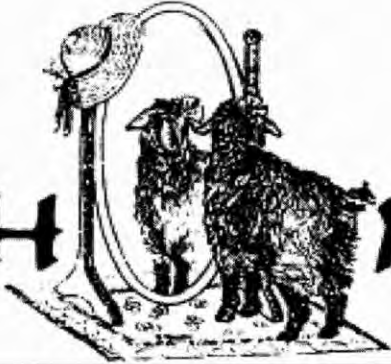




CASHMERE MIRROR

Volume 8, Issue 11

September 1997

The monthly magazine devoted to cashmere goats and their fiber



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

Cover photo:

Paul Johnson, Goat Knoll

"Someday, son, this will all be yours."

The Big Neck Contest!

Designed by Steve Hachenberger
Get your fat neck measurements in—time is running out!

This contest has been designed to answer that age-old question, "Whose buck has the thickest neck?"

Steve knows that you too must have stayed awake night after night wondering about this. So Steve can get some sleep (and also because he may have designed the contest thinking that he had a sure-fire winner) enter your buck in this first (and last) Fat Neck Contest.

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 (at least not a lot of cheating!)

Deadline

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

Prizes

The staff of CashMirror will be the judges.

Prizes include:

1. Wooden goat cut-out with appropriate saying.
2. New (color) CashMirror poster to be out soon (*something about a semi-nude photo of Paul in a pseudo-cashmere shawl*)
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, suitable 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.

Other

If you have appropriate prizes to add to the "pot" for the contest winner, let us know.

Looking Back



I came across the first issue of *CashMirror* (Volume one, Issue one) issued in the month of October 1989. Paul had left it laying around after doing his article about Bronwyn Schuetze last

month, and before putting the issue back where it came from, I re-read it. I came away with two thoughts:

1. Our little magazine has been around a while considering the number of magazines which seem to come and go in a very short period of time. It has been faithfully published every month for eight years and eleven months.
2. The issues concerning cashmere haven't changed much.

That first issue was 12 pages long and looks like it was run off on a copy machine. It had no cover and was firmly bound by one lone (rusty) staple in the upper left corner.

Articles included "The Cashmere Question" which asks the question, "what is a cashmere goat?" It defines cashmere and the goats which produce it and tells a little of their history in the world. Another article titled "Registry vs. Production Records" seems to be part (perhaps the beginning) of the ongoing debate about registering cashmere goats. In

this first issue of *CashMirror*, Judith Richardson, the original publisher falls firmly on the "no" side of the debate. There was an article about Jill Darrah and Bronwyn Schuetze and their import of Australian cashmere goats which contained some of the same information in our article about them last issue.

The Breeders Directory section listed 26 breeders—only two of which still live in our Breeders Directory—Airy Knoll Farms, Inc. (the Jensens) in Cozad, Nebraska and PMF Cashmere Company (the Doolings) in Dillon, Montana.

There is a page containing cashmere-related definitions, like luster, handle, feral and micron. I was happy to see that none of those definitions had changed!

There were advertisements from Cashco Goats America (Bronwyn's company) and Forte Cashmere Company, Inc. and *Goatkeeper's Magazine* in Australia, now defunct. There was also an announcement of a meeting (the first?) and conference of the Cashmere Producers of America to be held October 26-28 in San Angelo Texas.

While not achieving world peace or huge profits over the years, it seems there are still a lot of people enjoying the rewards of raising cashmere goats and, while the faces may have changed, the issues remain the same.

Reflections

by Linda Fox

Save the Goats (Build Fences)

I never met a goat I didn't like—when it was contained in an adequate fence. However, I've met a lot of goats I would rather have not met. I didn't want to know them mostly because of their location—dancing on the hood of my car, eating my rose bushes, or a neighbor's stray smelly (who-knows-what breed) buck looking wistfully at my registered Nubian does.

From talking to non-goat people, I find that a goat's bad rap is almost entirely caused by its location. And this, I believe, is not the goat's fault; it's the peoples'.

You've heard the complaints about goats:

"Those darn goats get up on top of everything!"

"They've eaten our grapes for three years, so we finally had to get rid of them."—the goats, not the grapes!

"They'll even eat the clothes off your clotheslines!"

All of these complaints are easy to fix with adequate fencing.

Some animal complaints are not easy to fix, but I've never heard these sorts of complaints about goats:

"Those goats bleat all night!"

"My neighbor's goats are always coming over to poop in my yard!"

"The darn goats shed on everything; I don't own a suit that isn't covered in goat hair!"

People who don't want to live with their goats and want to maintain a good image for the caprine species, need to build good goat fences.

Goat fences aren't difficult, but they are different from cow fences or sheep fences. You can't put the goats in an area surrounded with three strands of barbed wire stapled to an infrequent post and expect them to stay confined. Even though this sort of fence will contain cows and sheep quite nicely, a goat will invariably slip through when there's tastier (or just different) food morsels beckoning to it from the far side.

I was the owner of a very bad fence which contained a herd of Nubians for several years. I found the only

fence that needed to be improved was the fence line between the pasture and the house. The goats would slip in and out of the other fences, but wouldn't travel far and, because most of the fence was bad, they easily found their way back in. Fortunately, there were no neighbors who cared about a few wandering goats from time to time.

However, if the goats could slip through the fence line by the house, they'd immediately make themselves at home and stay to eat my garden, poop on the front porch and prance on the hood of my car.

A half-improved fence can prove more deadly than a consistently-poor fence, as sometimes the goats will get out and then not be able to find their way back in. Last summer, before we improved our north fence line, there were a few places where the goats and their guardian dog could slip through to the neighbor's cow pasture.

The neighbors called frantically to let us know that *our* herd was in *their* field and they looked like they were headed for *their* fir trees! These particular neighbors are convinced that the first thing a goat does in a new pasture is girdle all the trees. OK, I admit that these particular neighbors have a good view of a few crispy brown trees on our place that have been snuffed by the goats, but this wasn't the **first** thing in the pasture they ate!

I'm a firm believer in a good fence guarded by a few volts. Even the best fence will eventually be worn down by a goat standing on it, rubbing against it, or sticking their heads through or under it. Perhaps if there is nothing across the fence that will entice a goat to stand on the fence or push their heads through, such as browse, another goat, any other animal, a person, grass, or just general goat boredom, your fence will stand the test of time. However, if you guard your fence with a little charged wire, in addition to never having to unstick the little dears' horns, you will extend the life of your fence considerably.

Even though, theoretically, electricity alone should accomplish goat containment, I like a back up plan. If the electricity is not working, the real fence will still provide control. Unfortunately, goats seem to be aware of when electricity is running through the wire and when it is not.

To help improve the goat's image, our species needs to keep their species contained.



When Readers Talk...

Hi, Linda!

Actually I'm one of those folks who thinks wattles are a beautiful appendage! However, my shearer thinks less of them. She said, "you only shear them off once." I didn't laugh. In expressing my frustration to others, I learned this trick which I'll pass on to your readers.

Wrap masking tape around the wattle prior to shearing as a reminder to the shearer. It works perfectly!

C.J. Prince
PEACHDÄTTER FARM
Calhan, Colorado
July 31, 1997

Dear Editor,

This is a letter of outrage and of shock at the manner in which our Pygora goats were depicted in the "Coming Attractions" section in the August issue of your magazine! Without the article even being published anyone can see the attitude you are taking. How could you be so bold as to take an innocent adventure and make it into such a vicious attack? Maybe what you should really look at is the manner in which your Cashmere goats respond to a friendly "thought we'd say hello" gesture.

We are going to write our own article and mail it to you. It will be on the real story of what happened. We hope you will

have the guts to print it in your magazine.

Sincerely,

Andy and Jackie Liner
Liner Farm & Nursery
Dallas, Oregon
August 27, 1997

If you thought the "Coming Attractions" was bad, wait until you see the article!--Page 10--Ed.

Dear Editor,

Too many goat owners are spending entirely too much time with their goats and not enough time with their cats. You can't just expect us to purr on demand and then dump us off your lap every time a goat's hoof needs to be trimmed.

Cats return much more value per unit, in intangible ways--in spite of what a certain Publisher thinks.

Forget the goats; spoil your cat. Your bank account may not reflect the wisdom of this choice, but your heart will.

Mickey (the cat)
Goat Knoll
Dallas, Oregon
September 9, 1997

To: EDITOR
From: PUBLISHER
Date: September 9, 1997
Subject: Letters to Editor (cancellation thereof!)

If you can't do better than have letters printed from that stupid cat, we need to dump the "Readers Talking" section and replace it with some serious goat stuff.

Name one tangible positive thing that cat does (Bringing live mice into the house and releasing them is not a positive thing!) to even partially earn his pampered, spoiled, overly-expensive keep!

Personally, I think....

Sorry, we're out of space here so we won't be able to continue this line of conversation. And, as we all know, the Editor always gets the last word.--Ed.

Animal fibres - Adding value through producer co-operation

S.M. Andrews

Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 6JS. UK.

SUMMARY

The Europe Union has a long history of fibre production; but it is only over recent years that efforts have been made to develop production operations for such fibres as cashmere, angora mohair, alpaca, llama and fine wool. The term **adding value** can be applied to any process in which the product is brought closer to the consumer. This is demonstrated in the fibre industries of France, Denmark and the UK in both tangible forms, (such as processing/knitting), and intangible forms, (such as transportation to the market-place and farm retailing). Through co-operative ventures, the performance of such activities permit the grower to exploit economies of scale and to effectively widen their net margins. However there are additional - often non-counted - costs that need to be brought into the equation, such as additional labour. If these factors were fully costed the additional margins may appear less attractive. Although collaborative activities permit such fibre opportunities to evolve in an otherwise economically non-viable environment, there is little evidence to suggest that European growers are able to fairly compete with the rest of the fine fibre producing nations to satisfy the market. It can be concluded that there is still a need for a closer identification of the market place, in order to design, produce and locate the right product types to exploit niche market opportunities.

INTRODUCTION

It is widely accepted that the majority of the UK agricultural community are engaged in some field of diversification. Motives for change differ markedly from profit maximisation to supply chain and management control. Many new channels of diversification have evolved over the past fifteen years - amongst which are alternative animal fibre enterprises.

The term diversification has been used and mis-used by most sectors of the agribusiness communities. It has been referred to, in its broadest sense as any business which generates additional income to the farm from activity outside the range of conventional crop and livestock enterprises, (Ilbery 1991), and more concisely to those enterprises taking place on predominantly agricultural - proprietorial land which (a) are not based on the primary production of food and fibre and (b) fall outside the price support mechanism of the Common Agricultural Policy, (Slee 1986)

In order to pursue such an activity, which carries with it numerous risks, (Haines 1987), there is a re-

quirement for careful planning in order to ensure such risks are minimised. These risks have been to some degree assessed by Ansoff (1988), who considered the opportunities in the market place according to two differentials: the market itself and the product. Altering these differentials creates different windows of opportunity, of which diversification - in its truest form - is perceived to be of highest risk.

Many European producers have expressed concern regarding the discrepancy between the price the consumer pays for the product and the farm gate price - this is frequently referred to as the **marketing margin**. This margin has grown over time for a number of reasons - for example - it is recognised that the consumer demands a greater choice in food purchase, that a greater proportion of the 'food bill' is for processed products, and that most Europeans are prepared to travel to a supermarket, (that would usually employ a sophisticated logistics system), to physically purchase the food. All of these activities add value to the food - bringing it closer to the consumer. In doing so, any of these activities effectively incur a cost which justifies the increasing marketing margin.

If the producer were able to add value to the product - be that tangible, (such as processing/knitting), or intangible, (such as transportation to the market-place), then their share of the margin will increase. This is the primary motive of the UK farm shop owner. However is this the case for all diversification activities and more specifically for the fibre industries?

Through a series of market oriented models, one can attempt to identify future opportunities for present and potential contributors to the European fibre pool, whilst highlighting areas of current strength and weakness. The importance of market focus and marketing planning in the fibre sector has been highlighted on many occasions, (Gallico 1994 and Watkins 1995).

THE CURRENT POTENTIAL FOR EUROPEAN FIBRES

There are many areas within the Europe Union with a long history of fibre production; but it is only over recent years that efforts have been made to develop production operations for such fibres as cashmere,

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angora mohair, alpaca, llama and fine wool. Many of these projects have been exclusive to a particular region or state, and few have since attempted to develop strategic and commercial alliances between such groups.

The current relationships between interested parties, related to the European fibre producing groups, can be illustrated by examining the behaviour of three animal groups in the three main fibre producing European states: Denmark, France and the UK., (see fig 1). All three groups are represented in the three named states to a greater or lesser degree. The typical characteristics of the stronger groups would appear to be the employment of a high profile breed society and the collaboration of members to improve the *marketability* of the product

By controlling the supply chain, it is possible to avoid transfer of title regarding product ownership and, under such circumstances, the marketing margin re-

mains with the producer, (or *grower* as many prefer to be called). Through co-operation, scale economies can be achieved permitting growers to effectively replace the roles of the intermediaries. Due to relatively low world prices, many European fibre enterprises are unable to generate sufficient margins from production alone. Through co-operative, value-added diversification, the total margin to the producer may be increased thus economically justifying the enterprise, (assuming market demand exists).

This final assumption holds the key to a successful venture. Even with state/EU support, breed societies and added value processing through co-operatives, a lack of market focus and consumer orientation will still limit the scope of any project. This is demonstrated in the French mohair and the Scottish cashmere ventures, both of which currently appear to be experiencing decline in membership and total output.

By contrast the Danish mohair producers appear to be exploiting new market opportunities and have been

experiencing a growth in adopting growers. The key reasons for the success of this relatively new enterprise are the motivation and co-operation of a few individuals, who have demonstrated a determination and genuine faith in their new product. The fibre is being processed by a producer controlled initiative: Dansk Naturfiber

FIGURE ONE: The Management Of Fibre Production In Europe

	France	Denmark	UK
Angora mohair goat	Mohair society 50t fibre produced Asecaum & France Mohair government support sale: farm shops	Mohair society 8t fibre produced Dansk Naturfiber employ state support sale: farm shops	Mohair society 50t fibre produced British Mohair Marketing no gov't support sale: processors
Cashmere goat	only a little produced localised sale	only a few animals	SCPA society <1t fibre produced Cashmere Breeders EU funding sale by members
Camelid (lama)	only a little produced localised sale	only a little produced localised sale 20 society members	2 societies 4000 animals >200 owners little fibre sold

Source: S.M. Andrews (1997)

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(DNF). Current trends indicate that the national demand for Danish grown mohair products have completely outstripped supply.

Growers have received the benefit of state support; but this has had to be funded by the breeders themselves through the angora breed association. Together, the Mohair Society, the Danish Agricultural Advisory Centre and DNF have developed a simple, yet sophisticated, method of production and supply to the consumer, that is both cost effective and provides a viable return to the grower - subsidy free. In its simplest form, the grower provides the fleece to the DNF fibre pool. It is then graded, cleaned and processed in bulk to form nearly two tonnes of yarn and woven products. The cost of this process is funded by the grower on a per kg basis, identified from a model developed at the Advisory Centre. The fibre is then returned to the grower as either blankets, socks or spun yarn, according to the needs of the grower. It is then the responsibility of the grower to identify a consumer for the product. Since the development of the project, over 25 exclusive farm shops have evolved in a variety of forms serving a number of different types of consumer from the local knitter to the German tourist looking for the most exclusive of knitwear.

With the aid of a design group, a number of products exclusive to the DNF group are available, or if the consumers so wish, they can purchase the yarn and the design, and knit the garment themselves. It is the careful implementation of designs - of a clearly defined Scandinavian origin - that is seen to add value to a totally regional production and processing initiative. The target consumer is the tourist - both Danes and Germans - who expect to pay more for a locally produced and designed quality garment. In this way, the Danish growers have identified a truly diversified window of opportunity for their garments - both in terms of new product/design development and in terms of niche market development.

The scheme of payment and production is also sufficiently flexible to suit a variety of production interests. The pricing structure permits growers to buy back more fibre from the DNF fibre pool than they produced. Therefore, by means of a simple pricing mechanism, a grower can opt to do no more than send his fibre to the pool and await the purchase from another grower. In return he will receive up to four times the world market price for his fibre. Alternatively a grower may elect to purchase more fibre from the pool than was supplied in order to satisfy

the grower's retail needs.

THE FUTURE POTENTIAL FOR EUROPEAN FIBRES

In order to appropriately analyse the market opportunities for value-added fibre growers, a *SWOT analysis* is employed - demonstrating the internal environmental strengths and weakness of fibre growers and the external opportunities and threats facing the future European fibre producing industries. A general view of key factors within the fibre growing sectors are highlighted in the following broad analysis, (Dibb 1994):

Strengths

- Clearly, any factor which increases the margins of the producers is a strength. Co-operation to exploit economies of scale have, (in the case of UK mohair), lifted growers from a point of net enterprise loss to a point of modest profit.
- The small size of the individual sectors permit greater flexibility to changing consumer opportunities.
- The employment of niche, quality designs to compliment a quality product may well position the grower to exploit a regional competitive advantage.
- The greatest observed social strength of the majority of all European fibre growers is the dedicated, positive mental attitude towards the product, its origin and its quality. However, this sheer determination often deflects attention away from the consumer whilst maintaining a driving focus on the product.

Weaknesses

These can best be described through five observations:

- Sectors are product not market driven.
- Most growers have limited and insufficient access to market information.
- Horizontal communication between growers is often limited.
- The size of many sectors is too small to maximise scale economies.
- There is insufficient state/private support for the European grower.

Opportunities

- Greater co-operation within breed groups will increase efficiencies whilst scope also exists for new links and stronger links between different breed groups / member states.
- There may be many new opportunities to develop niche positions. Some are currently being tested in the UK.

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Animal Fibres - Adding Value

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- A strong communicating body with a quality product needs to be aligned with strong design development.
- A stronger focus on the consumer market trends will provide new market-driven opportunities.

Threats

- The greatest threat are the larger fibre producing countries with a long history of quality fibre production. Any increase in supply from the EU, may well evoke a competitive response from such third countries.
- Production and processing sectors are shifting - for example - the Chinese are limiting the supply of Cashmere onto the World market to encourage a stronger focus on home processing. This may shift the processing centre from Northern Europe and thus create potential trade barriers for European producers.
- The consumer is a dynamic concept - changing consumer tastes have led to a cyclical pattern of supply and demand in the fibre trade which can destabilise European production.

CONCLUSION

Today, through resilience, entrepreneurship and faith in a quality value-added product with unique characteristics, the Danish mohair growers are experiencing a steady growth in their industry, contrasting the economic climate of the UK and French mohair sectors. This demonstrates the importance of leadership and communication of initiatives to all parties. It is essential for the survival of any small group, that there is a clearly planned, designed, executed and focused marketing plan - that is adopted and employed by all parties.

Given the relatively small size of the European sectors in comparison to the larger fibre producing nations such as South Africa (mohair), China (cashmere), and South America (lama fibre), the greater opportunity may be exploited through strong European integration of value-added, co-operative programmes. However, this must be cautiously pursued so as not to diminish the regional specialisms that have successfully evolved in certain niche areas. It can be concluded that there is yet still a need for a closer identification of the market place, in order to design and produce the right type of product, to the right location at the right price, to meet the wants and needs of the target consumer. Furthermore there is a need for stronger co-operation in order to truly exploit the economic opportunities of added value diversification.

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"Between a rock and a soft place."

BPC Gee Whiz (half of the sister team Golly and Gee Whiz) nestles down for a nap between her mom, CashMears Delphi and a genuine Maine rock.
Photograph by Marilyn Ackley, Bessey Place Cashmere

The Vicious Attack of the Liner Pygoras

By GK21Y aka Stardust

As told to Linda Fox

Me and Prince had been mercilessly snatched out of our pasture, hosed off with cat shampoo and cold water, dried, fluffed up, collared, leashed, stuffed in the back of a Bronco and hauled off to the Polk County Fair, a small, local event of some significance in our rural area. They put us in the Country Store with our attendants, Linda and Paul. Linda was dutifully spinning up our cashmere and Paul was mostly trying to keep the small children from skewering themselves on our horns. We were confined to a discarded cardboard television box where we were required to withstand the pawing of an endless stream of fairgoers, all the while, looking cute and promoting cashmere. As if all this wasn't abuse enough, I feel compelled to relay the sad tale of a unwarranted attack by a nasty herd of Pygora goats during our stay at the fair.

There I was, me and my (neutered) brother Prince in our sawdust-lined box with our yellow plastic bucket of lukewarm water and our stash of alfalfa with nothing to play on except one cement block. I was standing on the block, looking quite cute and Prince was nestled in the corner chewing his cud. Prince was just telling me, "If I hear one more person saying 'Oooooo.. aren't they cute!' I'm going to throw up a piece of cud!"

Suddenly, the tranquil country fair atmosphere was shattered by a terrible noise coming from outside the store tent. It sounded like a herd of goats being ground into sausage. There arose such a clatter that Linda and Paul sprang from the tent to see what was the matter. There, coming toward the Country Store, were the entire Liner family (Jackie, Andy, Josh, Becky and Callie) leading their herd of pygora goats for, what they later claimed was, merely a visit.

The rowdy group assembled in front of the door of the Country Store and I hopped out of my box to personally inspect the situation. At the door, I was greeted by Callie Liner and her vicious little pygora goat, Clarrissa. I, being a curious, friendly, open-minded sort, sniffed at her delicately. She, however, in response to my friendly greeting, barred her little (milk tooth) fangs and reared up to try and flatten me with her tiny hornless head.

Now, I was willing to make some allowances, the herd being Pygoras and all, but my attacker had a Type C fleece (cashmere), so she certainly should have

known the respect I deserve. Fearful for my life and certain she would, at the very least, muss up my carefully combed and fluffed fleece, I felt compelled to protect myself the only way a young innocent doeling knows how—I attempted to slice the little slut with my pointy little horns.

"And where was Prince?" you might ask. Why wasn't my brother there to protect me? He, shamelessly, had taken over my concrete block in the box and was primping and being admired and photographed by a herd of humans from Sri Lanka. Not only was I risking fleece and dignity on behalf of the species, my brother had taken over my place as the cute photogenic goat!

Just as I was trying to tap out "911" in Morse code with my hooves on the pavement, Linda managed to pull me away from Callie's rabid little goat and saved me from further abuse. Then came the ultimate disgrace. Simultaneously, the entire Pygora herd pooped in the doorway to the store!

At last, the Fair Officials could ignore the situation no longer. This bleating and pooping had to stop. It was sure to tarnish the image of the whole Fair and perhaps even force the cancellation of the fair for future generations. They filed out from their offices and insisted that the Liner family remove their unruly herd from the premises and return them to the livestock barn, where goats of their sort belong. Paul, always trying to smooth things over, even for the truly wicked, quickly grabbed a dustpan and broom in an attempt to clean up the awful mess before fairgoers ended up with Pygora poop on their shoes. I was gently placed back in my box where I whacked Prince off the block and back into his corner where he belonged.

My point in telling you all this, even though I would much rather forget the whole sordid affair and get on with my cute charmed life, is that we, as cashmeres, must carefully guard our image. We must stand our ground and demand the respect we so rightfully deserve. We must hold ourselves above these lesser breeds of goat. We are, after all, cuter, fluffier, smarter and certainly more valuable. If we aren't careful, we could be thrown into the "bad image pool" with all those other goat breeds—you know, the ones that poop indiscriminately, smell during rut and eat rose bushes.

Pygoras get Slammed by Unruly Cashmere Goat

By Buckey, Harley, Clarrissa and Raider (The Liner Family Pygoras)

As told to Jackie Liner

We were going to the Polk County Fair. We had been chosen to represent our farm at the first Pygora Goat 4-H Show in Polk County. It's the first year for most of us and definitely the first year for Josh to show us. Josh and his sister Callie have been training us for weeks so that we would know what to do in the show ring. No embarrassing moments for this group. They cleaned us up, brushed us nice, clipped our hooves, and even cleaned our ears!

The people at the fair were all so nice. They love petting us and feeling how soft we are. Josh did a great job of showing us and Callie was really excited she was able to help Josh show. Harley was best of show and he was so proud, so were the (human) kids. All their hard work paid off. As a reward for all of us acting so well the whole Liner gang decided to take us for a walk. People love to see us goats out walking with our owners at the fair. This is when the whole mess started.

We were so excited about going out for a walk that we got a little noisy, well okay we were a LOT noisy. Imagine four five-month old goats following each other yelling, "Hey! Look at us!!" at the top of their lungs. Some of the Liner gang were mortified.

Callie and Josh wanted us to say "Hi" to a couple of cashmere goats they had met that day. So, we went to the County Store (not inside, just to the door; we know our place). We were waiting by the door for these goats when all of a sudden this little white thing, with two short pointy horns on the top of her head, comes flying out the door and lays those horns right into the side of me!! I was in shock and so was poor little Callie. We hadn't done anything except come by to say "Hi." Poor little Callie was trying to push her away from me (the name turned out to be Stardust—should have been Witchdust) and she nails me again! Then she has the nerve to start in on the rest of us. Talk about a goat with an attitude!

Well, to top it off the Country Store people told us to leave because animals were not allowed in that part of the county fair. Does that mean that

these cashmere goats were not animals? Sounds about right to me because this Stardust creature was like something out of a nightmare. The walk back was a quiet one to say the least. We were nursing our wounded pride and Callie, well she was just devastated by the whole turn of events.

After we got back to the safety of our pens and were talking amongst ourselves and with a few older Pygoras, we figured that this must be a cashmere goat with a horrible attitude or else she was really jealous of how good we looked and knew she wouldn't have done as well in the show ring. At least we hope that's the problem or else we have a breed of goats that will give all us goats a bad name. Or could it be the owners are breeding this attitude into their goats? Could there be owners out there teaching their goats to be soooo rude and fierce?

And that, we swear (not literally, of course) is the TRUE story of the event by us, the peaceful, truthful, fun-loving Liner Pygoras.



Callie Liner and Clarrissa (right)
"saying Hello"
to Stardust (left).

Book Report

VI International Conference on Goats (2 Volumes)

By Linda Fox

This beautiful, two volume, hard cover set, has been eagerly awaited by goat enthusiasts unable to attend the goat conference in May 1996 in Beijing China, and it was worth the wait. It contains the papers presented at this conference, all 269 of them. The books, in total, are 999 pages and full of informative and obscure stuff. This should be state of art goat—for those ambitious enough to wade through it.

There's no alphabetical index, but the articles are sorted by category. These categories are:

- Production Systems
- Genetics and Breeding
- Economics and Social Issues
- Products
- Environment and Ecology
- Nutrition and Feeding Resources
- Pathology and Health
- Reproduction
- Miscellaneous

In addition there's one lone article entitled "Goat industry and its significance in Chinese Economy" which they put on page one, presumably because it was considered very important or maybe just because they couldn't decide where to put it.

The lack of an index makes it difficult to home in on a particular topic, but this is not the sort of book you would use to look up how to trim goat hooves or to check if prune pits are poisonous. This is the sort of book that you will read to introduce you to ideas about goats that you had no idea you should even be thinking about.

Most of the articles are very interesting, many of them are studies of fiber goats including cashmere and some of the material is so "deep," I haven't the faintest idea what they're talking about.

A few articles which I can't wait to get into (when I have a few weeks to spare) are:

"Isolation and characterization of k-casein cDNA from a goat of Maltese breed,"

"The germplasm characters and exploitation of the southern Shaaxi White Goats,"

"Reduced ear length (Elr) and wattled (Wa) gene conditions among Tswana goats," and

"Genetic studies of goat post-transferrin and leucine aminopeptidase."

Other articles which I intend to read (and hopefully understand enough to write about) are:

"Effects of age on the cashmere production of goats" "Changing role of goats in a dynamic world agriculture", and "Use of goats for management of unwanted vegetation in newly-established pine plantation."

See the story on the next page about Chinese production systems, which was one of the first articles to catch my eye.

The articles are written by scientists and producers from many different countries and the translation to English has been fairly successful. By fairly successful, I mean you can figure out what they mean, but you might have to stretch a little.

So, I wouldn't recommend these books for bedtime reading or diversionary reading, but it would be an excellent set of books to dig into a little bit at a time—over a year or two.

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THE PRODUCTION SYSTEM OF CHINESE CASHMERE COATS

MA NING LI ZIWEN

Department of Animal Science, Jilin Agricultural University, Changchun 130118, China

INTRODUCTION

There were about 28.49 million cashmere-producing goats in China in the year of 1985. The number was almost doubled in recent ten years, by the end of 1994, it reached 54.02 million. In this paper, the ecological environment, production pattern and reproduction system of China cashmere goats will be introduced thoroughly.

ECOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT

Chinese excellent cashmere goats have long history and are formed under the artificial selection and sustained and complex ecology for a long time. Although the number of cashmere goats in China is large, these goats do not distribute in all parts of China. The areas they live in have much typical characters. The provinces possessing great number of cashmere goats are showed in Figure 1. (*not shown*)

In Figure 1, the eleven provinces possessing large number of cashmere goats are all in the north of China, within over 35 degrees north latitude, including the west and middle parts of Inner Mongolia, the north part of Xinjiang, a major part of Shanxi, Shannxi, Gansu and total area of Ningxia. The regions locate arid and subarid regions of a mid-temperate zone in which the Inner Mongolia cashmere goat is a typical breed. The ecological characteristics of these regions are insufficient rainfall, strong sandy wind, varying-intensely temperature, annual mean temperature 3.1-6.7°C, precipitation 80-288mm concentrating during July and September, evaporation 2500-3800mm, annual sunshine time 300-3779 hours, relative humidity 38-44%, the frost-free period 120-152 days, mean wind velocity 3.6 meters per second with

the maximum 23.8 meters per second, landform mainly mountainous, hill plateau, gobi, sands, desert, average elevation 1300-200m. Distribution of cashmere goats increase with increase of temperature and decrease of humidity and with increase of shrub and semishrub. There is a high rate of cashmere goats in all domestic animals in the regions with complicated landform.

Xinjiang is another important district of cashmere goat distribution. About 60% of goats in the Xinjiang province distributes at the desertified shrub pasture and mountainous land of Akesu region in the north part of the province. The others distribute in the south part, in which the concentrating selection area is also a climate region affected by a dry and hot wind from Tulufan, Zungeer Basins and dry wind current from Mongolia Plateau. The annual mean precipitation is 40-90mm, mean temperature 2.1-3.5°C with the maximum 37.5°C and minimum -31.9°C, frost free period 145 days. Landform is a typical desert and mountainous meadow. The cashmere goats in this kind of region account for 55-65% of all goats in Xinjiang, which shows that goats play a much important role in utilizing desertified pasture.

Zang (Tibet) goat is another type of Chinese cashmere goats distributing in Qing-Zang plateau. The archaeological findings have proved that Zang goats were domesticated 4000 years ago and Srinajia people in Cashmere country wore beautiful shawls and scarfs in 15th century. By the time of 18th century, down produced by Zang goats was called cashmere in the trade of cashmere country so that Zang

goats took their name "cashmere goats", which become a common name of down-producing goats and their production in all of the world. Mean elevation is 3500-5000m and mainly grasslands are plateau meadow and desert, sub-plateau and semiarid meadow. Mean temperature is 6°C - -1.9°C, annual precipitation 300-800mm, relative humidity 40-70% and no absolute frostfree period.

The ecological environment of cashmere goats in Qinghai is similar to Zang goats. The best goats producing down are in Gansu distribute in Subei Autonomous county and Sunan Autonomous county desert or semidesert pasture. Annual precipitation is 150 (80-200)mm, mean temperature about 8°C with the maximum 27°C and minimum -26°C and frost-free period 150 days. The goats in Hebei province mainly distribute in the regions of Yan and Taihang Mountains. These local goats can produce cashmere, meat and leather. At the early of 1980's, other cashmere goats were introduced to improve down production of local goats.

Among Chinese cashmere-producing goats, only Liaoning cashmere goat distributes in a moist region, the Buyun mountains of Liaoning peninsula. The elevation is 500-1000m, landform is complicated mountain area, river valley and small plain are intercrossed, grazing land is warm, sparse woods, and shrub meadow, the vegetation coverage is about 80%, the annual mean temperature in 6.4°C-9.4°C, the maximum are 37.3°C and -3.3°C, frostfree period is 140-175 days, annual precipitation is 656-1136.8mm.

Continued on next page

Chinese Cashmere Goats

Continued from previous page

PRODUCTION PATTERNS

Mr. R. M. Acharya, a member of Indian Agricultural Consultative Committee, said: "Goat is a kind animal which is most misunderstood by human being." In China, the goats have been being in the state of nonselection for a long time, therefore, they can produce hair, leather, mutton, milk and cashmere and no one of their performances is outstanding. As illustrated above, in the desert and semidesert pastures, like camels, goats can use herbage and shrub leaves in broad pasture to produce mutton, leather, cashmere, etc. Recently, in China, the capacity and technology of processing cashmere are improved, and the market price of cashmere rises continuously, so the people pay an unprecedented attention to cashmere-producing goats. Private flocks increase vigorously, and came out a lot of specialized cashmere goat holder.

In the mountainous regions and agricultural regions of north part of China, for example, Liaoning province, the cashmere goat flock is about 50-60 goats, or animals will be lost. If each farmer possesses more than two flocks, he has to hire hands to help kidding, mating and combing cashmere. On the plain or agricultural-pastoral area, a flock is about a hundred goats, and some flocks are mixed with sheep, cattle etc. Certain farmers may have several hundreds or one thousand goats, therefore, they have to hire farmhands. In the two kinds of regions above, goats graze in summer and autumn, in winter and the early spring, they are supplied with corn stalk, pod etc., and the does are supplied with corn. Since 1989, in the Northeast and North regions of China, the farmers carried out a kind of plastic film hothouse to help goats passing se-

vere cold winter.

The plateaus of Qing-Zang and Mongolia and Tianshan Mount are the regions in which grassland animal husbandry is main industry. The flocks are about 200-300 goats generally managed by a farmer whose whole family join the management. Some farmers have over thousand goats. The farmers rent a certain area of pasture land and pay pasture construction and management fee to government according to the number of their goats. In these kinds of regions, goats graze in pasture all the year and there is lack of supplement. The herdsman have stable homes, a few of them in very typical topographic area, still move around as nomad. In these areas the flocks are mixed, administration is extensive, the sheds are simple and crude, therefore they are shortage in ability to resist disasters and prevent diseases.

REPRODUCTION SYSTEM

The cashmere goats show sex maturity at age of about 4 - 5 months. It is reported that does aged 6-7 months can be pregnant, but it occurs rarely. The recommended mating age is 16 months when the body weight of the does is about 70% of adult weight. Breeding bucks and does are generally used for 8 years. In the state breeding farms or stations, artificial insemination or mating under artificial service for breeding records and kidding once a year are practised. The mating season is September and October and kidding season February and March of the next year. A buck can mate 150 does in artificial insemination and 50 ones in mating under artificial service. The frozen semen of excellent bucks is made.

The farmers have other kinds of mating patterns. When a farmer has a large number of goats, the bucks and does are raised separately, and only during the mating

season (about 60 days), bucks are released into doe flocks. In this case, each buck mates about 30 does. The farmers possessing a small number of goats generally raise buck and does in one flock. Does kid around whole year, but most does kid at two kidding seasons, February and March or September and October.

The suckling period of cashmere goats last 3-4 months until body weight of kids is about 13-17kg. Qualified kids graze or are given supplement in a individual flock or with bucks and the others are raised for commercial until an age of ten months. Casted goats will be sold in August or later when they have got a good body condition.

CASHMERE COLLECTION AND SELLING

Goats have a evident cashmere-moulting phenomenon in spring. When cashmere moult, down base part become finer at first, then a break mark appears. So the farmers must pay attention, according to the climate and the nutrition conditions, to the time beginning to collect down. If the break mark is not appeared, collecting work can not be done, but if all of cashmere has expressed break mark it is already late. The best time for collection is when the undulations of cashmere on the body sides are appeared. Generally, in the north area of China the time of collection is the last ten days of April and the first ten days of May. Collection work should be done with a particular tool (Figure 2) a small rake made of steel wire, with which comb down the cashmere. There are two sizes of rake, normal and small, the small one for combing the parts of blank, behind ear etc. Before combing, put the hair in order according to the direction, clean away the sand faeces attaching on the hair, and cut down with scissors, the upper part of hair ap-

Continued on next page

Chinese Cashmere Goats

Continued from previous page

peared on the cashmere layer. The combing must be start from the part of head, then neck, back, body sides, rear part of body, belly and last to legs. While combing, cashmere will stay on the rake between the teeth. When the rake is tight full, take down the cashmere from the rake. If more cashmere are combed on one rake, the cashmere ball will be tighter, and it is easier to park and less cashmere lose. Because the cashmere in different parts of the body moults at differ-

ent time, so it is difficult to comb down all cashmere completely in one time, therefore another time of combing in a few days later is necessary. Combing work should be done carefully, particularly to the breeding bucks and pregnant does, avoiding the injure of body or damage of hair follicles.

Because most goats in China are raised in private farmers, so cashmere collected and sold is in small scale from each farmer by personal trader and profiteer, in turn, they

Moving Supertor

Fixing Supertor

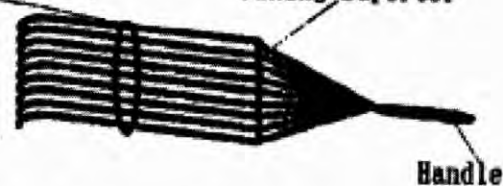


Fig.2 Cashmere Rake

sale cashmere in large scale with multifold price. In this process, some of the profiteer mix other fibre and even sand or other materials into the cashmere and lowered

Continued on next page

"Greetings World!!" — from the promising young bucks of Bessey Place Cashmere

Among the two year olds:

BPC Easter

BOGF Dakota x BPC Dove

Easter is a white buck whose shorn kid fleece garnered ribbons at the 1996 CaPrA and ECA competitions. In naming Easter Grand Champion of the ECA competition, judge Joe David Ross wrote: "An unusually fine white fleece, stylish crinkle with density." Easter's kid fleece tested objectively at 16.4 microns. As a chubby two year old he grew a 17.3 micron fleece while holding his CV at 16.8%, a sign of a consistent fleece.

BPC Ebony

BOGF Dakota x MLB Harmony

Although Ebony's kid fleece tested at 15.4 microns and his second fleece had an MFD of 16.4 with a CV of 19.5%, he isn't likely to win awards. His fleece is just over an inch long. Hoping that he would pass along his fine and stylish fleece characteristics and his big frame, we allowed him to begin his career as a buck last fall. The resulting twins weighed 42 and 45 pounds at three months.

BPC Emmet

BOGF Dakota x BPC

Doodle

Emmet, a black buck

with white badger markings, is the son of Doodle who took first place with her shorn white kid fleece in the 1995 CaPrA competition. Emmet covered two does when he was a yearling, and one of the resulting kids, B P C

Feather, was the first place kid in the 1996 ECA goat show. Emmet tested 17.2 microns as a two-year old with a CV of 19.8%.

Yearlings to watch:

BPC Felix (black with white trim), Flapjack (white), and Fortune (black), all sons of MLB Imagine. Fortune has the distinction of being the convergence of Mary Matthews's 5 Lismore lines with Mary Mears's carefully selected Spanish goats. He's a handsome fellow.

At Bessey Place Cashmere
many are born—
but few are chosen.

Wes and Marilyn Ackley
Buckfield, Maine
207-336-2948



Chinese Cashmere Goats

Continued from previous page

the quality, although original cashmere contains only 15-17% of hair and the scoured cashmere yield is 70-75%. Nowadays, the government has formulated a directive price of cashmere and recommended the processing enterprises to cooperate with goat farmers, and organized all of the state supply and marketing cooperatives to purchase the scattered cashmere yield in the farm family in all of the country for reducing the middle trade and deal links. There are some cashmere textile enterpriser invested in intensive cashmere producing area or established cashmere productive base. In the other side, the administration department of animal husbandry of all levels of government and farm stations provide the services of supporting the development of cashmere goat, working out breeding program and productive plans, organizing interchange of breeder animals, training personal for artificial insemination, treatment of epidemic diseases, get rid of parasites dipping and so on.

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Predators!

By Lynn Harwell, PhD, Clemson University (retired) and
Frank Pinkerston, PhD, Langston University (retired)

The predator problem can be acute. Predation may come from several sources, and demands constant vigilance. For best control, a combination of methods, i.e., a guardian animal and a good fence, is necessary. In certain circumstances, total control may be difficult to achieve.

The use of traps and poisons for predator control has fallen from favor recently, augmented somewhat by preventive legislation, but perhaps more so by a movement toward biological rather than technological farming practices. The Federal ban on Compound 1080, a substance particularly lethal to coyotes and other canines, and concerns with all toxic substances finding their way into the food chain have renewed interest in more traditional ways of guarding livestock.

Sometimes coyotes, bobcats, eagles, or feral hogs may be the culprit, but in the Southeast it is more likely to be the neighbor's faithful dog, who only an hour before was out romping on the front lawn with the children. A pack of domestic dogs can wipe out the better part of one hundred adult goats in less than an hour. If the bankbook and community friendships did not go out the window because of the goat's curiosity, they no doubt will when - not if, but when - the dog attack comes. A guardian animal can head off this calamity.

Dogs usually fill the guardian animal role, but donkeys sometimes are preferred. More recently, the use of llamas has surfaced, mainly because neutered male llamas are now within many producers' price range. Llamas are reputed to be superior guardians.

Livestock guarding dogs originated in Europe and Asia where they were the method of choice for guarding sheep and goats from wolves, bears, and wildcats. A variety of breeds fill certain niches in the predator control spectrum. In a 1986 USDA survey (a) of predominantly western handlers, the Great Pyrenees was found to be most widely used, followed in order by the Komondor, Akbash, Anatolian, and Maremma. Interestingly, American Indians in the desert southwest used mongrel dogs for similar purposes.

Many confuse guardian dogs with herding or "stock" dogs. A herding dog is essentially an extension of man helping to move and sort the livestock. Guardian dogs act largely independent of man, doing what instinct and conditioning tell them to do. That includes confronting and chasing away intruders, attaching themselves to the herd or flock, and staking out a territory (usually a pasture or paddock) which they patrol regularly.

Guardian dogs and herding dogs can be utilized on the same operation, but it requires time and patience, and may require penning the guardian while the herd is being maneuvered. Uncontrolled, some guardian

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Predators

Continued from previous page

dogs can gobble up a stock dog like a handful of peanuts.

Experienced, mature guardian dogs are harder to find (and more expensive) than puppies. Genetics plays a major role in a particular dog's effectiveness, although conditioning and a very limited amount of training are helpful. As to training, the willingness to come when called, and to understand what "no" means, may suffice.

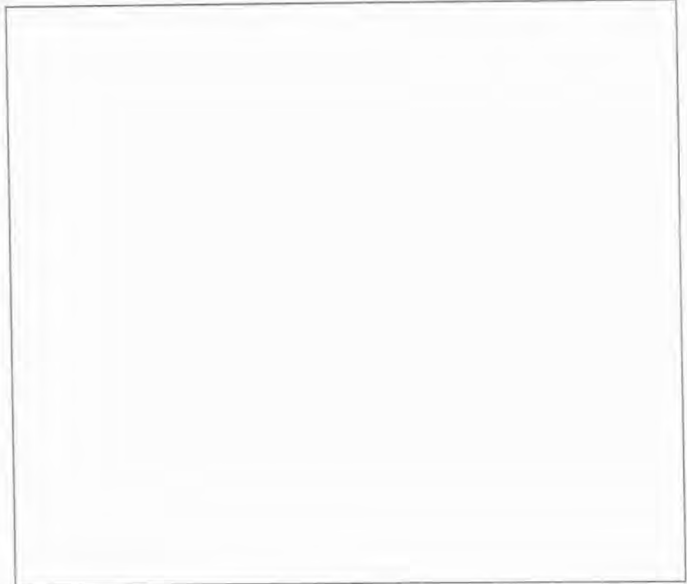
Conditioning consists largely of placing puppies in the environment where they will spend the rest of their lives. They should spend their time as one of the herd or flock, and be discouraged from detrimental habits, such as chewing the ears of goats, excessive playfulness, or a tendency to wander.

The number of guard dogs per herd of goats is more dependent on size and pasture terrain than on goat numbers. Angora goat owners commonly use two dogs on two 400 acre pastures, but if the herd scatters, two will not be enough. Rough, brushy terrain increases the work load. If the goats remain in a cohesive unit, particularly at night when predation is high, most pastures in the southeast may be adequately protected by one dog.

By nature, guardian dogs are aloof, independent (some might say hard-headed), and identify more with their charges than they do with people. At the same time, they should be submissive to human control when called for, such as for routine vaccinations. Many goat owners believe neutered males and females are superior to intact dogs. Current prices fall in the \$150-\$250 range.

Although the livestock guarding dog works independently, certain responsibilities fall to the owner or handler. For top performance, the dog should be well fed, free from abuse, attended to for health needs, and sheltered from severe storms. An occasional kind word or pat on the head is helpful. Beyond that, little is needed.

Some goat owners have found donkeys to make excellent guard animals. A single donkey, usually a female but sometimes a gelding, is introduced to the flock or herd and undergoes a bonding stage. Males (jacks) seldom work because they can be too aggressive, particularly with younger goats. After the donkey is bonded with the goats, it will protect them against canine predators as if they were its own.



Will a llama guard the goats?

A jenny with a young foal will obviously have her attention divided, and may be overly protective of her young when goats become inquisitive. Donkeys are felt not to cover as much country as dogs but in the Southeast, this may not be a problem.

The donkey will bed down with the goats, and sound a fearsome alarm at a strange noise or smell. Good guard donkeys will chase and trample a predator(c). When compared to dogs, perhaps a smaller percentage of donkeys make excellent guard animals, but owners who have a good one swear by them; those who don't, swear at them. An obvious advantage lies in the fact that, since the donkey eats what the goat eats, no daily feeding is required.

A few producers use llamas as guard animals. They are probably quite good at the task, but reliable printed information is hard to come by.

The American livestock owner, as do farmers in general, seek out innovative ways to do things better. Sometimes these innovations become fads, and an end in themselves. Llamas are one of the mainstays of the exotic animal industry, along with ostriches, emus, water buffalo, and pot-bellied pigs.

Work at the University of Wyoming (b) with llamas on sheep indicates that their effectiveness comes from their curious and fearless nature complemented by

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Predators

Continued from previous page

their rather awesome size. Sheep that attach themselves to the llama are seldom bothered; those who wander may not receive protection. In almost no cases have they recorded confrontational activity by the llamas.

Despite its history in this country as an exotic oddity, the llama has become financially accessible. Male llamas not suitable for breeding now sell for as little as \$200, with castrated animals perhaps two or three times that figure. Intact males should probably not be used with goats. There are reports of sexually aroused males chasing and injuring female sheep.

The llama's use as an environmentally friendly pack animal, and as a guardian for goats and sheep, is increasing. Like the donkey, they consume about what their charges do. Llamas' longevity, about thirty years, offers another advantage.

(a) Livestock Guarding Dogs: Protecting Sheep from Predators, Agriculture Information Bulletin No. 588, APHIS, USDA, 1990.

(b) "Llamas May or May Not Be Solution to Sheep Predation", National Wool Grower, July, 1985.

(c) "Donkeys", promotional brochure, The American Donkey and Mule Society, Inc., 1992.

The above information is reprinted, with permission, from the National Goat Handbook, United States Extension Service at::

<http://www.agweb/clemson.edu/agronomy/goats/HOUSING.HTM>

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Born to Be Mild

The Official Theme Song of the Mild Goat Men
(Sung to the tune of
Steppenwolf's "Born to Be Wild")

Get your clippers humming.
Hear those hoofies running.
Heading to the pasture,
Looking for adventure.
Like a true nature's child,
I was born, born to be mild.

Chorus

Born to be miiiiii-llllllld.
Born to be miiiiii-llllllld.

2nd verse

Repeat 1st verse

Chorus

3rd verse

Repeat 1st verse

Chorus

Note: All Mild Goat Men will be expected to have this song memorized to sing at their first meeting (in case they have one).



Housing, Fencing, Working Facilities

By Lynn Harwell, PhD, Clemson University (retired) and
Frank Pinkerton, PhD, Langston University (retired)

Introduction

Someone has observed that, of all domestic animals, the farm goat and the house cat could more easily return to the wild than any of the others. Hogs, dogs, donkeys, horses, camels, and cattle are known to have reverted to a feral state as well, but usually under a fairly specialized set of circumstances. But wild house cats abound every where, and many a tropical island lies denuded, subject to the ravages of uncontrolled populations of escaped or abandoned goats.

This would imply that the common briar, brush, or swamp goat can be husbanded profitably without an abundance of fencing, sheds, or handling facilities. Two simple factors eradicate this notion: 1) the goat's curious, nomadic nature, and 2) the presence of predators, both domestic and wild.

A goat's curiosity urges him to seek the wild, blue yonder, whether it be the Blue Ridge or the neighbor's blue delphiniums. He excels in this. The net result can be a loss of income or a loss of friends, more likely both. Oddly enough, some owners have little trouble keeping goats on the farm with seemingly simple fences, while others couldn't keep a goat on Alcatraz.

Three things seem to make a goat want to leave home: 1) hunger, or at least better feed across the fence, 2) an inadequate fence, and 3) an obstreperous individual goat. The first item is apparent; goat nutrition and grazing habits are dis-

cussed in other sections. The second is discussed in the fencing sec-

a goat's instincts in mind. Much of the time, a fence constructed to keep a goat at home will discourage predacious animals. It should be noted that several of the companies manufacturing and selling fence, particularly electric fence, have excellent publications available, which contain adequate diagrams and specifications.

While it is not true that a goat proof fence must also be airtight, to frustrated goat farmers it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the difference.

tion immediately below. The third is readily solved by a trip to the nearest abattoir, and calls for an admonition to goat owners everywhere, which is rarely heeded:

"If you 'love' your goats and that love affects decisions about selling and retention, you are in the goat business for a hobby. If you are in the goat business for a hobby, you are very likely not in the goat business for a profit."

Feed, from some source, must be available. In addition, responsible goat ownership and management calls for attention to fencing, adequate protection from the elements (in the Southeast, this will more likely be rain), simple working facilities, and protection from predators.

Fencing

Fortunately, the twin management problems of goat wanderlust and goat predation can usually be handled with a single solution. To wit, a fence designed with

While it is not true that a goat proof fence must also be airtight, to frustrated goat farmers it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the difference. This is mainly because they started with something less than adequate, and were forced into a "patch" job. With such a beginning, one is soon patching one's patches.

Effective goat fencing of the conventional (non-electrical) type, is approached in one of two ways. This may be of woven wire, or alternatively, closely-spaced barbed wire.

Woven wire, called 'wire net' in some areas, represents the most common conventional goat fence. The wire mesh is usually 47" in height and topped by one or two strands of barbed wire, and may

Continued on next page



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

Housing, Fencing...

Continued from previous page

also have one strand at the bottom, just above ground level. Some manufacturers now produce a special "goat net" containing vertical stays ten or twelve inches apart, rather than the ordinary 6 or 8 inches. This usually helps a horned goat "back out" through one of the rectangular openings much easier, and thus eliminate entrapment.

Posts can be either wood or steel, and are set usually one rod apart, frequently closer, with care taken that a post be set at all abrupt changes in grade. Relatively flat terrain is best for a tight installation. Gully and stream crossings have to be engineered to fit the circumstances.

Approaches to woven wire fence construction vary, with no one way being absolutely best for all circumstances.

Barbed wire fencing for goats was long thought to be ineffective, but in recent years ranches in the West have used eight or more strands of closely-spaced 15-1/2 gauge barbed wire with good effect. At first blush, this seems to call for extreme effort. But completed costs are less than for woven wire. If an old cattle fence is to be made goat-proof, with corners and line posts already in place, an extra four or more wires, along with some respacing, is not all that much trouble.

With barbed wire, line posts are often farther apart, but several twisted wire stays in place between posts the fence present a formidable barrier. Each additional wire costs only about 1-1/2 cents per foot, and the stays run about 30 cents each. Spacing should be closest (as little as three or four inches) between six and twenty four inches

Table 1. Comparing fencing costs in Illinois, 1991
Cost Per 100 Feet

<u>Fence Type</u>	<u>Materials</u>	<u>Labor</u>	<u>Total Per Mile</u>	
Woven wire plus 1 barb	\$70	\$27	\$97	\$5,016
Five strand barb	44	27	71	3,749
Three strand h-t elec	55	20	75	1,267
One wire portable elec	6	—	6	317

above the ground. Care should be taken that the bottom wires conform closely with the terrain. Rigidity between wires seems to be important. A tight stretch and liberal use of stays helps meet this need.

Electrical fencing for goats holds promise. It is fairly new, but expanding rapidly. If strict adherence to principles is followed, such fences can be both effective and relatively inexpensive. For goats, five or six wires are usually adequate and can be constructed for approximately one third the cost of woven wire. Alternating hot and ground wires, particularly on the lower part of the fence, increases effectiveness. Goats must gain respect for electric fencing. Untrained goats can be attracted to the fence by hanging pieces of foil or aluminum drink cans on a "hot" fence, or by placing hay or ground feed just across the wire.

An electrical fence must be adequately grounded. It also must be protected from voltage surges, whether caused by lightning or the power source. The new breed of fence chargers, called energizers, are more effective because they are far less resistant to power loss caused by plant growth, moisture, and other factors which tend to bleed electricity off the wire.

Electrical fencing became almost universally practical in New

Zealand, through the development of several technological innovations. In addition to the energizer, the Kiwis gave us high tensile fencing wire, improved insulation, and much better portability. Superior construction techniques, particularly in corner and brace arrangements, also have application for other types of fencing.

Portable fences, also electric, go hand-in-hand with improved grazing management. In three on-farm cattle applications on small acreages in South Carolina, results were amazingly similar. Given a boundary fence of adequate deterrence, the portable electric cross-fencing materials, turn-key, ran about \$14 per acre. Similar fencing for goats would be modestly higher.

In 1991, economists at the University of Illinois made the cost estimates for fencing construction shown in Table 1 (above). The comparisons invite a close look at electric fencing.

Housing

Goats seem to enjoy water for drinking but, like the proverbial hobo, they don't use it much for bathing. In fact, when the water comes from above, they seek shelter. During warmer weather, this may only cause discomfort. But, in colder temperatures, goats should not remain cold and wet for long

Continued on next page

Housing, Fencing...

Continued from previous page

periods. Young goats are particularly vulnerable to respiratory infection and to hypothermia.

In the Southeast, goats need protection from cold driving rains, as well as the occasional snow and sleet. They tolerate cold weather rather well, as long as they are dry and out of the wind. A sturdy shed, dry and open to the south, can usually provide adequate protection. Rear eave heights of 4' to 6' and front eave heights of 6' to 8' are adequate; 8 to 10 square feet per goat is desirable. Ruminants also need a good fill of feed to help them combat the cold. Goats also like to be in or near a shed during the night hours. If the facility is part of the farmstead, so much the better. Nearness to human activity plays a part in predator control.

Working Facilities

Goats are agile, quick, and to the untrained, quite unpredictable. They also need occasional handling, particularly for worming, marking (identification), foot trimming, and sorting operations. This is reason enough to construct a set of handling pens which gives the owner something closer to an even chance.

Small operations can make do with a small pen, with some means of getting the goats into the pen. The pen should be sturdy, preferably solid-sided, and at least four feet tall. Thus equipped, the producer can place his or her body in the pen and assume whatever anatomical contortion is required to catch and manipulate the goats.

One should be extremely careful when handling goats at close range. Small sharp horns can create a lot of one-eyed goat people.

As goat numbers increase, (in the absence of predators this happens

with surprising speed), the need for more elaborate working facilities arises. Really, the basic necessities are three. Our Australian friends call them the race, the crush, and the draft. The race is what we call a working chute. The crush, we usually term a "squeeze chute" or headgate, and the draft is some sorting (or cutting) arrangement of alleys and gates that we use to separate the goats.

A working chute should be about ten feet long, four feet high, and 12" wide. Longer chutes tend to cause crowding and trampling at the forward end, and should be divided into sections with sliding gates. Also, a series of canvas flaps suspended about half way down into the chute keeps the goats' heads down and eliminates riding.

The sides should be solid. Ideally, for horned goats the chute should be tapered, with the top nearly twice the width of the bottom. To avoid jamming, it helps to mount a vertical roller, about 30 inches in length, at one side of the entrance to the chute. The crowding pen should be half again as long as the working chute and up to 12 feet wide at the open end.

A word or two about goat behavior. Goats are motivated by instinct tempered with a very sharp memory. Domesticated goats rarely jump fences, unless pressured, but they do like to climb. Therefore, fence lines should be clear of rocks, stumps, and fallen timber. When gathering goats, they tend to drift to the tops of hills, and will move further and faster than cattle or sheep, but if hurried, tend to balk, or become aggressive toward each other.

Goats should be handled quietly when penned. Excessive noise and rough handling will "spook" the

animals. Women generally are better than men in handling goats, and will perform the required jobs in a manner that creates less stress.

Goats exhibit a natural "flocking" behavior; when one or two start to move, they all do. They frequently come into pens in family groups, with the older females first. They are creatures of habit, and once familiar with a set of pens or handling procedures, will expect to be treated the same way each time. They instinctively move in a circle around the producer, or around a pen.

Compared to sheep, goats respond positively because of superior intelligence, but also tend to stress more easily. Use of dogs should be held to a minimum. Working goats is definitely not a "hurry up" task. In fact, the faster you go, the longer it takes. Extension services in the Southeast should be encouraged to draft working plans for goat working pens on a scale suitable to smaller producers.

For separating goats, a cutting gate can be mounted at the head of the working chute, or a "cutting" chute can be erected for this purpose. More elaborate designs for handling large herds of goats are available, but probably should not be attempted until a producer acquires experience. This will allow a particular fit between the farm, the goat herd, and the owner.

Goats should be handled quietly during working operations. Excess noise creates agitation, and may well cause goats to go over, under, or through whatever stands in the way, which may be the owner. Goats do not flow as smoothly as cattle, tending to rush toward an actual or expected opening. They readily drop to the ground under crowding pressure and are at greater risk from trampling and smothering.

What Do My Customers Really Want?

By Eileen Cornwell

Our ranch is located on a rather busy country road which is one of the primary accesses to South Lake Tahoe. Dozens of people stop by our farm for tours and just to talk. A large number state that they want a goat. I have learned over the years to ask questions of the prospective buyers to try to guide them to the right decision. A few basics will start to hone their true objectives. The following actual questions I have received may help some of you to think up answers before you are asked yourself. Hopefully this will help customers figure out their path and save you from having to repossess older animals or suffer the brunt of unhappy individuals ruining your reputation.

"I want a couple of your best does." Show quality animals cost more and produce very small amounts of fine, crimped fiber. It's nice to say you have a super-fine, style 3+ doe, but the reality is that only farms wanting to show the fiber or goat will probably find these animals cost effective. The fiber diameter will be under 16.5 microns and sells to the Co-op for approximately \$37 per pound. According to Terry Sim, these animals produce an average of 1-3 ounces of fiber per year. A good quality doe, 16.5 - 18.9 microns, will often produce 2 to 3 times the amount of fiber, which sells to the Co-op for \$35 per pound. Therefore, a 3 oz. super fine fleece will bring in approximately \$7 and the 6 oz. medium fleece is worth \$13. Either goat eats the same amount. Chances are the medium fleece goat is bigger and will produce larger offspring for the meat market as well.

"I want a small herd of top quality does to start my own line of hand spun yarn." The individual who said this is truly heading in this direction. All of my points in the first response fit here as well. If this woman purchased 12 show quality does and averaged 3 oz. of usable fleece per goat per year, she will be lucky to have about 2 lbs. of fiber for her yarn project, maybe 3 sweaters worth. If she opts for a medium style goat, she will produce at least 5 lbs. of fiber and more than double her yarn production.

"I want a breeding pair of goats." I enjoy raising bucks, but I know I am in the minority (as my husband tells me frequently this time of year). An adult breeding buck will not be a pleasant yard pet for over half of each year. Not to mention, if you only keep a few animals, you will need to get a new buck every other year to keep the blood lines mixed. I tell these individuals they should simply purchase

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does and pay a breeding fee to their local breeder until they truly determine if they want their own buck.

"I want a couple of bred does just to keep my pasture down." A couple of bred does becomes 4-6 goats after the kids come. 4-6 goats become dozens in a few years. The reality is, unless one wants to breed goats, wethers are the ideal pets or weed eaters. Good goat homes are tough to find. The reality is that eventually these owners will have surplus stock to sell, probably at least some to the meat market. We need to be upfront with prospective clients and not pretend there is a limitless market for these animals outside of the meat arena.

"I want a couple of goats for hand-spinning." I encourage these individuals to buy wethers. If the individual is not a purest, I recommend the longer silkier cashgora-style fleeces, but I show samples of each type of fiber and let the spinner choose. This all revolves around the fact that most hand-spinners I have met do not want to spin a 1-1/4 inch fiber; they want a longer staple.

A couple of other questions worth repeating include:

"Why is that goat barking at me?" I informed this individual that the Great Pyrenees is a dog, not a goat and it is his job to bark at visitors.

"Are all those animals dogs?" I informed this individual that no, 100 of them were goats; only the two without horns were dogs.

In summary, we can do a great deal for our industry by being honest and upfront with individuals when they contemplate the move into the cashmere world. These goats are outstanding animals, but the reality is the fiber shorn each year will not pay for the keep of the goats. This fact is true with all fiber animals; we are not unique. We need to ensure individuals understand the industry before they purchase stock. If they want show animals, good breeding stock of cashgora style pets, a few questions prior to purchase will help our industry as well as the new cashmere grower.

Calendar of Events

Association Contacts

September 27-28, 1997

Oregon Flock & Fiber Festival

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

September 27-28, 1997

The Wool Festival at Taos

Kit Carson Park, Taos, New Mexico

For information email: woolfest@zynet.com

PO Box 2754, Taos, New Mexico 87571

Telephone 505-751-0306

September 27-28, 1997

The 1997 North Texas Caprine Caper

Wise County Sheriff Possee Fairgrounds, Highway 51, just south of Decatur. Fundraiser presented by Azle 4-H. For information contact, J.D. or Suzanne Loy, 3110 Reese Lane, Azle, TX 76020

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.

November 1-2, 1997

State Fair of Louisiana

Louisiana State Fairgrounds, Shreveport, LA. Contact for entry: LA State Fair Livestock Office, PO

Box 38327, Shreveport, LA 71133

Phone 318-635-1361

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

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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

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And One Old Goat...

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