

CASH MIRROR

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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 we will certainly be real careful.

Cover photo: Paul Johnson
JRW Black Bart, Goat Knoll, Dallas, Oregon
"It does not take two to tango!"

So, You Like the Photographs?...



...So do we! Especially other peoples' and we're running low. We could fill the magazine with just our own as we have stacks of them, but we (and you) would rather see a variety of photographs. Don't be shy! Send in your pictures. We won't hurt them and we'll return them to you later. They can be color or black and white. We can do slides, but photographs are easier. Doesn't matter if they're the wrong size or that there's some junk in there that needs to be sliced out—we can fix that. So, dig through those envelopes, dust off that camera and snap a few more and send them in.

Also, we're always on the look out for good goat or fiber information, hot tips or just plain good stories about goats and goatkeepers. If you run across any of those, we want to hear about that too.

Reflections

by Linda Fox

It's 2000! Are We Ready?

It's a new century. There are big things afoot, important plans to fine-tune, life-defining choices to make. At least this is what I think one should be doing at the dawn of a new century. After contemplating all this for five, maybe ten, minutes, I decided to leave all these things to you all and just try to solve the little things that are annoying me at the start of the year 2000.

First, we bought a new computer for the office. We're not talking about a state of the art marvel here—just something that would survive the turnover into year 2000 without a major hiccup. The new machine is wonderful, but the new monitor has a slant to the top of it. My old one was level on top. Mickey (my cat) likes to lounge on top of the monitor while I work. I like to think he is there to keep me company, but he most likely chooses this spot to absorb warmth from the monitor's heat vent. This partial blocking of the vent is no doubt bad for the monitor, but in five years of cat-blockage, I haven't blown a monitor so I don't worry about it. The problem is that Mickey slides off the new monitor. He is OK as long as he stays awake to hang on, but as soon as he nods off to sleep, he slips off the back of the monitor with a crash. How am I going to keep Mickey safe and comfortable without disrupting my own work space?

The second problem is the new Swiss Army pocket knife I received for Christmas. This "knife" has everything—two blades, a bottle opener, a can opener, screwdrivers (both phillips and flat head), half of a pair of scissors and a toothpick—a miniature tool kit designed to fit compactly in your pocket. I'm not sure I want to use a toothpick from a dirty tool that lives in my jeans pocket to clean my teeth in the barn between chores, but perhaps the animals' teeth will need picking someday. The rest of the tools, however, seem like a good idea. You never know when you'll be wanting a screwdriver when checking the fence line or looking for lost animals. I've never owned a knife outside of the kitchen before and it seemed this tool might come in handy.

The day after Christmas I headed out for the evening chores. In the barn, where I would usually retrieve hoof trimmers, wire cutters or whatever else was sharp and handy from the workbench, to cut the twine on the hay bales, I (with a smile) dug out my new knife. Deftly, I pulled out—a bottle opener. The next try produced the can opener. On the third guess, I found one of the knife blades. I cut the twine, closed the blade and returned the tool to my pocket. I wasn't sure I had saved time or frustration here with the new tool, but I hadn't had to find a cutting device on the bench or remember to return it after use.

On the way down the hill from the main barn to the bucks' quarters, I heard a snapping sound along the fence line. On inspection, I found a huge, wet thistle had engulfed the electric wire and was partially shorting out the fence. Never fear, I don't have to separate the thistle from the wire with my bare hands; I have a tool! I whipped out my trusty pocket knife and fished out—a can opener. No, that won't work! After a couple more

attempts, I located the long knife blade and made short work of the thistle. Fence charge restored!

While in the bucks' shed, I noticed that they were down to the last few grains in their mineral tub. When the minerals get low, there's usually some stuck-on goop in the bottom of the tub which I try to scrape off (with my fingernails, normally) to make it somewhat cleaner for a new scoop of minerals. Now, my nails can stay clean as I have a new tool. From my new palm tool, I quickly flip out—one half of a pair of scissors! No, No! What I really wanted was—a bottle opener! OK, OK, a knife has to be here somewhere—I'll even settle for the flat-blade screwdriver!

On the way back to the house, I found a rose bush with a few pink, rain-soaked buds still hanging on. I've found if you remove the outside rain-rotted petals, you often find a rosebud suitable for a vase viewing. Roses are a special treat this time of year because they really shouldn't be there. Not having pruners handy, I pulled out my new pocket tool and flipped out a—flat-head screwdriver. This was getting irritating! All the inside tools except the phillips screwdriver and the toothpick look the same when tucked inside the knife and I'm breaking off my thumbnail pulling out tool after tool to try and find the gadget I'm after. I'm supposed to remember which side of the tool and which level of blade to pull out every time I use it!??? Also, come to think of it, so far all I've ever needed was a knife. Do I need to just go buy a real pocket knife—one with only a blade?

One other small problem—we own two grain scoops. There are three scoopable items in the barn—grain, minerals and dog food. Grain and dog food get scooped daily and minerals get scooped periodically. So, logically the scoops should live in the grain and dog food cans. Can I ever find a scoop when I need it??? They get tossed on the floor, left in the mineral can and sometimes even removed from the barn for unknown reasons. It's understandable when someone else has done animals the night before that I might have to hunt for scoops, but when I follow myself, why can't I find where I left them!? I could just buy more scoops, but pretty soon I'd have a barn full of scoops and still not be able to locate one when I need it and that would be even more irritating!

So, you go back to those earth-shaking problems; I've got my own simple irritations to contend with. When I get these solved, maybe I'll join you later.



When Readers Talk...

Gentlemen,

About thirty years ago, in a deflated mood caused by city living, I said to my husband, "I'd like to run off and raise goats and mushrooms for a living."

My kids are grown, my husband is gone and I still think about raising goats and mushrooms.

This (magazine) is a Christmas present to myself.

Happy holidays,
Pat Kazmerski
Aurora, Colorado
December 18, 1999

Howdy Paul & Linda,

First off I would like to say that we really enjoy your articles and all the information. We really like *CashMirror*. I read it as soon as we get it.

In the December, 99 issue you stated there is a book published by Pattie and Restall Breeding Cashmere Goats (1991). I called bookstores and could not find a copy of the book. I would like to know if you could give me more information so I can buy this book.

I would also appreciate if you could give or tell me where to get information on shearing our goats. We have always combed our goats but now we have too many and it is taking such a long time to get this done.

I wanted to let you know that since we have put ourselves in the Breeders Directory we have had lots of people e-mailing us interested in purchasing goats, or information. Thanks again for all the hard work.

Bob Marshall
Marshall's Organic Acres
Wellington, Colorado
December 28, 1999

Dear Bob,

The best source of shearing help we've found is to attend a session where someone else is doing it—and lots of practice. Next best is Terry Sim's information on shearing from his travelling workshops. Of course, not willing to just print Terry's material (with permission of course), we felt the need to beat the subject to death like usual, so we researched other materials. In this issue, you have Terry's instructions beginning on page XXX and our article beginning on page 13.

An additional source for shearing information is an article by Wendy Paulin printed in the February 1995 CM issue entitled "No Second Cuts Please." You can access this article on the internet at: <http://www.teleport.com/~goatknol/sampart.htm>. We've printed a couple other articles on shearing since then, but I'm afraid they've been more humorous than helpful.

Regarding Restall and Pattie's book (Breeding Cashmere Goats by B. J. Restall and W.A. Pattie), it can be ordered from Kris McGuire, Capricorn Cashmere, 824 S. US Highway 287, Laramie, Wyoming 82070. The cost is \$25. This book is a collection of 10 articles and includes an introduction and summary of the research programs which resulted in these articles. The research was a joint project between the NSW Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and The University of Queensland which aimed to determine the inheritance of production characteristics in cashmere goats. The projects were conducted during 1979-1992.

A subsequent paper by Pattie and Restall, entitled "Selection Responses in Cashmere Goats, Results from the Wollongbar Selection Lines," was presented by them at the 1996 CaPrA conference in Laramie Wyoming. This article is printed as part of the Conference Proceedings which are also available from Kris at CaPrA (address above). These Proceedings are \$50.

—Editor

A Herd of Two

By Linda Cortright
Grumble Goat Farm

A prospective goat farmer recently asked me if she should get a registered herd code and just how many animals does she need in order to be considered a herd.

Hmmmm.

My standard response to the first question is always "absolutely" but afterwards my thinking began to falter. As I said this is a prospective goat farmer who is still enjoying (?) suburban life in a condominium and though plans to commence the great career as a cashmere goat farmer are slated within the next few months, obtaining a herd code seemed a bit premature. But who am I to dampen the spirits of a kindred caprine fanatic? However, I further added that a goat could not carry a farm's herd code unless the animal was actually born on the property and though my knowledge of zoning is limited I grant you, I haven't ridden too many elevators with pregnant goats. Although that would certainly circumvent the issue of losing kids in far away fields.

But what is a herd?

Personally, I've always lied about the number of goats I have. I didn't start out lying; I picked it up from the Texans. When they tell me they have five thousand goats I know they're lying. They may have 4,983 or they may have 5,001 but I know they don't have 5,000, and if they're allowed to speak in terms of round numbers then so can I.

But as to what actually constitutes a herd I confess I don't know.

If you have one goat you would say to someone, "I have 'a' goat."

If you have two goats you might be inclined to say, "I have a 'couple' of goats."

If you have three goats you might say, "I have 'several' goats"...and so it goes until what - Ten? Twenty? Two hundred? More than you can count? According to Random House a herd is defined as "a number of animals kept, feeding, or traveling together." Which would seem to imply that one could indeed have a herd of two. One might get laughed at but one would be linguistically correct.

Which brings me to an exaltation of larks. Back in the late '60's there was a book of the same name written by James Lipton that proposed to identify the various groupings of animals based on the writings of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle at the turn of the last century (that would now be 1900 now as opposed to 1800...). Apparently Sir Doyle took this number and naming thing far more seriously than those of us with clever farm names and registered codes and began



Sue Cullers and a trip of goats.
Airy Knoll Farms, Cozad Nebraska.

documenting the various animal and non- animal categories.

We are all familiar with a pride of lions and a school of fish, but how often do you speak of a murder of crows or a skulk of foxes? How about a crash of rhinoceroses, a bouquet of pheasants or a parliament of owls? There are pages of these marvelous descriptions and I flipped them rapidly until I came upon the almighty goat: a trip of goats.

Hmmmm.

A trip of goats? There are several interpretations to the phrase including the thought that it was taken from the Icelandic word, *thrypa*, meaning flock, or that it was a corruption of the word tribe. Of course for those of us who have ever ventured into their herd (which for this example can clearly mean two or more) with a can of grain, a trip of goats needs no explanation.

This leads me to conclude that a herd of goats can consist of any number of two or more. But you should at least be honest about the two. As I perused the pages even further and came upon a disagreement of statesmen, a nerve of neighbors and a mass of priests I couldn't help but to include a few of my own.

A trip of goats may be etymologically correct but seemingly lacking in the exact character. Would it not be more accurate to refer to an obstinance of goats? I know you won't find that word in Webster's but that was only because he didn't have any goats, for surely if he had, that's what he would have called them. But what then shall we call this culturally diverse, multi-talented, geographically-scattered gathering of goat folk? Simple. A debt of farmers.

Raising Cashmere Goats—One Year In

By Michele Lowe
Wild Flower Farm, Dallas, Oregon

As I write this piece, I am completing my first year as the owner of a growing herd of cashmere-producing goats. A friend suggested that since I was now completing my first complete cycle of ownership, I should sit down and write something about the experience. I could possibly provide helpful information to newcomers and it would be "really interesting."

Well, it's true, goat ownership is anything but boring. In fact, it's a little like falling in love and getting married.

Think about it. You dated. You kissed a certain number of toads or toadettes—it works both ways. Then one day you find the right person for you. Attractive, good build, nice personality, great hair! You want them; heck, you NEED them. In those heady early days of the relationship you're blind to all those little things that will eventually make you grind your teeth in your sleep. Later, you still love them more than life itself, but the sheen of romance has dulled a bit and every once in a while you want to wring your beloved's neck. Then, five minutes later they do something so unbearably sweet that you're reminded why you hooked up with them in the first place. And you just hang in there, learning all the while, and life goes on.

Fast forward to goats. You're ready to commit, but cows, sheep, or horses—none of them were right. You researched and read, and one day, lo and behold, the creature of your dreams presents itself—the cashmere-producing goat. Not necessarily a blueblood, but hardy, well built, handsome, with an even disposition, and hey, great hair! You can do this, you tell yourself. You WANT to do this. Just remember you'll have great days AND days that will make you wonder just what exactly it was that you did to enrage the Fates. The good days will make up for the bad—most of the time. And you'll learn all kinds of things, and not just about goats. You'll probably

learn the most about yourself. Goats are like that. They teach you much of what you need to know about being owned by them.

Goat ownership is...a little like falling in love and getting married.

Reflecting on the past year has led me to conclude that there are just a couple bits of advice I'd like to give. You can most certainly get

plenty of advice from far more authoritative sources than me, so I'll just talk about a couple of items I think are the biggies for a beginner. I also have a few observations about goat and human behavior that I'd like to pass on. Advice first:

(1) Believe what everyone tells you about fences, gate latches, goat curiosity and kid-proofing. Make things as animal-ready as you can BEFORE they arrive. Saves on emotional wear and tear and skinned knuckles earned, in the rain, in the dark, patching that "itty bitty hole in the fence that's too tiny for anything to squeeze through." If you're not sure whether your fences or pens will work, ask an experienced goat owner to take a look at your place to

Continued on next page

Michele & goats

Michele Lowe and her new fuzzy friends.

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One Year In

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help you assess your situation. Goats will put their head, and other parts of their anatomy, into places you'd never think they'd be interested in or fit, especially if there's something on the other side that looks like potential food. Sturdy is the operative word with goat equipment. It's not so much a matter of them intentionally beating things up as it is the fact that they like to chase and pound on each other from time to time and whatever is in the way better had better be able to take it. That includes you.

If you're going to have kids in the spring, it's especially important to do some planning. I've watched kids in the barn walk right through a space between a gate and post that looked way too narrow. Shoot, they never even brushed the rails and the opening couldn't have been more than three inches wide. They don't know they're not supposed to be able to just saunter through there so they do! They are curious about the whole world and have VERY flexible little bodies. Like human infants, they also tend to test everything with their mouths. Even the apparently innocent object is not always so innocent. Be aware of what you've got laying, hanging, or standing around. If it's dangerous or you just plain don't want it nibbled on, move it.

I once took a head count of my week old kids and found that one was missing. I was getting panicky when I decided to look around a pile of small drainage pipe that was lying around. The goats loved climbing and playing on it. Sure enough, the baby found the single piece of pipe that had an accessible opening and crawled in. It was nice and warm, and probably seemed like a great place for a nap. Problem was he couldn't go forward because the other end was blocked, he hadn't learned about reverse yet, and it was getting really hot in there.

(2) As you enter your first kidding season, everyone will tell you that there's really nothing to be worried about, and you will probably still feel anxious. I will say that you should learn as much as you can about kidding and if you can, attend a birth before your own kids arrive, but I won't try to convince you not to worry because everything will come out fine in the end (pun intended). The fact is that everything probably will be just fine. Goats have been having kids for a long time and they're usually pretty good at it. I decided to buy five experienced does for my first season, and I only had to help one out a bit, but I can honestly say that there weren't any assurances that could have kept me from being nervous until all of those first kids popped out. I won't try to talk you out of your angst.

Speaking of kids, if you didn't purchase a buck and are thinking about renting, borrowing or otherwise obtaining a buck to service your does, you may find that you will start to worry about this almost as much or



Birthing babies—everyone will tell you there's really nothing to worry about. You will still feel anxious.

more than "birthing babies." Let's face it, if you don't get this part of the animal husbandry equation right, you definitely will not get anything after the equal sign. One plus zero still equals one. There's a lot to consider. What are you trying to accomplish in terms of fiber, conformation, use, etc? Are you going to drive your does over to the buck to stay for a while, or hit and run when she's cycling? Or is he going to come and stay at your place for a while? Do you have the facilities that will hold a buck if one comes to stay, and how will you keep him away from animals you do not intend to breed? Some bucks will not tolerate guardian dogs. There are lots of things to think about.

Fiber and conformation, notwithstanding, do take a few things most seriously into consideration when you start your search. First and foremost, make sure you're going to be using a healthy animal. Ask if the animal has been tested for CLA and CAE. You don't need to expose your healthy herd to a sick animal. Do you know the herd owner personally or by reputation in the industry? Second, is your own herd and environment clean? Are you going to expose someone's healthy animal to some contagion? Did you have any hoof rot last year? Be responsible and honest. Also, bucks are not cuddly, are very strong and they are usually equipped with horns that make would make a wolf's eyes widen. They also smell in a big way. They have the rather unseemly habit of urinating on everything, particularly themselves. It may not be appealing to you but it's designer cologne to the ladies.

I just had a buck spend a month at my place. While it added new chores to my daily routine, it made my life simpler in the long run. I received a referral

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One Year In

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from a trusted source suggesting that I contact a particular individual because she possibly had a buck that might produce the results I was seeking for my herd. I visited the farm, talked about animal care with the owner, and looked at his fiber from previous years before deciding that he was the buck I'd use this year. And, by the way, by the time the month passed, I actually got used to the smell.

(3) Enjoy your goats. Don't make it all hard work. Take time to watch the babies play. There's hardly a thing in the world cuter than two-week old goats cavorting and discovering the spring in their legs. Goats love to play, to climb and challenge each other. Watch them go through some of their daily routines or while they're cuddled together napping in the sunshine like little angels. Believe me, you need the warm fuzzies to help you through the days when nothing seems to go right and barbecuing Herman for dinner begins to sound really good.



Little ones napping in the sun like angels—
plotting their next escapade.

Continued on next page

Cashmere Goats from Australian Lismore Stock
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One Year In

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So what are the sage observations I've made about goats and goat owners? Here they are:

(1) Almost all goats, at different times, will display an affinity for one or more of the seven deadly sins. This generally operates to your advantage. What do I mean by this? Consider gluttony. A goat's desire to be a grain glutton will, without a doubt, allow you to experience those rare, euphoric occasions when you actually have some semblance of control over your animals. Rattle a grain bucket and I'm the Pied Piper with a herd of adoring creatures who will follow me right over a cliff in order to get a taste. I have learned to love things that foster cooperation. I am pleased to report that my youngest goats are all now confirmed



Wild Flower Farm's guards—Lucy and Leo. They are Maremma/Great Pyrenees cross. Leo, on the right is still a puppy. No predator problems here!



Does and young kids basking in the summer sun.

suckers for grain. Of course I tell people that don't know any better that the goats love me.

Envy is good. At least it is when you're trying to catch a wary goat or socializing young goats to accustom them to being touched or brushed. Most goats cannot stand the fact that one of their fellows is getting and enjoying something that they are not getting. For example, kids do not automatically love to be held and touched by people. In fact, I'm pretty sure their mothers tell them not to let anyone or anything near them, and, unlike most of us, they actually listen to their mothers. Enter envy. If you can gain one convert who shows apparent signs of enjoyment from your attentions, the others start to follow suit. Of course, envy can also eventually lead to a lot of pushing and shoving and head butting if you're overindulgent. Remember—you're on ground level in the middle of a bunch of animals with horns. Practice safe cuddling.

Dare I leave out lust? Little bucklings display a propensity for this vice within the first few weeks of their lives. And they think big! It doesn't matter that their head hardly reaches above a doe's hocks. Fear not, you have not succeeded in breeding a bunch of libidinous creatures with Oedipus complexes. Take the appropriate precautions at the appropriate times. By the way, castration tends to cool everyone's jets considerably. You will, of course, grow to appreciate lust in a buck if you're planning on increasing your herd, and you will probably find, as I have, that some of your ladies are shameless flirts when they're in season. Conversely, lust is a problem if you've got bad fences, wait too long to separate your little boys from the ladies, or your bedroom window is downwind of the buck enclosure.

(2) Your goats are not going to be kind to each other and live together like one big, happy family all the time. Like George Orwell's book, *Animal Farm*, all goats may be equal, but some are more equal than others, and they enforce that principle. You will have a lead goat and sometimes she will be a real witch. She will insist that she get first crack at the hay, the grain, and any other goodies that come along. She will decide that it's one or more particular goat's fault that they are now penned up and going to get shots and goodness knows what else done to them, and those goats are darn well going to pay for it! That is why it's helpful to have places that allow smaller or more timid goats to hide. I keep several wooden benches in the barn. The baby goats love to leap from one to another. The adults often sleep on them or stand on them to let me know they'd like to be brushed too. Most importantly, little ones can dive under and the big ones can't reach them. Not all of them have sufficient gray matter between their ears to avail themselves of the protection I've offered, but I console myself with the fact that at least it was there when they needed it.

Some animals will always get pushed around, but

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they usually figure out their place in the scheme of things. They work it out. Just like some people, there's only so much you can or should do to help them.

(3) The last hay put down is the best hay. It's obvious.

(4) It's rarely as bad as you think it is. Anyone with an ounce of good sense will tell you that you should invest in one or more good guides to the care and feeding of goats, and that you should develop a good relationship with a veterinarian that knows farms animals, especially sheep and goats. That said, I will now caution you not to make yourself nuts reading about every imaginable disease in goatdom and then worrying about whether Fluffy's slight limp is the beginning of some obscure disease known to exist primarily in South Africa. I call it "goat hypochondria by proxy." If you live on a farm, and you hear hooves pounding across a pasture, it doesn't mean there are zebras running by. If your farm is located almost anywhere but the African Savannah, it's probably just a horse or a cow. Likewise, if a goat's got a problem, it's probably not some hideous, bizarre disease, but something prevalent in your area or otherwise explainable. Sometimes, nothing is wrong at all. I'll humiliate myself now to illustrate my point.

One morning I went out to the barn to do my morning check of goats and dogs. Mind you I was wrapping up what I considered to be the week from hell. One of my guardian pups had developed, overnight I might add, a huge festering hot spot on his back that required antibiotics and treatment three times a day for the next three weeks. I discovered that one goat had an injection site that had gotten infected but had remained invisible because she was so loaded with cashmere that I couldn't see or feel it. And, my entire herd, just two weeks from kidding, had a case of lice that was torturing them all pitifully. A consultation with and a visit from the Vet, and the lightening of my wallet by a couple of hundred bucks, had solved all these problems but done little for my attitude. So on this beautiful sunny day, what's the first thing I see? Nicole has a huge lump on the side of her mouth. I'm talking the size of a respectable apricot. I walk over and touch it. It's rock hard. Oh, no! A tumor! Or is it that hideous disease that gets in their lymph nodes! It doesn't hurt her to touch it so it can't be a thorn or anything like that. Oh, it's probably something contagious and/or fatal! Aaaaarrgh!

Well, it was just too much. I proceeded to throw everyone out of the barn. All I could think was that I'd just spent a small fortune and here I was going to have to do the same again, or worse, lose the animal. Never have you seen a barn mucked out in such record time. As I was finishing up it occurred to me that perhaps I'd not seen what I had seen. So, when every-

one happily returned to the now very tidy barn, I decided to take another look. Like the horrible tumor had been miraculously healed in the time I'd taken to clean the barn, right? But yes, once again, wishing it so had made it so. Nicole was cured! No lump! Now, wait a minute.... It occurred to me—maybe she had something IN her mouth? She is a ruminant. They do chew their cud. DUH!? That's right, she had pinch between cheek and gum that would have made a major league ballplayer proud. I'd stressed myself out over a lump of fermenting hay, imagining all sorts of disastrous outcomes that were never to be realized. All because of a goat with bad table manners and my overactive imagination.

Don't automatically assume the worst when you notice a sign of possible trouble. And, accept the fact that some time or other you're going to make a bad call and not recognize something you should have. Hopefully, it will be about something minor. You're new to this so don't be surprised if you make a mistake here and there. Just learn as much as you can about goat care, be responsible, and do your best. As I said before, goats are made of sturdy stuff.

(5) Goats have blessedly short memories and/or they are very forgiving creatures. No your goats will not hate you because you lured them with grain, restrained them, trimmed their feet—Oops! Cut that one a little too short, did you?—and then you stuck them with a needle or two. In fact, most of them will come right out to do it again if you come back in an hour or so. Just make sure that something bad doesn't happen every time you touch your animals.

(6) You're supposed to be smarter than the goat. Sooner or later you will find yourself doing something that will convince you otherwise. Trust me. You will chase a kid around a 12 X 24 enclosure till you are convinced that you have been defeated by a thirty pound goat. Well, you have been. Then, miraculously, it will occur to you that you could just run the little beggar into that 4 by 6 foot area you've got right there all handy-like and then she won't be able to get away. Heck, she'll jump right into your arms trying to get away! The message? Slow down. Handling is almost always stressful for the goats. Take time to think about the best way to organize a situation to reduce stress for you and the goat. Cultivate a virtue we all need more of in this day and age, one that is indispensable if you want to raise animals—PATIENCE. Speak a little more quietly; don't be in such a hurry; plan in advance whenever possible. This isn't rocket science, and you'll get better at it with every experience you have. I still make mistakes but it gets a bit easier all the time.

I've spent a year with my goats now. Trimmed hooves 4 times, treated a few minor boo boos, stuck hour old newborns with a needle and cleaned up a couple of sticky,

Continued on next page

One Year In

Continued from previous page

poopy baby goat bottoms for what seemed like days without end (that's a story for another day). Some of them call out and rush to see me whenever I come out of the house, standing close by to give and get some attention. It doesn't matter that I'm not passing out grain. I'm part of the herd in my own way. They make allowances for me, I'm sure of it. I love to get down to mix with the little ones and feel their soft, warm breath in my ear as I work in the pens. I've had days when I wanted to cuddle them all, and days when I wanted to round one or more of them up and send them to the great pasture in the sky. The only thing that stopped me was the fact that I'd have to clean up the mess, and I didn't need one more mess to clean up! I remind myself often that I must be patient. They're goats, and I'm only a human being. Most of the time I don't have any delusions about what my goats are or aren't. It's a constant learning experience that I have to really work hard to succeed at and that I thoroughly enjoy. And I always say that I'm glad I have the goats I have and not somebody else's.

See—it is just like love and marriage.



Photos with this story by Michele Lowe and Linda Fox

Book Report

By Linda Fox

Meat Goats, By Sara Emond

This book was published in November 1994, in Canada by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. It is soft cover and includes 74 pages. It is well done, extremely readable and presents topics in a thorough and understandable manner. There are chapters on goat management, nutrition and facilities as well as kidding and raising kids. Health problems and parasites are covered extensively. There is a list of suggested mineral levels in goat rations. There are also sections on recordkeeping and marketing meat goats, including tables of live weights vs. carcass weights and percentage of various meat cuts per carcass. A comparison of different breeds and their meat-producing characteristics is included.

This book does not focus on Boer goats as many meat goat related products seem to do these days. The book notes that since this breed is new on the scene in Canada (in 1994), there is little data available on carcass quality. For cashmere breeders who are not crossing their stock with Boers, this book may be more useful than something Boer-focused.

The book is full of excellent charts and drawings on injections, hoof trimming, drenching and condition scoring. It has information on space requirements for different ages of goats, both for shelter and exercise yards, and drawings of suitable shelters, pens and feeders. This book would actually be a useful reference for anyone contemplating raising any breed of goat.

This is a wonderful book. If you are interested in meat goats, or just want to know more in order to market your cull goats for meat, you need this book. I'd heard of it a year or so ago from Yvonne Zweede-Tucker. She had referred to it as the brown meat goat book, but I hadn't been able to find it. I found them for sale at the Edmonton Farm Fair and snatched one up. You can order your copy from the Alberta Goat Breeders Association by sending \$15 to the AGBA, c/o Jackie Riley, General Delivery, Hay Lakes, AB, T0B 1W0. If you live in the US, the cost is \$15 in US funds. If you live in Canada, it is \$15CN. The difference, per Jackie, is to cover the additional cost of foreign mailing.

Shearing Goats

By Linda Fox

In Asia, cashmere goats are kept in small flocks by herdsman and when they begin to moult, the down is hand combed from the animal. Labor is cheap and plentiful and the comfort or stress to the animal is mostly ignored. In this country, if you have more than a few goats (see Linda Cortright's article on page 6 to determine what number constitutes a few), you will eventually contemplate shearing them instead of combing them. Shearing is relatively quick, hopefully painless and overall, less stress for you and the goat, unless you are lucky enough to own those goats that actually enjoy being combed. Combing a goat will take 20 minutes, at best, and this is assuming your goat sheds all fleece in one easy combing.

There are advantages to combing, so you may not want to give it up just for the promise of a quick, easy fleece harvest. Advantages include less cost invested in harvesting equipment, probably a lesser processing cost to remove guard hair and leaving the goat with enough hair to protect it in severe weather and from potential embarrassment in the herd. Also, if you intend to separate out those pesky guard hairs by hand, you may never get them picked out from a sheared fleece. This article is not intended to add to the entertaining debate of combing vs. shearing, merely to note their differences and pass on by to the nitty gritty details of shearing for those who have decided to take the plunge.

When to Shear

Unlike pruning apple trees, which a wise older relative once told me was done "when your knife is sharp," you need to shear a cashmere goat at a certain time of year. You need to shear when the fleece is ripe—after the cashmere has grown to its full length, but before it starts to shed. Shed cashmere disappears quickly in the wind or hangs up in guard hair as nasty little mats. Studies of cashmere growth have shown that cashmere begins growing around the longest day of the year and stops growth on the shortest day of the year, June 21st and December 21st, respectively, in North America. If you've had cashmere goats for any length of time, you know that this, like most things, varies from goat to goat, from location to location, and from year to year. Additional considerations for timing your shearing are the weather in your area, when pregnant does are expected to kid, timing of other chores to be completed at the same time as shearing, and last, but certainly not least, your own schedule.

Ideally, you should not shear pregnant does during the last month before kidding as the stress of shearing and exposure to cold weather may induce abortion. You may want to shear them before they kid as kidding may induce shedding. If a doe still carries her fleece at parturition, she will usually shed it within 2 - 6 weeks after kidding.

As Terry Sim, noted Australian cashmere goat classer and shearer, discusses in his Cashmere America workshop materials, "Cold weather need not be an excuse not to shear at the optimum time. Goats can be coated to satisfy an owner's concern..."

Goats in poor shape should not be sheared at all. To shear goats in poor condition or those who lack adequate shelter, puts them at risk for health problems. In locations with severe winter weather, goats normally shed later in the year than those in mild weathered locations. Here, in the Oregon Willamette Valley where the weather is mild, the goats begin shedding by the end of January, although the day after Christmas this year, I found one doeling who had started to shed. I easily combed 1/2 ounce of shedding fiber from her hindquarters in five minutes. By the time we get to shearing, it will be too late for this one. Premature shedding can be caused by stresses caused by transportation or nutritional deficiencies, or by an abrupt change in climate or breeding (for the bucks).

You should shear before your goats begin to visibly shed cashmere. In America, this is generally January - March. If you see goats shedding, research indicates they have already lost 30% of their down. Research also indicates that the finest down fibers start growing last and shed first, so if you shear after shedding has commenced, you've probably lost the goat's finer down. To determine if a goat has started to shed, pluck a small amount of cashmere from the goat's side. If it comes out easily, it's time to shear.

Continued on next page

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Shearing Goats

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Just as some goats start to shed even before they're supposed to stop growing, some goats are still growing cashmere after the winter solstice. If you've sheared or had your herd sheared in the past, you've probably seen a goat or two shedding more than the 1/4" of cashmere that should have remained after shearing.

It is obvious that you won't catch them all at the ideal shearing second. Some will be shorn too late no matter when you shear, while others will be shorn before their maximum cashmere length is reached. You will just need to do the best you can in selecting a shearing date. You may want to add those that shed early to your culling list.

One reference suggested looking at cashmere fiber under a microscope to determine if it was ready to be shorn. If there are "brush ends" on the fiber, it is ready to be shorn. If you have a microscope handy, this method might work for you.

Shearing Equipment

The shearing equipment of choice seems to be electric shears made by Oster with a four-point cutter. The best (and more expensive) models have the motor separate from the handpiece. A flexible connection connects the handpiece to the motor. An all in one shear is considerably less expensive. Having shears with the handpiece separate from the motor is an advantage in keeping the shearing head cool. An overheated head can burn the animal. If you are buying shears, go for the four-point cutter rather than the three. You will pay a bit more for the four points, but you will be able to cut a wider swath and you will have more choice of combs. Other companies make shears including Lister (British) and Heiniger (Germany). The Lister and Heiniger shears will be more expensive. Each has its advantages and disadvantages. It would be an advantage to have shears which adjust to a lower speed for goats—speeds in the range of 2000-2200 rpm are recommended for goats, while speeds of 3000 rpm are generally used for sheep. However, a single speed shear costs less and will do the job.

The price for a typical one-piece shearing device is around \$200. The one-speed model will be a bit less; a variable speed shear will be a bit more. They usually come with one comb and one cutter. One cutter will probably not be enough and the comb which comes with the shear will most likely be for sheep. Additional combs are around \$20 each and cutters are \$10 or less. Combs with 17-21 teeth are best for

goats. The more teeth there are in a comb, the less likely you will cut skin.

A different type of shears available from Premier works well for some people. The combs and cutters come in sets and are sharpened together as a pair. We have trouble knowing when the tension is correct on our Oster shears. If tension is too loose, fleece accumulates between the cutters and combs and in a worst case, cut-

tters fly off the comb spearing the startled shearing assistant. If tension is too tight, the cutters dull quickly and become useless until sharpened, sending the frustrated shearing assistant off on a Sunday looking for someone to sharpen the cutters. On the Premier shears, adjusting tension is a no-brainer; proper tension is obtained by turning the tension knob a specified distance from tight. Terry Sim did not think much of our Premier shears on his last pass through this area, but they have worked well for us.

You will also need a restraining device for the goat. Most people use a headstall which is an upright, adjustable stanchion for holding the goat in a standing position. The device should be adjustable for height and not obstruct any part of the goat's body to be shorn. The goat is restrained in a standing position by wrapping a rope, chain or strap around its horns and fastening it to the headstall. A headstall would not work for polled or dehorned goats. The goat's eyes are usually covered in the headstall which keeps the goat calmer during shearing. The goat's head is held at the proper level, by adjusting the height of the headstall if necessary. With the victim's head secure, it can then be positioned and controlled by holding its tail and resting its body against the shearer's legs. Experienced goat handlers noted that if a goat was held so that its chin rests on the holder's hand with its head up and facing forward, it would usually stand without struggling. If the animal is allowed to bend



Kris McGuire loads a reluctant goat into a headstall for the cashmere goat shearing competition in the 1999 Denver Northwest Stock Show.

Continued on next page

Shearing Goats

Continued from previous page

its head down, it may become harder to hold because it will be able to obtain better leverage for the muscles in its neck and shoulder to enable it to struggle. The typical headstall is normally a portable device which is bolted to the floor for shearing and removed to clear valuable floor space for other uses when you are not in shearing mode.

You could also restrain the goat by using a collar and lead and snug them to a post, but you would need to remove the collar at some point to shear the neck. You can also have a helper hold the goat while you shear, although this can operate something like a back seat driver; the last thing a beginning goat shearer wants is an assistant pointing out the second (and third) cuts.

A sheep grooming stand should also work—one of those metal stands you see at the fair, perched on four legs with a rod attached to a half circle containing the animal's head. This might help by bringing the goat up to a higher level to save your back.

Most successful shearers we know use a headstall. We use the Johnson patented portable headstall—we just take turns holding the goats. The person not acting as the headstall shears the goat. We and our goats are used to this. Using a nonhuman restraining device is preferable.

Preparing for Shearing

You will want to plan ahead for shearing day. The goats need to be dry, so if rain is expected you will want to pen them the day before. Since each goat will be handled individually, this would be a good time to do other maintenance chores such as trimming feet, worming and vaccinating. The best time to grade your fleece is while it is still on the goat; you will have the added advantage of knowing the location of your fleece sample. After shearing, especially for novice shearers, you will have difficulty matching the fleece in a bag with the section of goat from which it was removed. Also, you may never get back to grading those fleeces. Even if you are not an experienced classer, you should write down your observations—the length, yield and color will be relatively easy as will your notes about how well the goat was covered with cashmere. For the diameter and style, take a guess and write it down. Anything written down at this point is better than no notes at all. You may also wish to make notes about the condition of the goat and other observations about each goat.

It is best to weigh each fleece, sort them by color/

line, and pull potential fleece contest entries and fleeces to be sampled for objective testing at shearing time as well. The more you do with your fleeces at this point, the less shuffling around with the bags of fleece you will have to do later in the year—if and when you ever get back to them.

To keep the stray colored hairs from your white fleeces, you should shear the white goats first, followed by the "light" goats (white fleece with colored guard hair), the gray goats and then the darker colors. If you can, you should separate the goats by color into separate mobs at least two weeks before shearing, to avoid color contamination of your white fleeces.

You will need good light for shearing including, if possible, a spot where you can look at fleece in natural light or a "daylight" light fixture. (Or as Terry would say, a "dyelight" light fixture.) Your shearing place should be set up so it can be cleaned between goats. If you attach your headstall to a sturdy piece of 4' X 8' plywood, this will provide you with a smooth surface that can be swept between animals. A tarp will also work in a pinch.

You should have on hand a soft-bristled brush to brush off large hay flakes and other goop from the goat before beginning to shear and a small hand mirror in case the goat wants to see the back of their head after shearing is completed.

Shearing

One reference stated that goat shearing is similar to shearing sheep. NOT! The only similarity I see is that in both cases, you are cutting a coat from an animal. After five years of struggling to shear sheep and three years shearing goats, I'd have to disagree. Goats are definitely easier to shear and infinitely cleaner. The hair removed is different, where you shear is different and sheep act differently than goats. Shearing sheep is a dirty, strenuous, unpleasant chore. Professional sheep shearers may find the shearing of sheep fascinating, but I can find little to amuse me. Shearing goats is relatively clean and easy and I believe it can be accomplished by anyone.

Shearing goats is different from shearing sheep and shearing cashmere goats is different from shearing Angora goats. There are few goat shearing specialists within the sheep shearing industry and these specialists may not be available for a small herd at a cost you can afford. The advantage of using a professional cashmere goat shearing specialist is that they will often grade your fleeces for you at the same time as

Continued on next page

Shearing Goats

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shearing. Most traditional sheep shearers do not want to shear goats and if they do, shear them poorly.

You could shear goats with inexpensive electric pet groomers. I sheared one square foot on my first sheep years ago, with pet clippers and burned out the motor. The disadvantage to using smaller shears on a cashmere goat is that it would take longer and put you more at risk for second cuts. "Second cuts" are the short pieces of fleece that you remove after the first cut into the fleece has been made. These can occur when you go back to remove a hunk of fleece that you didn't cut off at skin level on the first pass or when you overlap a previous cutting path where partially cut fleece still remains. Second cuts produce short snips of cashmere that are undesirable in the final product. If there are too many second cuts in a fleece, your total fleece will be of no value.

Most goats don't grow cashmere on their bellies or lower legs and what does grow there is usually short or of poor quality. Your shearing surfaces normally are limited to back, neck and sides of the goat—all easily reached while the goat is restrained in a standing position. Keeping a goat standing is an advantage as goats prefer to stand and will resist less if they are left standing. Sheep, unlike goats, seem to go limp when dumped off their feet, making it easier to manipulate them.

As you might guess, there's more than one way to shear a goat. All methods must include sharp shears with the comb's teeth held next to the goat's skin at the proper angle. The most difficult goats to shear, of course, are the best ones—those with the fine, very dense fleeces. You may be able to successfully push dull shears through the fleece of an average goat, but less than the best edge will cause you to crash and burn on the best ones.

References listed below illustrate two basic methods for shearing goats. The first is the tally ho method, also known as the traditional or conventional method. It is the same as the traditional shearing method usually recommended for sheep. References say that this method is faster, but requires considerable skill to perform properly. You've all seen sheep sheared using this method—where the sheep is held between your toes while the underside wool is deftly removed and then they are flipped in the air like a pizza, with their sides shorn as they twirl and the back neatly clipped on the way down. It's usually done in three minutes or less by a short, burly-looking guy with a great tan, hairy arms and an intense look.

A preferred method for goats is called the go-down technique. This method was developed at the Agricultural Research Centre, Wollongbar, New South Wales. They wanted to develop a shearing technique that was easy to learn, easy to do, efficient, quick and clean, and would use existing shearing machines. The go-down technique was a refinement of the Trimmer/Kajons technique, developed by Barry Trimmer and Andy Kajons, two wool officers who had obviously struggled with one goat too many on the ground and decided that they would rather deal with them standing. The go-down technique has simplified the blows and improved the restraining equipment designed by the Trimmer/Kajons team.

For shearing, the tips of the shearing combs are held at an angle—about 10%—next to the goat's skin while moving the shears forward. If the angle is correct and the blades are sharp, the shear will glide effortlessly across the goat's skin. If you find that your shears aren't gliding effortlessly, try changing the angle slightly. Try not to remove shears in the middle of a blow. Shears removed and replaced is an invitation for second cuts.

Each shearing pass, called a "blow" should be made as long as possible. The number of blows required to shear an animal is determined by the size of the animal, the area of skin to be shorn and the width of the shearing head. The diagrams on the next page illustrating the placement and number of blows assume that the goat is of medium to large size. Drawings of goats with numbered lines may seem somewhat childish, but you will be amazed at how fast your mind will go blank when you have a vibrating shear in one hand and a frightened goat in the other. The first year, we had our "goat maps" with us whenever shearing.

Before you get in the middle of this next description and run out into the barnyard screaming, "Oh no! That's not the way Terry does it!" You're right; Terry's method is different. We also use Terry's method. However, Terry's method calls for the use of your non-dominant hand to wield the shears for one half of the goat. The go-down method has been designed for the use of only the dominant hand for the entire goat. So, read on. In case you find that your non-dominant hand is untrainable, you'll have an alternative:

The Australian go-down method as described in Agfact A7.8.2, second edition, 1984, is as follows: The shearer should stand on the goat's left side, holding the goat's tail with the left hand and leaning the left leg or knee against the goat's side. The opening (first) blow is made from the base of the tail, down the breach, over the

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Shearing Goats

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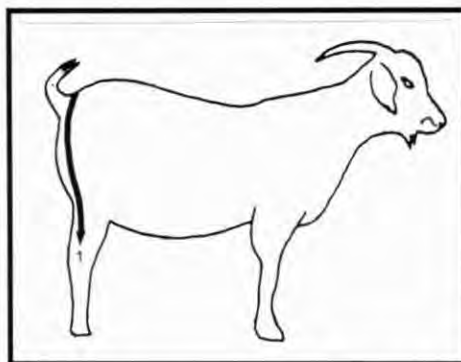
outside of the rear leg and ending at the outside of the hock. Be careful to turn the handpiece to avoid the hamstring. The second blow begins where you end the first, at the base of the tail and continues along the middle of the back up to the base of the horns. If there is coarse dorsal hair along the backbone and little cashmere, the second blow can be made slightly down from the backbone.

Blows 3 - 7 continue down the goat parallel to the second blow. Each begins at the opening blow and ends on the neck. Blow 8 begins low on the back leg, travels up a little and then back down onto the side of the belly. A couple of short blows (9 and 10) go down and back up the front leg to complete the first side of the goat.

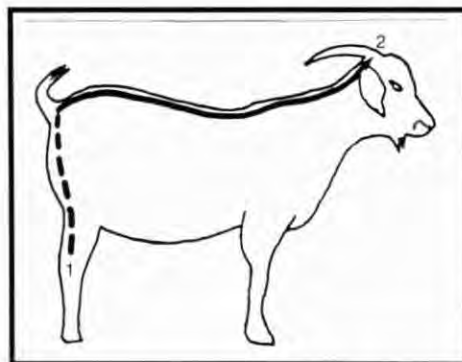
Side 2 (the left side): For blows 1 - 4, the shearer straddles the goat and leans over the left side. Blow 1 begins at the base of the horns in the area previously shorn from side one and goes down behind the ears and cheek, under the neck, to the top of the throat. Blows 2 - 4 go from the top of the neck, down the neck, down the side and down the front leg. For the final blows, the shearer moves to the right side of the goat, grabs the goat's tail (gently) with the left hand and presses on the left side of the goat with a knee or leg. Blow 5 is a long blow beginning at the top of the shoulder and ends at the base of the tail running next to blow 2 on the first side. It ends at the tail. Blow 6 runs from the shoulder towards the tail next to the previous blow. Near the base of the tail, the blow takes a turn and travels down the outside of the rear leg to end near the hock. Blows 7 - 9 run from the shoulder to the rear leg and end at the previous blows. They begin and

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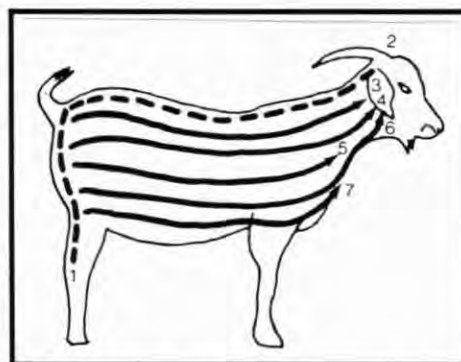
Australian Go-Down Method Side 1—The Right Side



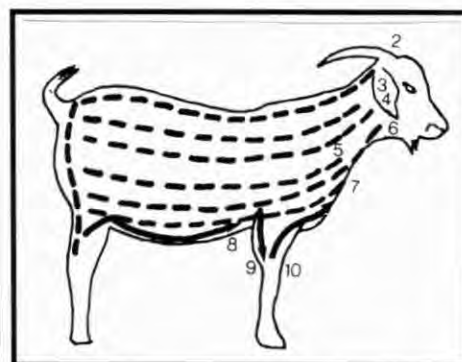
1. The opening blow—down the neck.



2. From the base of the tail to the base of the horns.

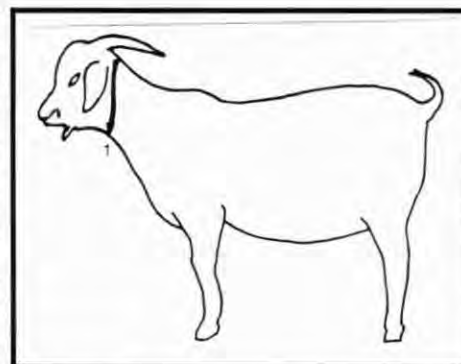


3 - 7. Parallel blows down the goat.

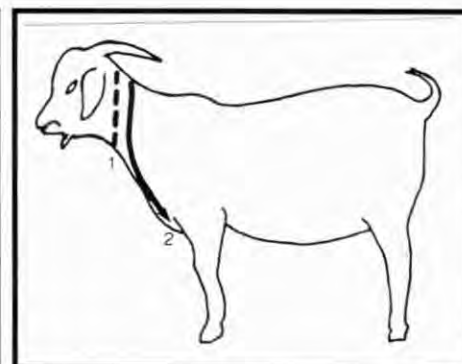


8. From low on the back leg, up a little and then across the side of the belly.
9 - 10. Finishing up the front leg.

Side 2—The Left Side



1. First blow on second side begins in shorn area from side one and goes down the neck.



2. Next to blow 1, down the neck.

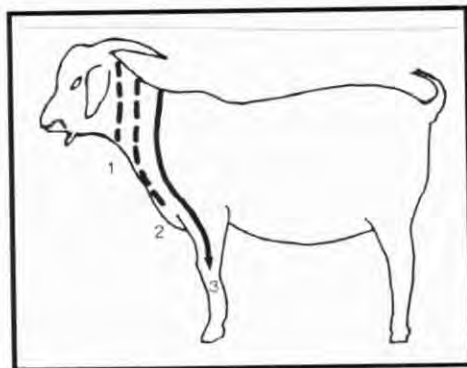
end in a shorn area. Blow 10 is the final one and starts at the rear of the front leg, runs along the side of the belly, down the outside of the flank and completes the outside front of the rear leg.

This shearing method is described and illustrated for right-handed shearers. Lefties will need to start on the opposite side of the goat and use blows that are a mirror image of the ones illustrated. This sounds difficult to us right-handers, but I'm sure you lefties are used to translating stuff like this.

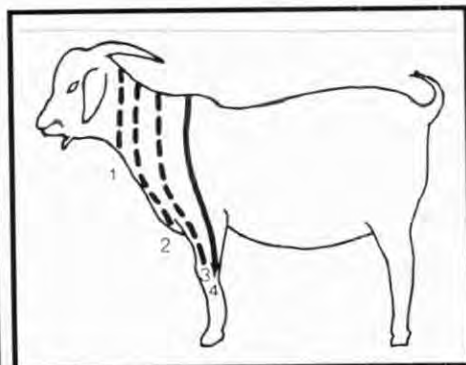
The shearing operator may want to wear a mask which covers the nose and mouth during shearing as there will be small bits of fleece everywhere. You probably won't want to chew gum while shearing.

For all blows, care must be taken to ensure that loose skin and tendons are not cut. Cutting tendons or arteries can be a crippling or fatal mistake. Each blow should be designed to keep the shear cutting its maximum capacity of fiber with each stroke. Fleece cut should be gathered carefully, weighed and placed in an individual bag or a container with similar fleeces if you are collecting for your own "lines" of cashmere. You would have graded the animal's fleece and made your notes on it and the goat prior to starting up the shears. After shearing, you can complete any other maintenance the goat requires, such as trimming feet, worming or vaccination.

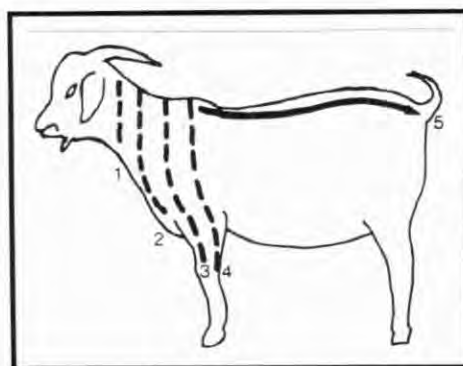
More of Side 2—The Left Side



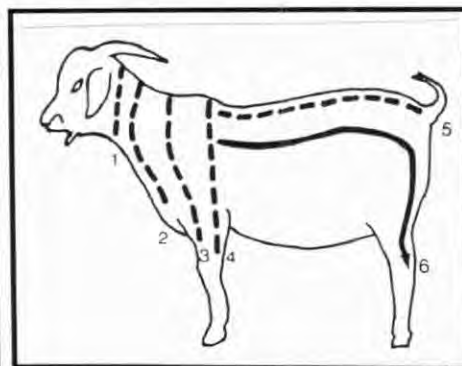
3. Down the neck, down the side and down the front leg.



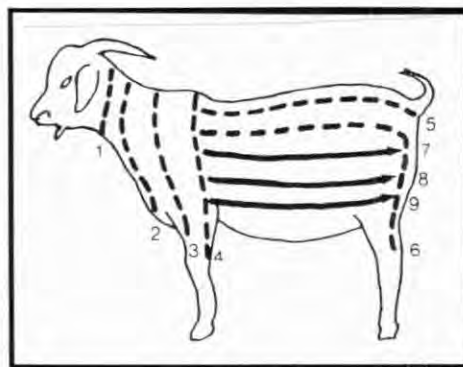
4. One slice over from blow 3.



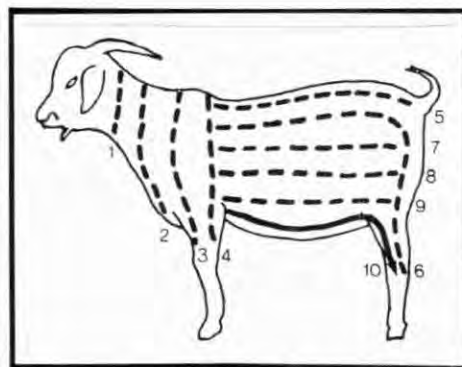
5. A long one—from top of shoulder to base of tail.



6. From the shoulder to the base of the tail and then turns down to travel down the outside of the rear leg.



7 - 9. These go across the side from the shoulder to rear leg.



10. Finishes up the side. Starts at rear of front leg, across belly, down outside of flank and rear leg. That's it. Put down the shears.

Shearing Goats

Continued from previous page

The modified go-down technique, used by Terry Sim and other professionals, is simpler as blows on both sides of the goat are the same. However, you must shear the left side of the goat with your left hand, which is difficult at first. The blows on the hips and neck of the goat go up instead of down, which should make it more difficult to cut a tendon. For details of this method, see Terry's article beginning on page 21.

If you are a beginning shearer, after you finish shearing you will have to decide whether to clean up the goat, or just go on to the next one. "Cleaning up the goat" means going back over the goat to neaten them up by removing any of those missed hunks of fleece containing second cuts. These scraps of fleece removed are trash and must not be included in the bag with the animal's good fleece. The first year we sheared, we carefully neatened all goats, preferring to take the extra time to save us and the goat further

embarrassment. The second year, we left them as they were when we finished removing the saleable fleece. We figured any bit of waste fleece remaining was better left on the goat for warmth and modesty rather than laying on the ground as material for bird's nests. Some of them had a "punk" look to them which seemed to be fashionable in the pasture.

A couple of last bits of advice from Australia: It is advisable to put weld mesh over the louvered windows in your shearing shed as the occasional goat recently in from the bush may try and go bush again. Also, you will need a few steel bins to hold the cashmere fleeces from the different lines. You will first fill the bins and then, when the bins are full, fill up your bales. It will take 300 or more fleeces to fill a bale. Of course, this only applies to you really big boys and you guys aren't even going to be reading this.

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Shearing a goat is relatively easy, even for a beginner, especially if you are not worried about perfection at first.

Getting Ready for the Shearer

By Terry Sim

OK, so you can't shear, you don't want to shear and nothing we can say will convince you that you can do this...here are Terry's instructions for getting ready for someone else to shear.

Minimum requirements to ensure your cashmere goat shearing goes ahead smoothly without interruption by weather, inadequate facilities, or injury to shearer, owner or goat include:

1. DRY GOATS UNDER COVER

This will mean penning goats in a barn without access to an outside pen at least the night before the shearer arrives, regardless of the weather forecast. Cashmere cannot be fairly graded or shorn wet. It also cannot be bagged wet as it will rot and disintegrate. The shearer may refuse to shear wet goats. Don't trust the goats to stay out of the rain. Every year valuable time and expense is wasted because goats were wet when the shearer/classer arrived.

2. CLEAN COVERED SHEARING AREA

The shearing spot will ideally be off the ground in a barn on a wooden floor, and well protected from the wind and rain. This can be a tack shed, garage, or storage shed 10' X 10' in dimensions or more. It should be well lit and ventilated with at least one 110 volt outlet, or an extension lead hooked up to an alternative power source. Have it swept clean before the big day. If your barn has a dirt floor, spray this down to control dust.

3. SMALL CATCHING AREA

You will ideally have a small catching area in a barn or shed, within a 20' of the shearing area, goat proof, and the smaller the better for ease of catching. Don't expect to give the shearer a crook to catch the goat in a large outside pen. Organize to be able to get your goats from pastures to the shearing area and hold them there. Strangers make goats wary and harder to pen.

4. HEALTH TREATMENTS

Have all vaccinations, drenches, tagging and foot trimming done before the shearer/classer arrives. These operations slow up the shearing/classing and can lead to contamination of the fleece. Or at least have all the equipment ready the night before.

5. EQUIPMENT NEEDED

If you want to learn how to shear have your own adjustable speed clipper ready with correctly sharpened special 20 or 22 tooth blades and lubricant oil. These can be obtained from ranch supply catalogues or for expert advice call Charlie Swaim of Oster Professional Products on (515) 722-3721.

You will need tags, a tag pen, a clipboard and pad, hoof trimmers, straw broom, plastic fleece bags (small kitchen bags for single fleeces and large garbage bags for bulk fleece), a magic marker, rubber bands to tie bags, fleece weighing scales and

a powerboard or double adapter. If you are putting coats on your shorn goats have these ready too.

6. FREE LABOR

Have enough friends or helpers that are willing to work and learn how to catch goats, take them away, do health treatments, record classer comments, and bag the fleece. Initially delegate one job to each person or the shearer/classer will do it for you. If the goats are being classed there must be one person free to record comments only.

New Online Ordering for Caprine Supply!

Caprine Supply, the largest goat supply company in the world, has announced the introduction of their new Caprine Supply Online Catalog at

www.caprinesupply.com

Beginning in January, 2000, customers will be able to browse through the entire Caprine Supply catalog online. The site will feature full descriptions and pictures of over 750 products, plus all their new products and articles helpful to both novices and experienced goatkeepers alike. Their secure server means no problems with privacy or credit card ordering.

Online ordering allows you to place orders 24 hours a day, and this means better, faster, more efficient service.

Caprine Supply says that their catalog shopping site should be fully operational by the time you get your 2000 catalog in the mail. However, with all new technology, there are bound to be glitches, so if you visit their site and the shopping site is not yet up and running, they urge you to try again in a week or so. And if you run into a problem ordering online, please be patient.

Cashmere Goat Shearing Cashmere America-Style!

By Terry Sim

Check List: Before you start shearing cashmere goats your minimum requirements will be:

A clean area free of potential fleece contaminants, ideally in a barn protected from the wind and rain. A set of professionally sharpened goat shearing blades, correctly set up, ideally on an adjustable speed clipper. A solid floor or wall-mounted headstall that covers the goat's eyes and head comfortably without pressure on the nose or throat. Oil for the clipper, a bag for the fleece and water for the shearer.

Before you start, check each goat for wounds, wattles, vaccination point or cheese gland boils, and sticks or wire in the fleece. Refer to the Cashmere America Clip Preparation Notes for more information on general pre-shearing preparation.

Check the goat is secure, your blades are sharp, set correctly and well-oiled. Position yourself on the goat's near (left) side with your left knee in front of its hind leg. Grasp the goat's tail with your left hand or grasp its rump to hold it steady against your left knee.

Step 1

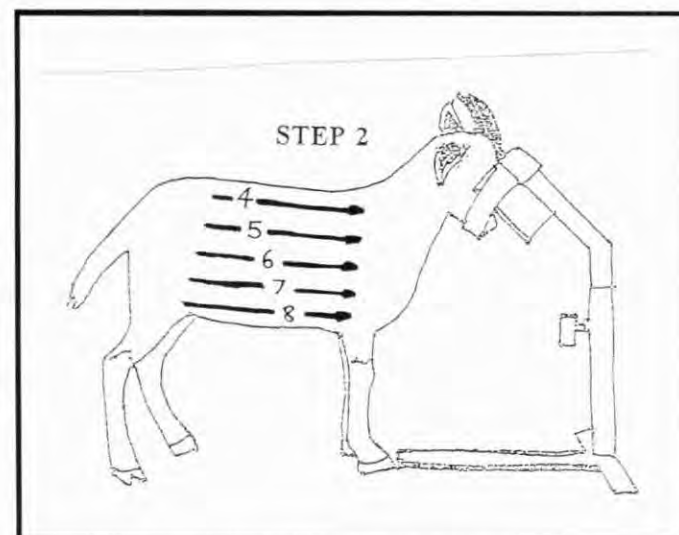
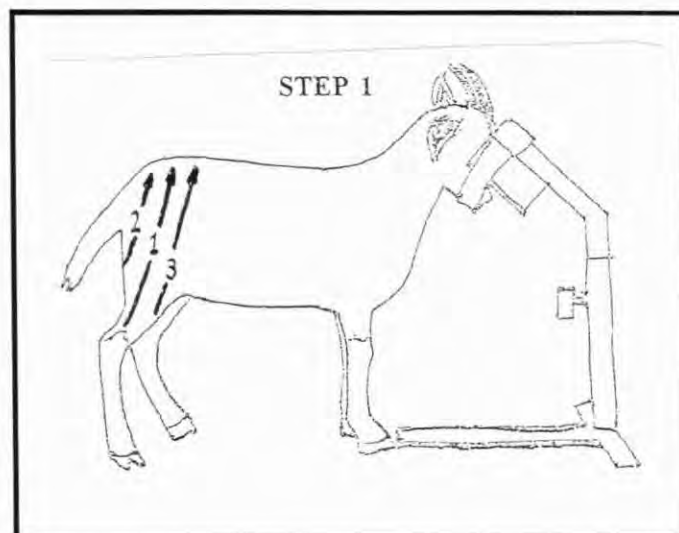
Start the first blow or stroke at the hock with the bottom of the comb flat against the outside of the goat's off or right hind leg (1). Continue this blow up the leg to the base of the tail. Clip any fiber left at the back of the rump by either twisting your blades slightly clockwise to follow the rump contour as you shear up AFTER the achilles tendon goes into the leg muscle, or make another short blow above the tendon to the tail (2). Do not run your blade over the achilles tendon or shear down the back leg. Clear the back leg fiber with one more blows up to the backline (3). Look for protruding teats near the back legs on lactating or pregnant does.

Step 2

Using your left hand to steady the goat, make your next blow from the tail along the backline to the base of the neck (4). Shear up the neck now only if the goat is steady and this is easily done. Continue with successive blows below this up to the goat's shoulder (5,6,7,8). Be careful to clip close over the stomach



Terry Sim (left) and Wes Ackley shear a goat.
(Photograph by Marilyn Ackley)



Continued on next page

Shearing with Terry

Continued from previous page

cavity of poor goats and bevel the clippers according to the body surface angle. Always shear across the goat, never down. Concentrate on pressing the blades' front edge slightly angled (about 10%) into the body surface for a clean cut, but don't force or push hard. Use your left hand to stretch loose skin and clear shorn fiber in front of your clipper. Be careful of loose skin and connective tissue where skin attaches the back leg to the belly, and the front leg to the chest. Any belly fiber can be clipped by slightly lifting the back leg out and holding your hand on any teats. Watch out for the pizzle on a wether or buck.

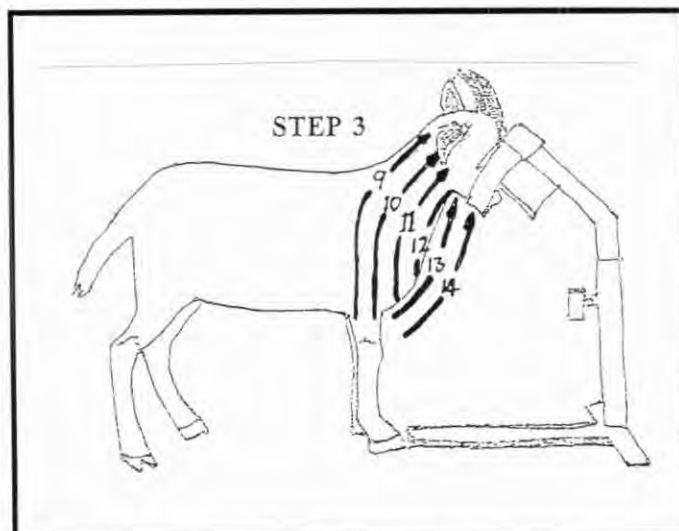
Step 3

Now step forward astride the goat making a blow up the front leg over the shoulder to the wither (9). Be careful of loose skin attaching the front leg to the chest. Progressively shear the shoulder, neck and chest fiber with upward blows (10, 11, 12, 13) finishing at the front of the goat with half the brisket and front of the neck shorn (14). You can shear the neck separately with shorter blows if this is easier. Put your left hand over any wattles or the ears to avoid cutting them. While astride the goat you can keep the goat still by grasping it between your legs in front of its hips and straightening your legs or leaning back.

Step 4 (The Second Side)

No diagram is needed for the second side. You repeat what you have just done on the goat's right or off side, only this time use the clipper in your left hand to shear the near or left side. Visualize the goat broken down into smaller sections with shorter blows if this makes it easier until your left arm gains strength. Take a break, turn the machine off, and plan your next move.

Most beginners express disbelief that they could possibly ever shear with both hands. It is possible and done readily with persistence, patience, and concentration, even by those that are not naturally ambidextrous. If your aim is to shear your goat as efficiently as possible with minimal hardship and injury, while maximizing fiber quality and length by shearing against the grain or lay of the fiber, then you must learn to use your left hand and only shear up and across the goat's body. It will initially be much slower than shearing with your right hand, but it is still the preferred option to shearing with your right hand on the goat's left or near side.

Good Luck!**10 Golden (Shearing) Rules***By Terry Sim*

1. Always shear across or up the goat's body, never down, to minimize injury to the goat.
2. Make your blows or strokes against the grain or lay of the fiber (i.e. up and across), not with it, to maximize shorn down length.
3. Go slow, don't hurry. A clean job with no injuries or second cuts is more important than a quick job. Shear slower and more carefully if a goat is poor and bony.
4. Using the whole width of the blade is more efficient and diminishes second cuts. The number of strokes or blows indicated are only a guide. You should use less blows as your confidence increases.
5. Don't pull your goat's tail unnecessarily, it hurts! Most will stand quietly in a good comfortable headstall. Never have pressure on the goat's nose or throat to restrain it.
6. Keep your blades sharp, well oiled and don't let them get hot. You could burn the skin off the goat and tear the fiber.
7. Keeping the blades in the fleece keeps them cool and the goat happy.
8. Never bevel out of the fleece cutting the fiber staple in half. Always enter or leave the fleece at skin level to minimize second cuts.
9. Don't pare hooves in the headstall before shearing the goat. The hoof pieces will contaminate the fleece.
10. Always keep a firm grip on your shearing handpiece and instruct fleece or goat handlers to keep clear. Turn the machine off first before settling an unruly goat.

Goat Gala Cashmere Show Winners

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

November 7, 1999

Judge: Coni Ross, Austin, TX

Milk Tooth Doe Kids

- 1 GSF Khalua, Pat Fuhr, Onoway, AB
- 2 GSF Deidre, Fuhr
- 3 Nebraska #100, Jackie Toma/Bob Dushenski, Willingdon, AB

Yearling Does

- 1 GSF Danse, Fuhr
- 2 GSF Chance, Fuhr
- 3 SH Midnight, Glennis Tober, Stony Plain, AB

Two Year Old Does

- 1 SMR Brio, Yvonne Zweede-Tucker, Choteau, MT
- 2 GSF Tranquility, Fuhr
- 3 SMR Khaya, Zweede-Tucker

Adult Does, born in 95 & 96

- 1 GSF Yamica, Fuhr
- 2 GSF Aretha, Myrna Coombs, Onoway, AB
- 3 GSF Maple Bug, Fuhr

Aged Does

- 1 SMR Ahsley Creek, Zweede-Tucker
- 2 Cashco Daisy, Fuhr
- 3 GSF Geisha, Fuhr

Milk Tooth Buck Kids

- 1 RSC Beauregard, Diane Thompson, Quesnel, BC
- 2 GSF Omega, Fuhr
- 3 GSF Duncan, Fuhr

Yearling Bucks

- 1 SMR Nighthawk, Zweede-Tucker
- 2 SMR BBR Texas Ranger, Zweede-Tucker
- 3 GSF Mystic, Thompson

Adult & Aged Bucks

- 1 SMR Midnight Magic, Coombs
- 2 SMR Panzer, Toma/Dushenski
- 3 SMR Cashco's Two Dot, Zweede-Tucker

Grand Champion Doe: SMR Brio, Zweede-Tucker

Reserve Grand Champion Doe: GSF Yamica, Fuhr

Grand Champion Buck: SMR Midnight Magic, Coombs

Reserve Grand Champion Buck: SMR Nighthawk, Zweede-Tucker

Get of Sire

- 1 Smoke Ridge Cashmere, Zweede-Tucker
- 2 Giant Stride Farm, Fuhr
- 3 Smoke Ridge Cashmere, Zweede-Tucker

Progeny of Dam

- 1 Smoke Ridge Cashmere, Zweede-Tucker
- 2 Giant Stride Farm, Fuhr

Breeder's Herd

- 1 Llone Pine Farm, Coombs
- 2 Giant Stride Farm, Fuhr

Premier Breeder: Giant Stride Farm, Fuhr

Herdsmen Award: Giant Stride Farm, Fuhr



Yvonne Zweede-Tucker and Grand Champion Doe, SMR Brio.



Pat Fuhr and Reserve Champion Doe, GSF Yamica.



Myrna Coombs and Grand Champion Buck, SMR Midnight Magic.

Canadian Goat Gala Photographs

September 6 & 7, 1999



Pat Fuhr attempts to get Stider to walk the plank. (She failed and walked it herself.) I'd always thought that goat obstacle courses were a bit silly. However, during the event, crowds packed the bleachers as well as around the ring.



A buck attempts to socialize with a cashmere doe in heat in the next pen. He said he just wanted to talk.



This is one way to move your goat to the show ring, saves dragging them. No, it wasn't a cashmere; it was a Boer.

Page 24, January 2000

Those Canadian Show People and Their Goat Trailers

At the Edmonton show, I noticed that goat owners take their goats' transportation seriously. I'm not sure why they don't just use beat up pickups with stock racks or the family Suburban like normal people, but at this show, goats arrived in luxury. Perhaps they are more successful goat producers and can afford better equipment, or feel compelled to have their goats ride in style when attending a goat event attached to a world class rodeo/stock show or it is just because they have more goats to transport. Whatever the reasons, most had major trailers and they were all able to back them up successfully into any tiny, obscure spot even if people were watching which always impresses the heck out of me.



Yvonne-Zweede Tucker's trailer license reads "Chevon." It had several compartments and room to spare.



Gerry Fuhr's immense orange trailer. Yvonne called it the Great Pumpkin.



This trailer is my personal favorite—belongs to Dan Workman. He built it. Goats ride in the bottom with room for supplies or another layer of goats on the top.

Calendar of Events

Association Contacts

January 13, 2000

Cashmere Goat Show,
National Western Stock Show & Rodeo, 4655 Humboldt St, Denver, Colorado, 80216-2818, phone 303-297-1166, Website for detailed calendar of events: <http://www.nationalwestern.com>
Entry deadline December 15, 1999, entry fee \$20/goat, stalls provided. CaPrA sanctioned show held under the rules, bylaws and point system approved by CaPrA.

January 14 - 16, 2000

Fiber Arts 2000, exhibit and sale at Sutter Creek Auditorium, Sutter Creek. Info: Sutter Creek Business & Professional Assoc, PO Box 1234, Sutter Creek, CA 95686, phone 800-400-0305.

January 15, 2000

Pygora Goat Show & Fiber Frenzy (6th annual)
Fiber, fleeces, vendors, goat show, demonstrations, free admission, 10 AM to 4 PM, Washington County Fairgrounds, The Armory Building, Hillsboro, Oregon.

Info: Lisa Roskopf, 503-985-3331, email: lisa@hmrpygoras.com

January 21 - 22, 2000

Roe Day Celebration of Spinners, Sam Houston Memorial Museum, Huntsville, TX. Info: Tamara Chasteen, 175 Scott Rd., Huntsville, TX 77320

March 23 - 26, 2000

Fibers Through Time, state conference, Central Arizona College, Coolidge. Info: Lynn Silberschlag, 6481 Avenida de Posada, Tucson, AZ 85718, phone 520-299-1418, email: ruslyn@aol.com

May 15 - 20, 2000

Conference internationale sur les caprins (7th International Conference on Goats), Tours, France. Sponsored by the International Goat Association. Official working languages of the Conference: French and English.

Diversified scientific program of worldwide interest including round tables, conventions on special topics, technical visits and tourist excursions. Registration deadline January 31, 2000. Info: IGA, 1015 Louisiana St., Little Rock, AR 72202.

June 22 - 25, 2000

Convergence 2000, biennial conference of Hand-

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UTAH

KANARRA KASHMERE

Ron and Jan Gerrity
PO Box 420186
Kanarraville, UT 84742
435-559-9472
fax: 702-242-9436
email:

CenturyCedup@Msnpage

Breeders Directory

Continued from previous page

VIRGINIA

FOGGY BOTTOM FARM

Marilee and John Williamson
990 Old Hollow Rd.
Buchanan, VA 24066
540-254-1628
email: mhwabc@juno.com

RANEY DAY KIDS

Lucy Raney
3627 Va. Ave.
Goshen, VA 24439
540-997-1121
Fax: 540-997-1124
email: rainhart@intelos.net

STONEY CREST FARM

Anne and Roy Repaske
570 Paddy's Cove Lane
Star Tannery, VA 22654
Phone/fax: 540-436-3546
email: cashmere@shentel.net

WASHINGTON

BREEZY MEADOW CASHMERE FARM

Douglas and Roberta Maier
810 Van Wyck Rd.
Bellingham, WA 98226
360-733-6742
email:
fibergoat@earthlink.net

BROOKFIELD FARM

Ian Balsillie/Karen Bean
PO Box 443
Maple Falls, WA 98266
360-599-1469 or
360-715-1604

KELLERS KRITTERS

Kay Keller
11030 Grandview Rd.
Arlington, WA 98223
360-435-6123

LIBERTY FARM (NLF)

Cliff and Mickey Nielsen
5252 Hwy 12
Yakima, WA 98908
509-965-3708
email: Cnielnlf@aol.com

RAINFLOWER FARM

Sue Lasswell
37003 Mann Rd.
Sultan, WA 98294
360-793-9590
email:
Rainflower@compuserve.com

STILL WATERS

CASHMERE

Moon and Diana Mullins
PO Box 1265
Twisp, WA 98856
509-997-2204/509-429-0778
email:
dmullins@methow.com

WALLFLOWER FARM

Dan and Marti Wall
16663 Beaver Marsh Road
Mt. Vernon, WA 98273
360-424-7935
Fax: 360-428-4946
email: cashmere@sos.net

WINDRIDGE FARM

Becki and Jim Belcher
11810 272nd St. E.
Graham, WA 98338
360-893-7893



Nicole Brainard, Marcola, Oregon, models the perfect Christmas gift—a cashmere lace shawl. Unfortunately, she had to give it back to Grandma after the modeling session. You can crochet one just like this from the simple pattern in the Fall 1998 *Spinoff* magazine, page 76. The pattern illustrates a five foot square shawl made from spun Jacob fleece, but you can just crochet until you run out of cashmere or patience and the scarf will be lovely. Use finely spun singles of cashmere.

Page 28, January 2000

Internet listing of these breeders and a link to their homepages, if they have one, can be found on the net at:

<http://www.teleport.com/~goatknol/breeders.htm>



“Thank goodness the holidays are over!”

Spanish Town Gives Up Goat Toss (Maybe)

The town of Manganeses de la Polvorosa, located in northwest Spain has an old tradition—they toss a goat off a 50 foot bell tower. Townspeople below catch it in a tarp. The event is scheduled during the annual festival of St. Vincent and is scheduled for January 23rd this year. The practice originated, according to local legend, many years ago when a goat belonging to a local priest accidentally fell from the bell tower. Villagers below saw the accident and saved the lucky goat by catching it in a blanket. Since that time, the goat tossing event has been celebrated annually to begin the festival which honors the town's patron saint, St. Vincent.

In 1992, the local governor banned the goat toss due to protests. Villagers modified the event that year by lowering a goat with ropes rather than tossing it, but it just wasn't the same. In subsequent years, villagers ignored the ban and went back to just tossing the goat off the tower.

Protests by animal rights activists in recent years have escalated. Last year, the town was fined \$150 by the regional government for tossing the goat after the National Association of Animal Welfare and Protection filed a complaint.

This year's plans are unclear. The councilors of Manganeses say that they will not take responsibility for the behaviors of the participants in the spectacle. Sounds like the goat toss is still on.



"A goat what!?"



Recipe!

Roast Chevon— Greek Style

From the Alberta Goat
Breeders Association

2 legs of kid (about 6 lb.)
2 tsp. oregano leaves
2 cloves garlic
1/2 cup olive oil
1/4 tsp. salt
Juice of one lemon
1/2 tsp. ground black pepper

Rub meat with garlic (cut cloves in half lengthwise) and rub until garlic starts to break apart. Poke bits into creases of meat.

Combine salt, pepper and oregano and rub all over meat. Place legs in a roasting pan and pour combined oil and lemon juice over them.

Roast, covered in 325 degree F oven for 2 to 2-1/2 hours, then remove cover, baste meat with pan juices and roast for another 1/2 to 1 hour until meat is nicely browned. Baste once or twice during this period.



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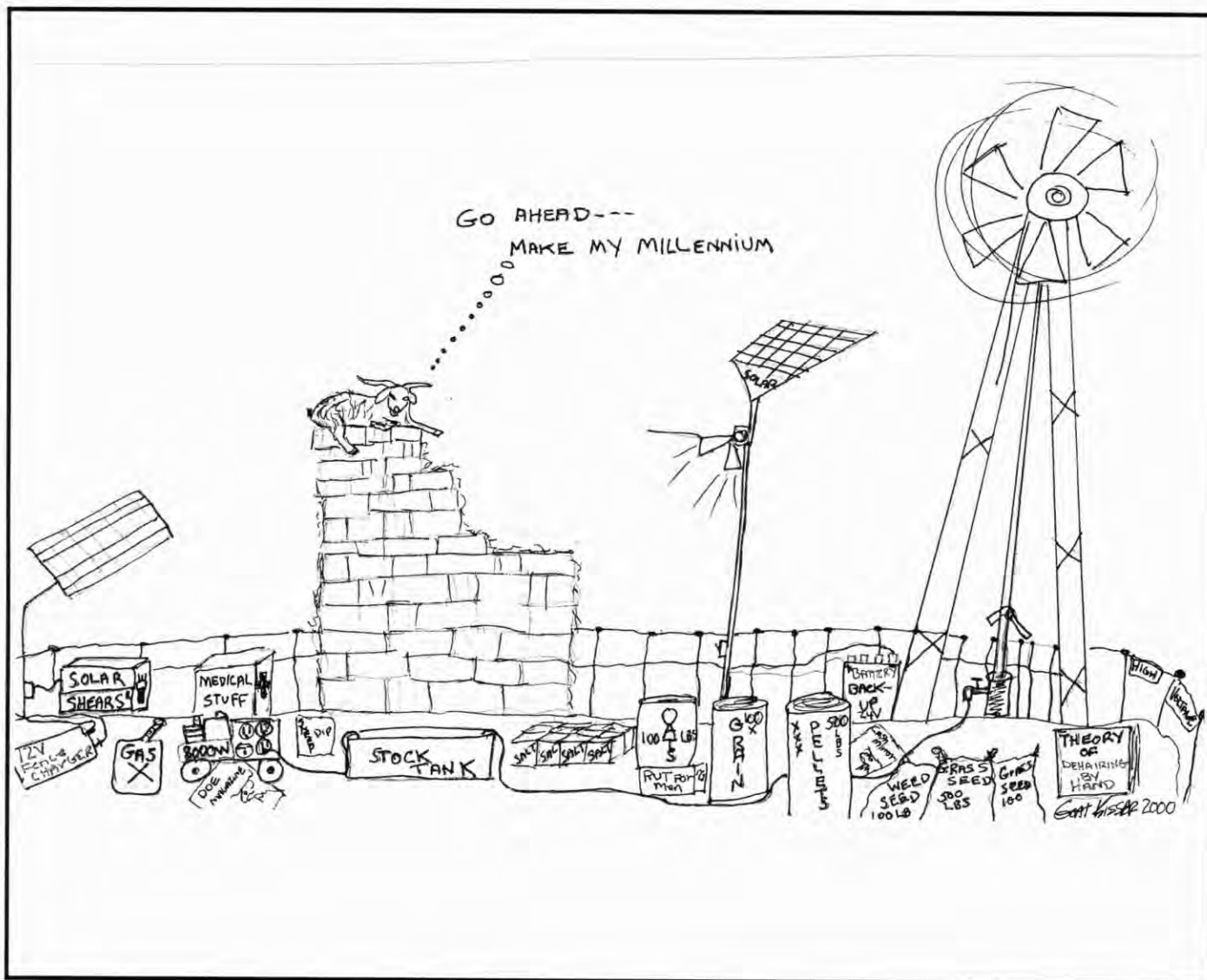
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Notable Quotes

"There is more to life than increasing its speed."

...Mahatma Gandhi

"Cultivate a virtue we all need more of in this day and age, one that is indispensable if you want to raise animals—patience. Speak a little more quietly, don't be in such a hurry; plan in advance..."

...Michele Lowe

"Small gray cats can make good coyote bait."

...Paul Johnson

"I'm considering getting rid of my husband—the cat is allergic."

The Deadlines:

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