courtesy of the Goat Production Newsletter, April 1997, Lincoln University Cooperative Extension.*



## NEW MARKET FOR MEAT GOATS

By Dr. Helen Swartz

Missouri State Sheep, Goat and Small Livestock Specialist  
Reprinted from the GOAT Production Newsletter, April 1997

Last November, Dwight Holmes, Educational Assistant, Small Farm Family Program in Extension, held a meeting in Alton, Missouri for meat goat producers. A representative, Jerry Jones, member of the newly formed Southern States Meat Goat Co-Operative in the State of Mississippi visited Missouri. He began the meeting in Alton with "Why should you get in the goat business?" Jerry stated that there were 600-700,000 immigrants that had entered the U.S. legally since 1995. No one knows how many more are entering illegally. He further stated they all like goat meat. Hispanic, Asian, Middle Eastern, Caribbean and African immigrants are seeking goat meat as a main source of meat in their diets. He went on the say that we imported over four million pounds of goat meat in 1995. In Washington, DC alone, 40 meat markets are catering to ethnic tastes and this is not going to go away. In the nutrition and health trends, red marbled meat and fat stops up the arteries. The goat is genetically engineered to lay down lean meat without marbling. Beef, lamb and pork are genetically designed to marble fat as intramuscular fat but not so in goats. The low fat, low calorie trend puts goat meat in the right position for present and future protein, zinc and B-Vitamin needs in the diet of Americans, not met by vegetable diet. John Addrizzo, MD, has conducted some research for the yuppie crowd. He shows the low fat in goat meat compared to pork, chicken, beef, turkey and lamb. Jerry Jones claimed the demand for goat meat far exceeds the supply. He further stated that James Cliborne, manager of the Southern States Meat Goat Co-

Op is lining up markets in the southern states, New York, Washington, DC and California.

The Co-Op in Mississippi is planning to slaughter 5-6,000 goats per week. They haven't looked at markets in Florida to date. The Mississippi Co-op is projecting the sale of 10,000 goats per week if they can get them. He emphasized that **no one** is going to get rich raising goats, but that it was his opinion that it is possible to make a living or supplement one's income raising goats. The price paid by the Southern States Goat Co-op will depend on quality and quantity. The Co-op will attempt to provide a stable market for Co-op producers.

A grading standard which does not exist in USDA for goats has been developed by Alcorn and Mississippi State University meat scientists. The State of Mississippi has been given 36 acres of land and they have received a grant from USDA for \$490,000. This has been awarded for construction of a slaughter plant. A grant of \$150,000 was also awarded from the State of Mississippi for operating and turnover moneys to pay producers at the door when goats are delivered. Co-op members can purchase products, fencing materials, posts, etc. at a reduced rate. Following the construction of the slaughter plant, a second plant will be build to process goat hides to make gloves, purses and other leather goods. Wal-Mart has agreed to purchase the goat leather goods, according to Jerry Jones.

At some point, the producer will be paid on grade and yield and will not

Did someone mention meat!???



receive money at the door but later, following carcass grading. They initially plan to pay 45-85 cents per pound depending on the quality of the goats.

How does a goat producer join the Co-op? You can join by paying \$100 for a share of the Co-op and a \$25 membership fee per year. The second option is to pay \$25 membership fee with no rights to vote or buy or sell from the Co-op store. The shares are limited to one per household. The Co-op members who have purchased a share will get a dividend each year. The Co-op is not designed to make money, but to give profits back to the membership.

Helen Swartz spoke of the opportunity for marketing here that we have needed for some time. There are auction barns in Missouri purchasing goats, order buyers and some selling on the Internet. The price per pound being paid by the Co-op is not sufficient to pay for transporting 400 miles or more at the current trucking rates. Missouri's southern region is quite suitable for goat browsing as well as some other areas of the state. Browsing the oak-hickory will improve the grasses and legumes for goat grazing or to be followed by sheep or cattle when co-grazing is the strategy for improving income.

# Goat

a  
d  
g  
e  
t  
s

## A Simple (and Cheap) Goat Feeder

By Linda "power tool" Fox



The feeder's empty.  
No grain, no goats.



The feeder's full.  
By my count, there's 14 does eating out of the 10' feeder.

### Materials List and Cost

|                                               |                |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1 4" X 10' plastic vinyl gutter               | \$ 2.99        |
| 5 plastic gutter brackets @ \$1.89            | 9.45           |
| 2 plastic gutter end caps @ \$1.79            | 3.58           |
| 2 Dairy Queen sundaes @ \$1.19                |                |
| (This is a bribe to get your spouse to help.) | <u>2.38</u>    |
| <b>Total</b>                                  | <b>\$18.40</b> |

### Other No Cost Materials

(You probably have this stuff around anyway.)

Glue sticks  
10 wood screws

### Tools Required

Glue gun  
Hammer  
One big nail  
Screwdriver

### Directions for Assembly

Hot glue the end caps to the two ends of the gutter piece. If you don't want 10' of feeder, you can use a hacksaw to trim the gutter piece to the required length. Cut from the bottom to the top—it cuts easier this

way. While the hot glue dries (You don't want any goat tongues stuck to hot glue!), attach the brackets to the wall. Hold up the gutter bracket to the place on the wall or other wood surface where you want it attached. Use whatever height you want. We placed ours low so the little ones could reach. Scratch a mark (using the big nail or a pencil if you want to get really elaborate) through the two holes in the bracket onto the wood. Remove the bracket and with the hammer, pound in the big nail far enough to get the screw holes started. You "big tool" people can even use an electric drill for this. I suppose you'll be using that drill to put in the screws as well.

Screw on the brackets at around 2' intervals. This may seem like overkill, but remember they're going to try and stand in it. I wouldn't scrimp on the length of the wood screws either. After the brackets are installed, snap in the gutter piece. You're done!

We've had our new feeders up for two weeks and they have been durable. The does and kids are pretty rough on them, but they have held up. Because of the small size, they can put their front feet in it, but cannot stand in it. It's surprising how much fits in them. It helps if you can fill the feeder without going into the pen or be able to lock them out while you fill. I'm not sure this feeder would hold up under buck abuse.

# Bill Benham

## Cashmere Spinning Enthusiast

By Linda Fox



Hand spun yarn woven into elegant scarves by Bill Benham.

Left: Gray cashmere and white silk.

Right: White cashmere and pink silk.

Bill Benham loves cashmere and he makes beautiful things with it. He hand spins it and uses it in his weaving projects. He also hand spins yarns for his wife Evelyn, who is a knitter. Evelyn learned to knit at the same time that Bill learned to spin. Bill is a fascinating person, has definite ideas about using cashmere and is eager to pass along his knowledge to others.

Bill learned to spin about eighteen years ago and began weaving fifteen years ago. He was motivated to spin by his daughter's dog, Tina, a beautiful white Samoyed. Tina required constant brushing because his daughter took the dog to shows. He took up spinning because he wanted to find a use for all that dog hair. As Bill explains, "I was too cheap to throw out the hair."

He learned to spin using wool, as do most new spinners, but soon was able to spin the Samoyed hair. Evelyn knit a sweater and a cap from the Samoyed yarn. The sweater, which is now pretty threadbare from wear, has lasted many years. The cap is still in mint condition. Bill said that clothing made from Samoyed is somewhat scratchy, but very warm.

Bill now continues to spin because spinning is fun. He spins mostly with other spinners and describes it as a social event. While spinning is a social event, his weaving is done alone, an intellectual activity.

*Gandhi required his ministers to spin each day.  
He believed that it gave them a chance to  
meditate, focus and plan their day.*

Bill believes that cashmere is best used as an accent to other fibers (silk is good) or as a fine knitted lace, due to its scarcity and cost. He believes that cashmere should not be blended away so that it loses its character. If you blend it, he believes that it should be blended with a similar fiber, such as silk or very fine wool.

Two of Bill's cashmere projects are shown in the photograph to the left. My photograph does not capture the elegance of these scarves. The scarf on the left is made using imported gray cashmere which has been plyed with silk. The warp (long-ways yarn) is white silk. The narrower scarf is woven of pink silk with white 100% cashmere spun from one of Carol Spencer's cashmere goats. Bill said if he had this scarf to do over again, he would make the cashmere the darker color. Since your eye is automatically drawn to the darker color, he feels dyeing the white cashmere would have shown it off better than leaving it in its natural white color. Perhaps undyed white cashmere would be best used for a knitted lace.

Bill first spun cashmere about five years ago and he is definitely hooked. He describes working with cashmere as his favorite project. When Bill spins, he has a general idea of what the yarn he is creating will be best used for, but no specific project in mind. He currently has many pounds of yarn ahead which he needs to weave.

I offered to bring Bill a sampling of various types of domestic and imported cashmere for a "taste test." I had been intending on doing this myself, but after accumulating the samples, could come to no better conclusion than they were all very nice. I put my primitive conclusion down to my inexperience with cashmere and spinning. Bill said his conclusion would be the same. He loves cashmere—all cashmere—the fine, the not so fine, the longer fibers, the not so long fibers, the very crimp, the not so crimp, the colors, the whites—"It's all wonderful!"

### Tools

Bill believes that the tools you use—spinning wheel, combs, cards, and related tools—should be beautiful as this will encourage you to create beautiful work. He showed me a beautiful set of handmade combs made from various woods and dizes made from

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**Bill Benham**

**Continued from previous page**

ox horn and mastadon ivory. He uses an Ashford traditional wheel when he spins away from home and a Drudik wheel (custom made by Mr. Drudik, Salem, Oregon) when spinning at home. He says the Drudik wheel is the "best in the world." However, before you go running off to find Mr. Drudik to make you one as well, be warned that he is not currently taking any more orders. He has orders to fill which he feels will last him until he turns age 70. If Bill begins a project on a certain wheel, he will not change wheels or wheel settings until the project is completed.

**Preparing Cashmere for Spinning**

Bill never uses combs to prepare cashmere for spinning. Combs are used for preparing fibers for a worsted yarn and he believes that worsted yarn is opposite of the qualities you want to emphasize in your cashmere yarn. Cashmere's enduring qualities are its softness and loft which would be lost if the fiber is spun worsted. Bill uses cotton cards to prepare cashmere for spinning. He believes that most drum carders are too damaging to use for preparing cashmere and should be used only for blending. He demonstrated preparing cashmere for spinning using cashmere hand combed and hand dehaired from one of my goats. It was not excellent cashmere by the classic standards—medium diameter, pretty relaxed crimp (most likely would be classed cashgora), about 1-1/2 inches in length and a beautiful smokey gray-brown color. Bill loved it.

Per Bill, the goal is to process the cashmere the least amount possible as any processing is damaging to the fibers. Cashmere is carded lightly to open and organize (line up) the fibers prior to spinning. The fibers are loaded onto one of the cards (Bill uses the left one) and gently carded with the right card. Bill rests the left card on his knee. He says he does this because he is lazy and that "laziness is the mother of invention." In the carding process, the fibers are transferred to the right card. While carding, you might find some residual guard hair and he did. Per Bill, "Be thankful you found them at this stage."

Carding is completed when you have eliminated the higher density areas of fiber on the card. You may not get rid of them all. A spinner will learn what he can do with the fiber on his wheel and will learn to process it just the right amount. After the fiber had been carded enough, Bill removed it from the card—into a spinnable sausage-shaped piece known as a rolag. It takes about five minutes to produce a rolag



**Cashmere fiber is loaded onto one card.  
Bill uses his left card for loading.**



**Fiber is carded from the left card to the right one.  
Gently.**



**Removing the rolag from the card.**

**Continued on next page**

## Bill Benham

Continued from previous page

which Bill can spin from for two hours. Per Bill, the processed cashmere is not perfectly carded, but it does not need to be.

After you remove the rolag from the card, you can hold it up to a light or a lighted window for a final check for guard hairs or lumpy spots. We did this, even photographed it. The method worked, even though the photo was less than perfect.



Inspection to see if the fibers are adequately carded—checking for dense areas.

You can also spin from a batt, instead of using a rolag, but you may end up with a lumpy yarn or need to slow down excessively to avoid creating a lumpy yarn. Bill says **all fiber preparation for spinning is a compromise of three factors: Fiber damage, time and quality.**

Bill believes that all cashmere should be spun fine. Even though a finer yarn requires more twist, you should be careful not to overspin the cashmere yarn. Overspinning will create a harder (less-soft) yarn. If you find yourself putting too much twist in the yarn, you might need to treadle slower. If you have difficulty in spinning from your rolag, you might want to try and spin from the other end of the rolag. Sometimes this will make a difference. Also, be sure and pick out the big stuff and junk from the fiber before you spin it, as most lumps which end up in your yarn start out as a piece of junk.

The only instance when you should wash cashmere fiber is when it's from a buck. Use a mild dishwashing detergent like Palmolive or Ivory and warm water. Wash the plyed yarn and finished items in mild detergent and warm water. Always rinse with warm water until the water is clear.

### Learning to Spin Cashmere

Bill advises beginning spinners to buy an inexpensive wheel—such as an Ashford, something that is readily available and has good resale value. When you are a more experienced spinner, you may be more particular about your wheel/s of choice. You will also need hand cards—a set of wool cards for wool and a set of cotton cards for cashmere and other fine fibers.

Start spinning on wool. You could start on a coarse wool, such as Romney. As you are comfortable with the coarse wool, move on to a medium wool such as Corriedale and then, when this feels comfortable, move to a fine wool such as Merino. And then comes cashmere. I asked Bill about spinning cotton in preparation to spinning cashmere. I have heard this advice from several people. Bill says that spinning cotton is "highly conducive to strong language." He would skip cotton.

Beginning spinners should have everything going for them that they can. They should try to make the process as easy as possible.

### Marketing Cashmere to Spinners

Cashmere's major competition, in Bill's opinion, is Qiviut (musk ox). Qiviut is similar to cashmere and has all of the problems and advantages of cashmere.

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Blauw Dak Ranch  
10640 Freeman Rd.  
Birkenfeld, OR  
97016

Bill De Jager  
503-755-2005  
(phone and fax)

Cashmere Goats  
Maremma Guardian Dogs  
Home of  
Genghis Khan



## Bill Benham

Continued from previous page

It is however, more expensive. Bill believes that quality imported cashmere is available to spinners and that this is a major competition for domestic cashmere.

Because of the scarcity of cashmere, Bill believes that spinners are not currently particular about what quality of cashmere they get, as long as they can get it. They will be picky about impurities in the fiber—trash—hay, seeds and other impurities—because this trash makes lumps in the spun yarn. Most yarn lumps have something at the center.

Uniformity of fiber length is important in spinning. When spinning, you will draft to the longer fibers and the shorter fibers will clump up. An experienced spinner can even out these clumps, but it will slow them down. A less experienced spinner may end up with an uneven yarn.

Spinners will want to pick out as few guard hairs as possible. Bill thought that no spinner would be interested in a shorn fleece and some would purchase a combed fleece to hand dehair themselves if the price was right and the cashmere was a quality product. As (if) more cashmere choices are available to spinners, they will become more particular about length, color, crimp and other identifiable qualities.

Per Bill, your best customers, in order, are yourself, then a handspinner, followed last by the commercial markets. Don't forget to satisfy your best customer first!



Bill Benham admires his rolag of cashmere.

## Spinning Terms for Non-Spinners

**Batt** - A sheet of carded fiber taken from handcards or a drum carder.

**Card, cards, handcards** - Wooden things with sharp, bent, wire teeth. Used to open and organize (line up) fibers before spinning into a woolen or semi-worsted yarn. They come in pairs, are wickedly sharp, but not nearly as wicked as combs. Cards are used for cashmere.

**Comb, combs, wool combs** - Wooden things with long, sharp metal tines set close together—might be one row of tines, might be several. When they say a three-pitched comb, they mean it has three rows of teeth. Combs also come in pairs. They are used to line up longer woolen fibers in preparation for spinning a worsted yarn. Combs aren't used for cashmere.

**Diz, dizes** - A round thing, traditionally a thin slice of bone, with a hole in the middle (smaller than a doughnut hole), used as a guide to make a uniform thickness of spinnable fleece.

**Draft, drafting** - The process of pulling out an appropriate number of fibers from the spinnable piece to feed into the twisty part on the spinning wheel, just the amount of fibers you want to end up in the yarn.

**Drum carder** - A mechanized, or semi-mechanized (depending if you spring for a motor or turn a crank) gadget that does the same thing (more or less) as the handcards. The teeth are set in a flexible base material which is wound around cylinders which turn.

**Plyed** - The process of winding two or more spun "singles" of yarn into one piece of yarn.

**Loft** - Fuzzy stuff that sticks up from the surface of a finished product. When talking about yarn, it means airy or spongy.

**Rolag** - A spinnable piece of fleece made by carding short-stapled wools or fine fibers. After carding, the fibers are rolled up off the card into a light, even tube with the fibers running around the tube (unlike a sliver where the fibers run lengthwise). Woolen spun yarn or semi-worsted yarn can be spun from a rolag.

**Semi-worsted yarn, Semi-woolen yarn** - You got me on these. I read the books, but am still not totally clear. The processing varies in either the preparation for spinning or spinning from the full-fledged woolen or worsted yarns. I assume the final product is someplace in the middle - sort of semi-soft, semi-squishy.

**Sliver** - A continuous strand, more-or-less-round, of carded fibers ready to spin. The fibers all point the long way.

**Woolen-spun yarn** - Yarn spun from relatively short, carded (as opposed to combed) fibers. Spun using a method which traps as much air as possible, the goal being a light, soft, airy yarn. It is a fuzzier, softer, kinder, gentler, squishier yarn than worsted yarn.

**Worsted-spun yarn** - Yarn spun from longer fibers which have been combed to remove unwanted shorter fibers and line up those long fibers as much as possible, so they don't stick out and make the yarn look fuzzy. Resulting yarn is pretty, smooth, compact and not very squishy.



# A Spinner's Thoughts About Cashmere

By Bill Benham

1. Spinners are not a uniform group with identical standards.
2. The one thing that spinners are most interested in is the amount of guard hair. The highest grade could have, perhaps, one guard hair in one yard of yarn. The spinner can remove this amount without slowing down much.
3. Many spinners **can** detect small differences in fineness but, all finenesses are wanted, with an adjustment in price for various grades.
4. Many spinners will ignore crimp and sheen. If they blend cashmere with silk, a very popular commercial product, cashmere sheen is undetectable.
5. Great differences in length of fiber are important. Uniform length is more easily spun to a uniform diameter.
6. Trash is a no-no. We don't want trash in our **yarn**.
7. Different spinners will want different colors. Eventually, specific colors will become more popular and demand a premium.
8. Eventually a specific spinner will want the fiber from a specific goat each year. This is a way to build loyalty. Be able to identify the goat your fiber came from. Ask the spinner what quality is most attractive to that spinner and decide if this is a generally desirable quality or only an idiosyncrasy of that spinner.
9. Domestic cashmere is a new product to the spinner. Scrupulous honesty is especially important at this point.
10. Most spinners who spin cashmere are experienced spinners. Preparation by the producer should not exceed removal of guard hairs.
11. For my cashmere spinning, I hand card with cotton cards. I card the least amount that removes the clumps in the fiber. All carding damages by breaking and stretching the fibers.
12. For hand spinners, don't attempt to sell shorn fiber. Cashmere for handspinners should be combed from the animal only.
13. The best markets for your cashmere are:
  1. Yourself
  2. Handspinners
  3. Commercial

Handspinners will pay a premium compared to commercial consumers but require a premium product, i.e., combed fiber, not shorn.
14. A primary characteristic that spinners want is fineness. Many spinners are not sensitive to degrees of fineness after a certain threshold is passed.
15. Fine fiber can be spun into a fine yarn. It is soft to the skin, especially the neck.
16. A coarse cashmere yarn is offensive to me because it represents a waste of a valuable material. A coarse yarn frequently disguises an inferior fiber. The yarn should be used where only the yarn from a fine fiber can be used. Unnecessary damage to the fiber in processing is offensive to me.
17. Yes, cashmere can be spun on a spindle but it should be a spindle appropriate to spinning a fine yarn, either a supported spindle or a hand spindle, not a drop spindle. These are spindles that are usually used to spin cotton. A very experienced spinner can spin four times as much yarn with a wheel as with a spindle. The beginner is at an additional disadvantage with a spindle.

*Bill Benham is an experienced spinner (18 years). See the article featuring him and his work beginning on page 11 of this issue.*

## CRR Cashmere Goats & Alpacas

Goats, Alpacas and Fleece for Sale



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## New Contest!

Designed by that Wild and Crazy  
Steve Hachenberger

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### WHOSE BUCK HAS THE THICKEST NECK?!

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"Who cares?" you may ask.  
Well, Steve Hachenberger cares and Paul cares and.....  
there must be *somebody* else out there who cares?

#### Rules (Gotta have 'em)

Measure 4" to 5" back from the base of the horns.  
Must use a cloth tape for measuring.  
Must provide photo of both the buck and owner with  
front and side view of each.  
No cheating, such as deliberately bloating the buck! It  
is OK to feed right before, however (if you really  
think this will effect the neck measurement!)

#### Deadline

Submissions due by October 1, 1997.  
Mail all submissions to CashMirror Publications.

#### Prizes

The staff of CashMirror will be the judges. (That's  
Linda, Paul and Mickey in case you haven't figured that  
out yet.)

#### Prizes include:

1. Wooden goat cut-out with appropriate saying.
2. New (color) CashMirror poster to be out soon.
3. An almost full set of back issues of CashMirror  
(October 89 - September 97).
4. MacDonald's gift certificate in an undetermined  
amount.
5. Three cashmere hairs each, hand dehaired, suit-  
able for framing, from both Black Bart and Silver  
Bart (post-rut).
6. Other valuable stuff which may be added between  
now and then by us or other people who care.

## Goat Nutrition 101

By Paul G. Johnson, PhD (Post hole Digger)

Most evidence so far has shown that nutrition levels for cashmere goats does not materially affect cashmere production, with the possible exception of starvation. It can affect cashmere production indirectly however, through the timing of shedding or moult. (Merchant 1994). Also, at least one study shows there is some evidence that those pesky guard hairs are influenced by changes in nutrition. (Russel, 1995)

I will address here the normal or average nutrition requirements. Like most generalities, what works best for you, in your area, region, and circumstance may vary from the "normal." Check with your veterinarian., extension agent, or your goats to see what works for your herd.

Obviously, the size and age of the goat is a factor in calculating nutritional needs as well. In regions containing plentiful browse, a goat's diet will be quite varied. Browsing goats tend to eat small amounts of a great many plants. Their needs for added nutrition are less than those of goats limited to grazing on all-grass pastures.

The lumbar scoring method of Australia is a good method for checking a goat's condition. By gripping the backbone just in front of the hips, you can determine whether the goat is too thin (sharp edges) or too fat (can't even find the edges). With practice, you can determine the middle ground as well. The numbering system used usually ranges from condition 1 through 4, with 1 being too thin and 4 being overweight. Condition 3 is the usual goal, with the backbone edges readily felt, but rounded, with no sharp edge. A goat is considered Condition 2 when you feel more backbone than a Condition 3.

A one point change in condition represents an average of a 12% change in body weight. Dairy goats are usually scored on a 6 point system, ranging from 0 (bag of bones) to 5 (prominent groove down the back line with the muscles mounded up on each side of this groove).

Learning this method of judging condition tells you a lot about the goat's condition, and is necessary in determining your goat's specific needs. When rating a fiber goat's condition, it is even more important to feel than just look, as a fluffy coat of fiber can conceal

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## Goat Nutrition

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an underweight goat. Books and studies can only give you guidelines. Your goat's condition may vary depending on the season of the year. Also, you will find that some goats are easier to keep in good condition than others.

Pregnant and lactating does need more protein than the others. Studies have indicated that pregnant does will need at least 150% of normal nutrition, while a doe feeding two or more kids, will require up to 250% of normal nutrition. (Massey, AC, New Zealand) In addition, it is common to increase the protein level a few weeks before and during the breeding season for both the bucks and does for "flushing," the practice of stimulating egg and sperm production by increasing the level of nutrition.

Most goat farmers feed their goats various types of hay including alfalfa, pasture or browse. For the purposes of this article I distinguish between alfalfa hay and other types of hay due to the normal protein differences.

This roughage part of the goat's diet can be supplemented with grain to adjust the protein intake. If you don't feed hay/alfalfa or have much in the way of pasture or browse, be sure your goats have an adequate level of fiber in their diet. Fiber is important and grain, with all its protein, doesn't have it.

So how much feed is needed? In terms of percentage of protein, per the available literature (which varies widely!) the average goat needs 10-12% of its intake to be protein. Pregnant and lactating does need 12% to 18% protein, with the highest amount required during kid-



How much protein am I getting from this hay? Is it enough?

ding. This translates to ½ flake (3 to 5lb.) alfalfa, with up to 1 lb. of grain, or 1 to 2 lb. grain if fed hay with a lesser protein amount. Browse should also be supplemented with grain during these peak times.

You can vary the grain amount according to your herd's needs. We feed no grain for 6+ months to bucks wethers, and non-lactating does. They get by just fine on blackberries, poison oak, and other browse. We just need to watch them, and rotate pastures occasionally. If one group seems undernourished, we supplement with grain (C.O.B.) ranging from 1 cup on up, per animal. Since we don't serve them individually, (unless one shows signs of needing additional help), some get more, and some less in the resultant free-for-all. Feeding troughs work well. (See article on page 10 of this issue for a plan for a cheap and easy "free for all" feeder.)

As already noted, feed requirements suggested by various references varies a lot. Two examples of suggested nutrition requirements

follow:

Per Sue Drummond's book, "Raising Angora Goats the Northern Way," the following are listed as nutrition requirements:

Non-pregnant, non-lactating doe (weight 80 lb.): 2-1/2 lb. of alfalfa/per day, plus free-choice minerals.

Pregnant doe (80 lb.): 2-1/4 minimum/day alfalfa plus ¾ to 1 lb. of corn, plus minerals.

Lactating doe (80 lb.): 2-3/4 (minimum) alfalfa plus 1 lb. corn plus minerals.

Kid (after weaning): 1 to 2 lb. alfalfa (depending on kid's size) with 1 to 2 lb. of grain (C.O.B.) plus minerals.

Nursing kid: Free choice alfalfa, C.O.B., and minerals.

Nutrition requirements suggested by University of California, Irvine -

Continued on next page



## Goat Nutrition

Continued from previous page

4H program literature are as follows:

Adult goats: ½ flake (5 lb) hay or it's equivalent per day.

Lactating doe: ½ flake (5 lb.) hay or it's equivalent, plus 2-3 lb. grain.

Pregnant doe (last 1-2 months of gestation only): Add 1-2 lb. of grain to adult does' requirements.

The requirements for bucks and wethers are similar to the requirements for non-lactating, nonpregnant does, although some references suggest giving bucks 10% more of everything, especially during rut. During the breeding season, bucks can get too excited to eat much hay and may need more grain.

The amount of the protein contained in your hay is important and can vary quite a bit. In many regions, you can find out the amount of protein in different types of hay. Check it out; it does make a difference. If the farmer doesn't know, call your County extension agent. Size of goat, time of year, condition and mix of browse, all are factors to consider in planning your nutrition program.

When adjusting your nutrition program, never suddenly change from one feed system to another, i.e., from forage to grain, just to increase protein requirements. This may have unpleasant side effects. Make any changes in feed gradually. (Sahlu, 1997)

Water is an extremely major part of nutrition. You should offer plenty of clean water, with easy access at any time. Yes, they always mess in the cleanest water, but no one seems to know why. Perhaps this is their way of letting you know they approve.

Mineral and vitamin requirements are more difficult to quantify on a general basis. Selenium is needed in our area, while in areas of California, copper is deficient, and must be added to the diet. Other minerals, including calcium, phosphorus, sodium, potassium, iron, and iodine are found in the feed and/or hay itself. Again, you need to check with your veterinarian, feed store or neighboring farmers to determine any special needs in your region. A good free-choice mineral in block or loose form which contains most or all necessary vitamins and minerals may take care of your herd's special needs.

Good grass forage and /or hay, with minimal grain, fresh water, and minerals pretty well sums up the basic requirements. With just a little attention, the goats will help you determine what they need.

Resources for further reading about goat nutrition:

### Books:

Goat Medicine, Mary C. Smith & David M. Sherman, 1994.

The Nutrition and Grazing Ecology of Specialty Fibre Producing Animals, European Fine Fibre Network, 1995.

Proceedings, Goat Field Day, April 26, 1997, Agricultural Research and Extension Program, Langston University, 1997.

Goat Husbandry, David Mackenzie, 1993.

Angora Goats, the Northern Way, Susan Black Drummond, 1993.

### Web sites:

University of Maryland, National Goat Handbook

[www.inform.umd.edu:8088/EdRes/Topic/AgrEnv/mdd/goat](http://www.inform.umd.edu:8088/EdRes/Topic/AgrEnv/mdd/goat)

Massey University, New Zealand

<http://www.massey.ac.nz/~wvvet/muvsa/ass/nut/goats.htm>

Langston University Research and Extension

<http://www.luresext.edu>



Are we getting enough to eat here? If you ask us, we'll tell you we need grain, too. (Of course, we will lie about this.)

# A Journey into the Heart of Goat Country

by Wes Ackley

I really didn't want to go to Texas in May when so many things needed to be done at home in Maine. I grumbled, packed and prepared to test fate on the airplane. Sure enough, my plane got punched so hard by a thunderstorm over San Antonio that the pilot aborted his landing attempt and announced with tension in his voice that we would circle and try again. The second attempt brought us a worse pummeling and the pilot pulled up once more to fly around a towering mass of gray-green clouds raining fire and ice. The third try was announced an hour after the first. We all went silent considering how much we still wanted to do with our lives and the crew brought that 737 swooping down to a relatively smooth landing. We passengers exhaled, applauded and began to reconsider our evening.

I had imperiled myself for the spring meeting of Cashmere America directors at the Co-op's home in Sonora. A Board of Directors meeting on May 17 was to be followed by two days assisting James Barton in grading the recent fleece shipments. Since I had flown in to San Antonio a day early to save money on airfare, I figured I didn't need to drive the 180 miles to Sonora in the dark. I decided to drive a few miles in the Hill Country and find a bed.

The bed was in Beorne (pronounced as Bernie) and morning came on clear blue over a brick and stone commercial district from the turn of the century. After breakfast and photographing the town square architecture, I chose to avoid I-10 for a while in favor of a lightly used road running north through Sisterdale to Fredericksburg. On this road I learned that Texas is beautiful in May. Hilly green ranch land was decorated with wonderfully large and dense carpets of wildflowers. And the show of color continued after the land began to flatten as I turned west toward Junction and Sonora.

Downtown Sonora has two banks, four restaurants and about one thousand pickup trucks. I found James Barton's pickup near the Co-op office. His big white F-350 is distinguished from all the other big white pickups by two bumper stickers. One exclaims, "CASHMERE GOATS / A HAIR RAISING EXPERIENCE." The second warns, "PASS AT YOUR OWN RISK / I CHEW." I found James in the nearby Pizza Hut with a quartet of women, one of whom turned out to be Delyse Jaeger, the bright and competent owner of

the new voice at Cashmere America.

James and I spent the afternoon at the warehouse belonging to Sonora Wool and Mohair. This building contains at least an acre of floor space covered with five foot high bags of mohair. In one corner, tucked behind the mohair classing room is our room: the warehouse and classing space for all the cashmere shipped to the Co-op. A solitary casement window allows a surprising amount of light into the four or five hundred square foot room. A white classing table with a blue backboard extends from the window toward the center of the room. Perpendicular to this table runs a second one which holds

*Downtown Sonora has two banks, four restaurants and about one thousand pickup trucks.*

the electronic scale and functions as a desk for all the record keeping. Outside the well lit triangle of work space are arranged a stack of all the boxed shipments of incoming raw fiber, cubicles to hold graded fleeces,

Continued on next page



"Is this a style 2 or a bit better?" James Barton and Kris McGuire discuss a fleece at the classing table in the Co-op workroom.



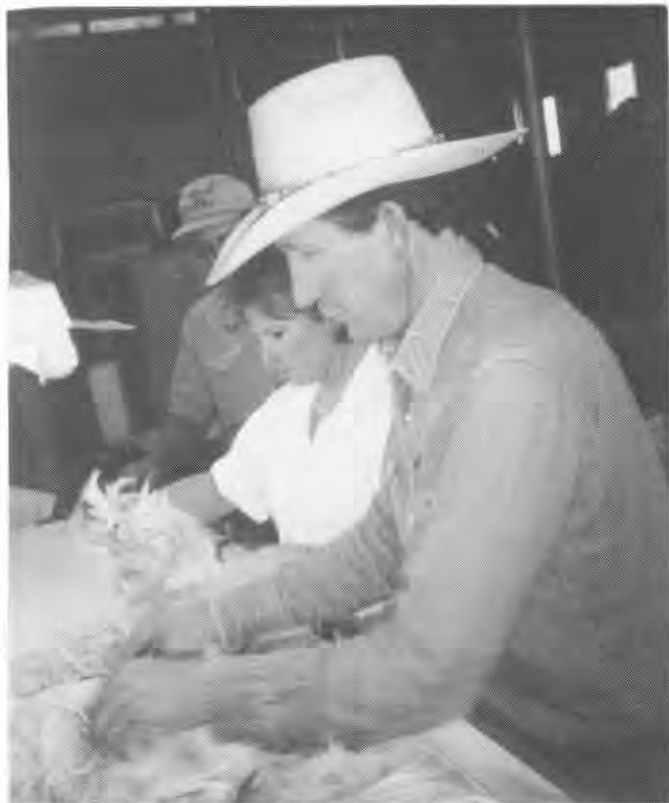
## Goat Country

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barrels of batt back home after dehairing and large bags of fleece previously graded.

What work James got from me that afternoon was fun and educational. Some grading involved three of us. Harriet Jensen had shipped a couple of hundred pounds of fleeces from Nebraska. She wanted to get some feedback on her yearling doe fleeces and to test her grading skills. Each fleece was accompanied by a card showing Harriet's assessment of color, fineness, style, and yield. If James differed, he marked his evaluation and he entered the fleece weight on each evaluation slip. I was testing my judgment against James and Harriet. Most of the time we agreed. But there are many borderline fleeces. Is that fine or medium? Is that Style 2 or a bit better? Sometimes James was more generous toward a fleece than Harriet, sometimes less. But I was delighted by the preponderance of agreement; mark a big credit to Terry Sim.

After finishing these individual assessments, James switched to classing a big bag of fleeces. Classing has a different purpose and should take less time. The grader is not trying to judge the exact length of a pinch of cashmere, only whether it is long enough to dehair and spin well and provide reasonable yield. He is not thinking Style 2+ or 3, but rather "Is this crimpy



Bronwyn Schuetze and Bob Buchholz grading fiber with James Barton keeping watch from the background

enough to go into the #1 Soft Brown cashmere lot?" And he is not taking time to record his judgments. He is simply trying to get a handful of fleece in to the proper bag clipped on the edge of the classing table. If he is classing a large shipment of well sheared fleeces of a single color, James can consign a fleece to the collection bags in less than a minute. But if there are second cuts, mixed color, or vegetative contamination and coting to deal with, he may end up spending two or three or even eight minutes. One person's consignment may require a great deal more time than another.

Glenda Barton stopped in to round us up for Friday night dinner. After a quick trip out to their ranch for chores and cleanup, we drove sixty miles to San Angelo for dinner. We made our way out of goat country and into crop land with fertile fields. We had a good dinner and a lovely ride in the evening light. But the thrill of the evening was returning to the Days Inn at Sonora and finding a capped pickup truck from Colorado stuffed with bags of cashmere. Bronwyn Schuetze and Kris McGuire had made a long drive with hundreds of fleeces.

Saturday was devoted to the meeting of the Board of Directors. To the six participants in Sonora we added Harriet Jensen and Marti Wall on the telephone. We made our way through a long agenda, but the list of topics of general interest was short. The Co-op booth at Stitches in San Francisco was a success due to the work of Marti Wall and Eileen Cornwell and others. Marilyn Merbach and Jeanne Austin will run the booth at the Pennsylvania Stitches in October with assistance from Joe David Ross and Wes Ackley. The 100% brown cashmere yarn is selling well and customers are hoping for white or light, so we hope to answer that demand by winter. And we reelected Joe David Ross president, James Barton V.P. and Marti Wall secretary with appreciation for their stamina and for the continuity of their leadership.

On Sunday we all went to the warehouse to class goat fleece. "We" were James Barton, Bob Buchholtz, Bron, Kris, Joe David and I, joined after a while by Betty and Bill Nagel, who arrived with their own fleece. Since it was soon apparent that only one person could work beside James at one time due to a need for continual communication, I opted to function as photographer and time keeper. In these roles I was able to watch this crew work intently, argue over some difficult questions and enjoy the whole process, even when our fleeces were being downgraded from our own evaluations. And do you know who seemed to enjoy it all most? Joe David. Yup. Here he was with this bunch of people who were enjoying each other even when they were on opposite sides of an argument; and James was in charge of operations, so Joe David could

Continued on next page



## Goat Country

Continued from previous page

relax a bit. He sat back and watched and listened, he joked and joshed and he ate more pizza at lunch break than anyone else.

Now the great question of the day became: should classing be charged on the basis of time instead of weight shipped? We have known that large shipments take far less time per fleece, but we found that there could be dramatic differences between small shipments. One small consignment of fleeces in poor condition required four and half minutes per fleece (with all record keeping excluded), while another shipment of clean white and gray fleeces, half of which were to be appraised as well as classed, only needed two and a half minutes per fleece. And James claims some small shipments take only as much time per fleece for the actual grading as those in a large shipment. For reference, a 200 pound preclassified shipment required only about one minute per pound even with considerable reclassing. The times here were realized with two classers. We think they would not be much different with James working alone, as the constant background chatter and cross-checking between the classers hurt concentration.

We decided that James should keep very careful time records. We will then confront this question again. There has been a penalty charged for contaminated fiber, but we may be able to quantify it better. This much is clear: cotted (felted) fiber, color contamination, vegetable contamination, second cuts in sheared fiber, and poor combing technique slow down classing even more than James had realized. These problems waste down and cost grading time. As growers we must learn to minimize these problems in order to lower our handling costs.

When we had used up a good part of the afternoon in the warehouse, we divided up for the evening. Some chose to enjoy Texas hospitality and barbecue at the Bartons' ranch. But Bron and I, disdaining such an easy ending to the day, accepted Joe David's invitation to visit his ranching operation at Ozona, an hour drive to the west. And Bob didn't have much choice; he was appointed to come along to find an escaped billy. (I'm trying to adjust to the Texas practice of referring to billies and nannies.)

I've visited four Texas ranches now and they are all so foreign to my experience that I am struck with open mouth disease. I don't even know what to ask and then I forget the answers to my questions. But let me give some impressions of Joe David's Ozona operation.

We entered the ranch in the middle of its 7,000 acres because I-10 runs through the middle of it. There is a small house for the farmhand and a collec-



Bronwyn and Bob looking over the buck population in the holding pen at Joe David Ross's Ozona ranch.

tion of sheds. The most impressive structure is the complex of sorting pens, all five feet high and constructed of welded pipe and rod and all well maintained. There are miles and miles of fencing subdividing the dry, rocky and vulnerable grassland into management units. With a couple of farmhands and the same number of horses and collies, day to day order is maintained under the direction of Joe Will Ross who manages the wool warehouse in Ozona. When special problems arise, Bob and James may get called in.

This day the problem was a billy who had abandoned his brothers presumably to hunt up some nannies. Bob was to search for the girls to find the errant boy. First, we took time to look over the billies which were penned. We moved them in to a smaller pen so we could move in on them. Joe David has imported cashmere goats and he has imported Boers. And he

Continued on next page



Bron getting set to ride some rough ground in search of an AWOL buck.

## Goat Country

Continued from previous page

buys bucks that impress him at shows. So we were looking at a large group of mature billies with a real range of genetics. But they were generally big framed with solid conformation. Joe David could tell us about any one and pointed out faults as well as strengths.

A crash involving sheet metal interrupted our inspection. Bob had abandoned us to saddle horses for himself and Bron. He and a farmhand now appeared with a rattlesnake they had just killed beside a shed. We turned to the world outside the pens. Bob and Bron headed off on horseback with the collies to search for the errant billy. Joe David loaded me onto the back of an ATV and piloted us up on to a ridge from which we could see a large territory. We stopped several times and walked, Joe David explaining erosion control techniques, identifying native plants and introduced grasses and checking on their condition. He delights in the complexity of this environment and tries to control his livestock's interaction with it very carefully. He uses fire and overseeding with various grasses to protect and increase productivity. He speaks of calculating pasture rotations by hours, not days. At his home ranch in Sonora, which is divided into thirty pastures, the combined herd of goats, sheep and cattle may spend as little as thirty-six hours in a unit.

We spied a large group of yearling does making their way through heavy brush along a ridge away from the horsemen and dogs. It soon became obvious that the humans were not going to find the wandering billy that day. We quit the search in favor of dining on burritos graciously prepared by the farmhand's wife. Then we made our way back to Sonora in the evening light, stopping to satisfy an urge for Dairy Queen cones.

I went to bed that night believing that this trip to Texas had been worth the price of fear of flying and loss of work days. I learned more than I planned and it was both a humbling and exciting experience. My faith in the co-op was renewed and my appreciation for this arid land was expanded.

*Wes Ackley and his wife Marilyn raise cashmere goats in Buckfield Maine at Bessie Place Cashmere. Marilyn is the current president of CaPrA and Wes is a Cashmere America Cooperative director. All photographs included with this article were "shot" by Wes. If you want to see a photograph of Wes, you'll need to check out the Co-op's cashmere scarf kits—some of them contain a very attractive picture of Wes modeling a finished scarf.*

## What's in a Wattle?

Wattles are skin appendages sometimes found on the neck of the goat. They have a central cartilaginous core, smooth muscle, connective tissue, nerves and blood vessels. And even with all this stuff, they have no known purpose. Wattles are inherited via a dominant gene. Although usually inherited if a parent has them, they vary in location, size and number. A study in France found that does who sported wattles were 13% more prolific than does without wattles.\*

Wattles can be removed easily from very young goats using scissors or they can be removed inadvertently by a shearer on an older goat somewhat more messily. Even though wattles could potentially become a problem if they are snagged, this is uncommon. When they are removed, it is generally for cosmetic reasons. Some people like 'em, some don't and most don't care one way or the other.

If some of your goats have wattles (and you like them), you may want to point them out to your shearer as they may be hidden underneath the fuzz and accidentally sheared off. A goat shearer told us a story about shearing off a wattle on a customer's goat and casually holding a finger over the hole in an attempt to stop the bleeding in hopes that the goat owner wouldn't notice. The owner noticed.

\*Ricordeau, G.: Hérité des pendeloques en race Saanen, différences de fécondité entre les génotypes avec et sans pendeloques. Ann. Zootech. 16:263-270, 1967.

(That's French for the differences in fecundity of Saanen goats with and without wattles.)

If a man says something in the forest and there's no woman around to hear him, is he still wrong?

## Calendar of Events

## Association Contacts

### August 28-29, 1997

Fiber Art Expo

Bethel, Missouri

Spinning, weaving and other fiber workshops

Registration required by August 15th

Contact Dr. Helen Swartz, Lincoln University, PO

Box 29, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0029,

573-681-5551

### August 30 - September 1, 1997

World Sheep Fiber Art and Flower Festival

Bethel, Missouri

Featuring Year of the Goat

Goat show, goat cookout, demonstrations, booths, fun—see additional information page 8, this issue.

For more information contact Karen Arment, Route 1, Box 238, Shelbyville, MO 63469, telephone 573-633-2652

### September 27-28, 1997

Oregon Flock & Fiber Festival

Angora, cashmere, pygora—livestock and fiber shows and sales, Clackamas County Fairgrounds, Canby, Oregon. For information contact Brandy Chastain, Whistlestop Farm, 503-628-1205

### September 29 - October 1, 1997

Virginia State Fair, Richmond, Virginia

Home of ECA's goat show and fleece competition.

### October 24, 1997

Mild Goat Men - First (maybe annual, maybe not) meeting. Bozeman, Montana, at a saloon to be announced. More information? Contact Head Herder, Johnson, 503-623-5194.

### October 24-26, 1997

PCMA Business of Cashmere Conference III

Bozeman, Montana, Holiday Inn Convention Center

For information, contact PCMA at 406-683-5445, fax 406-683-5567.

### American Meat Goat Association

W. E. Banker, President, 512-384-2829

### Cashmere America Co-operative

Joe David Ross, Manager, 915-387-6052

fax 915-387-2642

Wes Ackley (Maine) 207-336-2948

Marti Wall (Washington) 360-424-7935

### Cashmere Producers of America (CaPrA)

Marilyn Ackley, President

Phone/fax 207-336-2948, ackley@megalink.net

CaPrA office: 512-452-5205, fax 512-452-5521

### Colorado Cashmere and Angora Goat Association (CCAGA)

Carol Kromer, Club Contact, 719-347-2329

### Eastern Cashmere Association (ECA)

Ray Repaske, President 540-436-3546

### North West Cashmere Association (NWCA)

Cliff and Mickey Nielsen, 509-658-2502

### Professional Cashmere Marketers' Association

(PCMA), Tom and Ann Dooling, 406-683-5445

knits-pioneer@worldnet.att.net

### Texas Cashmere Association

Dr. Don Huss, President

915-396-2920 or 915-396-2195

tca@webstar.net

### Western Prairie Cashmere Association

John Harris, President

308-635-1579

JHarris@Hannibal.WNCC.CC.NE.US

### Wild Goat Women

Debbie Walstead, Chairperson

719-495-2962



## ARIZONA

### CAPRON COUNTRY CASHMERE

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35039 N. Central Ave.  
Phoenix, AZ 85027-7481  
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Fax: 602-780-9715  
email: GDrewry@aol.com

### RANCHO VERDE

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602-471-3802

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Fax: 719-347-2696

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email: ackley@megalink.net

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Fax: 406-961-4770

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Fax: 212-626-6487

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Dewey and Eric Skemp  
199 Ankeny Hill Rd.  
Jefferson, OR 97352  
503-373-9724  
Fax: 503-362-8323  
email: eric@hifly.com

### BLAUW DAK RANCH

Bill DeJager  
10640 Freeman Rd.  
Birkenfeld, OR 97016-7226  
Voice & fax: 503-755-2005  
pager: 503-229-2776  
email: blauwdak@3dwave.com

### CASHMERE GROVES

Pat Groves  
16925 S. Beckman Rd.  
Oregon City, OR 97045  
503-631-7806  
email: pgroves@pacifier.com

### CHEHALEM CASHMERE

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### FOXMOOR FARM

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## GOAT KNOLL

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2280 S. Church Rd.  
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503-623-5194  
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email: goatknol@teleport.com

## HAWKS MOUNTAIN PYGORA'S

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Woodville, Ontario K0M 2T0  
1-705-374-5527

## Index to CashMirror issues 7/96 - 6/97

**July 1996**

Reflections - A Good Farmer, Notes from New Publisher (Mission Statement), China Trade, Poisonous Buttercup, IV International Conference on Goats, Recipe (Goat Bar-B-Que), CCAGA - New Cashmere and Angora Goat Association, Goats in Cyberspace, Goat Widow's Tale, Introducing Chevrasse, About Rocky Mountain Exotic Fibre, Metric Conversion Chart, A Conversation with Terry Sim, Drought in Texas, Update on CAE, How to Become a Better Sheep (Goat) Manager, Skin Diseases.

**August 1996**

Reflections - Couples Working Together on the Farm, Farm Feature - Paulins (Washington), Goateaters Anonymous (Predators), Whatever Happened to Whatawhata, The Fleece Checks are Here!, The Domino Theory (Planning), Castrating Buck Kids, Introducing CashMirror's Internet Home Page, Convergence '96, Can You Milk Them? - Yes!, NWCA Fleece Competition Results, '96 Black Sheep Gathering.

**September 1996 (Breeders' Showcase)**

Reflections - Fencing, Fencing, Fencing to Avoid Breeding, Breeding, Breeding, Ten Rules for Breeding Goats, Fiber Testing in the USA, Interpreting Fleece Test Results, Farm Feature - John Harris (Nebraska), Introducing the Fåure Island Goat, How to Build a Mineral Mix Feeder, George Howe: Maker of (Spinning) Wheels, Observations on Breeding, Breeding Terms, Report of Cashmere Research in Europe - Part I, Mad Cow Disease - Are Goats Susceptible?

**October 1996**

Reflections - Little Lost Goats, Farm Feature - Hinchman/Weber (New Jersey), Report of Cashmere Research in Europe - Part II, John Mionczynski - Man of Many Talents, Taking Your Goat on an Interstate Trip, How to Order China Conference Proceedings, Australian Goat Notes & CaPrA Goat Notes, Farm Fair International (Canada) Goat Gala, Recipe - Durham Chevon Squab Pie, How to Get Your Goat, Spinning Basics, CaPrA/Cashmere Wyoming conference - Spinning Track and Breeding Track, How to Dye with Koolaid, The Great American Goat Roundup (CaPrA Conference).

**November 1996**

Reflections - Billy's Harem, Good Deal! Breeders Are on the Internet!, Recipes (3), Goat Replaces Beef at the Palace, Cashmere Kids 4-H Group Visits Goat Knoll, Montana Knits, CaPrA Fleece Contest Results (corrected), Livestock Guarding Dogs, PCMA Business of Cashmere Conference II, General Health Management of Goats, Advanced Cashmere Breeding, ECA Fleece Competition Winners.

**December 1996**

Reflections - The Night Before Christmas, Introducing a Contest!, Avoiding Micron Madness, Ranch Feature - Bartons (Texas), Hand Combing and Hand De-hairing Your Own Cashmere, Breeding Types (Rated X), Interview with Mild Goat Men, Zhongwei Goats, The Buck Stops Here or Who Are You Kidding?, Advanced Breeding For Homozygous White Cashmere, PJ's Low-tech Tips, Dehairing Options 1997, Yield and Recoverable Yield of Cashmere Fleeces, *Fibre News* Becomes *The Goat Farmer*.

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**January 1997**

Reflections - Finding the New Barn, About That New CaPrA President, Goats in Cyberspace, Marketing Cashmere Garments in Australia, Announcing Third Annual Winter Pygora Goat & Fiber Frenzy, Insurance For Goats, Shelters for Goats, A Plan for A Goat Shelter, Goat Statistics, Cashmere and the Textile Heritage of India, Consider the Shahtoosh!, Taxes - How to Write off Your Goat, Musings (About Mona) From the Manure Pile.

**February 1997**

Reflections - Kidding/Lambing, Contest Results, Explanation of Contest Results, Farm Feature - Kim Washburn (Oregon), Montana Knits Announces '97 Fleece Prices, Cashmere America Co-op News, Kidding Around - Kidding Tips, Normal Birth Instructions for Midwife Paul, PJ's First Goat Midwifery, Knitting in America - A Book Report, Kidding Difficulties, Why Do We Trim Hooves?, Langston University Goat Research, Trimming the Hooves of Goats, Third Annual Pygora Fiber Frenzy, Goat People - Michelle Dobbins and Marilyn Ackley, Macaulay Land Use Research Institute, Goats on the Web.

**March 1997**

Reflections - Little Lost Pig, Shearers Without Terry (A Support Group), Who is Christopher Lupton (of Texas A&M)?, Enforcing Trading Standards in Cashmere and Camel Hair Marketing, On the Cashmere Trail - in China, Cashmere Research in Europe, Rare Natural Animals Fibres - Australian RIRDC organization, How a Ruminant Ruminates, How the Kids Eat (Little Digestive Systems), Goat Teeth, Grunt - Pigorian Chants - a Book Report, Cashmere's Story, Lambing (Kidding) Tips, Computer Links.

**April 1997**

Reflections - Hunting for Eggs, Zoonotic Diseases, Peoplenotics, The Cashmere Dream, News from the Co-op, Good Goat Words (A Glossary), Goat Parasites, Goat Herding for the Technically-Challenged, Goat Recipes (3), Quiz for the Goat-Inclined, FoxMoor Farm's Field Day, The Rights of Spring, 1997 Co-op Purchase Prices, Goats on the Web.

**May 1997**

Reflections - Will the Real Mother Please Stand Up?, Joe Dooling Receives FFA Award, Goat People - Heidi Smith and Pat Fuhr, The Clostridial Diseases, Unseen Fiber Arts (Spinning Presentation to Blind), Fiber Testing Update, Claude Montana vs. Montana Knits, Finishing Kids, Photosensitization, The LSIRD Nafplio (Greece) Conference, Thoughts on Mother's Day - Types of Goat Mothers, Eradication Program for CL in the Netherlands, Edens Obtains Grant for Cashmere Goats, Kindler Gentler Chicken???

**June 1997**

Reflections - Avoiding Poisonous Plants, Possibilities for Cashmere Production in South Africa, Fiber Fair photos - Mt. Vernon WA, Interesting Facts - South African Cashmere Goats, Can the Cashmere Goat be a Competitor to the Hill Sheep?, Farm Feature - Goulds (Oregon), Now That I Got the Fuzz Off My Goat What do I Do With It?, The Handspinner Market, Plants Poisonous to Goats, List of Poisonous Plants.



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**The Deadlines:**

Articles, photographs, advertising and other information submitted must be received by the 15th of the month prior to magazine issue date.

If you need assistance designing or laying out a display ad, or fine-tuning an article, earlier is appreciated.



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CashMirror back issues 7/96 - 6/97 \$3 each or a whole dozen for \$20. Back issues 10/89 - 6/96 \$2 each or \$15 for a dozen. We'll pay postage just to get them out of our attic. Most issues available. A good reference source about cashmere goats and history of the industry. Index for 7/96 - 6/97 on previous page. Index for 10/89 - 4/96 in May 1996 issue.

*Happy Anniversary to Us!*

*Happy Anniversary to Us!*

*Happy Anniversary Dear Linda and Paul,*

*Happy Anniversary to Us!*

*(We've published this for a whole year!)*

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