CASHMERE MIRROR

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The monthly magazine devoted to cashmere goats and their fiber

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C A S H M I R R O R

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Just the Facts

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E-Mail:
editor@cashmirror.com
Internet:
http://www.cashmirror.com

Publisher and Ace Reporter:
Paul Johnson
paul@cashmirror.com
Editor: Linda Fox

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The *CashMirror* welcomes contributions of articles and photographs and even ideas for our pursuit. Submissions may be made by mail, fax or e-mail.

No responsibility will be taken for material while in transit or in this office, although we will certainly be real careful.

Cover photo:
Lisa Vailes, Silver Branch Farm, Staunton, Virginia
"Double take"

Kid: "Have you seen the Easter Bunny?"

Chicken: "Of course not—April is over!"

Photograph by Marilyn Ackley

"Are you absolutely sure these are all mine?!"

(They weren't.)

April Showers Bring...No New CashMirror!!!

What's the Deal? Where's the April issue?

In order to reclaim (partial) sanity and continue to maintain our overfull schedule, we're skipping April and moving on to May—which is certainly a good idea as it's been May for some time now...

All subscriptions and Breeders' Directory listings will be extended for an additional month so that you will all receive your full measure of 12 issues. You breeders actually get an especially good deal as your internet listing will be around for 13 months, instead of the usual 12.

May has been a busy, exciting month for cashmere folk with many of us seeing the arrival of the last of the spring kids. Also, we just returned from an exciting NWCA event in Stanwood Washington. They did it all—fleece competition, goat show and a well-attended workshop on fleece classing. And of course there was the usual exchange of good goat stories and reacquainting with goat friends from afar.

We feel like spring has arrived and even though we grumbled about all that rain for the past several months, we see the payoff now in lush green grass, aka free goat food.

We're looking forward to the summer and catching up on things somewhat—the magazine, the fences, the hooves—your list probably looks much like ours! During the summer we can catch our breath, while the goats seem to thrive left to mostly their own devices. They pick and choose among a lush choice of edibles and grow fat and shiny with little effort on our part. Summer is too early (for us) to worry about breeding decisions or culling decisions—those can wait until fall.

For the summer, we'll just be able to relax, lay back in our hammocks with a good book, throw a little food to the dogs from time to time and periodically refill the goats' water tubs after the springs and winter streams dry up. No chores, no worries. Whatever will we do with all that extra time?

Reflections

by Linda Fox

Training the Border Collie

We bought a Border Collie early in 1998. Our reasons for doing this are now somewhat vague. I don't remember if we had delusions of participating in herding dog trials or were convinced we actually needed her for handling our small herd of goats and sheep. Perhaps we were just more "Babe" movie fans who jumped off the deep end. We should have bought little singing mice instead of a dog, but hindsight, like always, is wonderful.

Anyway, we ended up with Jill, a promising young pup with a pedigree full of dog ancestors from England and Wales, with impressive one-syllable names like Peg and Nell and Patch and even Fly. Jill was a fun puppy, as fun as most puppies are when they get over the chewing and the carsickness and the other cute things they do early on.

We knew there was no rush to do anything about training except basic obedience, because the real herding dog stuff comes later, when they're older. We found our early, she has great natural instincts. She readily "herds" anything in sight—goats, sheep, cats, chickens, whatever. If there's more than one of them, she thinks they should be grouped up together and she's just the dog to facilitate this. I suppose this is good.

Unfortunately, when she is on a herding mission, she pays absolutely no attention to our pleas/screams to desist. Also, we have no control where she chooses to place the herded victims. She's never harmed any of the herdees (except for that one batch of chickens), but we don't like unnecessary stress on our animals. So, we try to control her herding; we built a dog run for her to live in when we're not around and we don't let her in with the other animals unless we have her on a leash.

She's mostly under control, except for her constant herding of the chickens. The chickens are penned, so she's not hurting anything, except their peace of mind. I'm not sure why I feel the need to ease the stress of a handful of chickens, but I do. Our few chickens live in a nicely-appointed chicken house built on stilts and they have access to a 8' X 16' fenced yard that protects them from hawks, raccoons and herding dogs.

Jill has always herded the chickens. There is a well-worn path surrounding the chicken yard to prove this. In the absence of anything else herdable, Jill will circle the chickens, pausing only to crouch and watch them waiting for them to move. Probably the chickens are totally numbed out to the whole process after years of herding, but with a chicken, it's very hard to tell if they are experiencing stress or not. We had pretty much given up trying to get her to stop herding chickens until this spring, when Jill took up a new sport—digging for chickens! No longer content with mere herding, she decided to spend time digging her way into the chicken yard, which made those numbed-out chickens very nervous.

For the first few days, I scolded Jill as I shoveled replacement dirt into her new holes. When this had no effect, I used rocks from the driveway to fill the holes. Rocks were no obstacle

Jill—She's a lean, mean, chicken-killing machine.**

for her. She didn't even change her digging location. Paul brought in bigger rocks. I had trouble moving them into the holes, but Jill was able to move these aside as well.

It was looking like dirt and rocks were not going to solve the problem. I decided to purchase an electrified perimeter system—those devices where a buried wire activates a shocking collar on a dog whenever the dog crosses the field. I could circle the chicken house with the field. I discussed this option with a professional dog trainer. She said that this seemed a bit severe (and expensive) when the only real problem was that we had not adequately trained the dog. I hate it when people point out the obvious!

I had one final idea to try before I resorted to the obvious solution. We had purchased small solar-powered lights for our back door this winter—the little plastic, cheap kind that you stick in the ground. We had problems with Jill uprooting them and packing them off. Paul's ingenious solution was to coat them with a small amount of hot sauce. Jill never touched them again and even though the hot sauce is long gone, she doesn't move the lights.

I poured a bottle of Scorned Woman hot sauce on the area where Jill had been digging. I used other bottles of hot sauce and chile powder to sprinkle around the rest of the chicken house perimeter.

That was two months ago and Jill has not dug around the chicken house since then. However, she has not given up herding the chickens. Hopefully they have adapted to this. I know I certainly have.

*** Well, actually she's not that thin, not mean at all and only kills chickens occaisionally, but you have to admit it was a great caption!*

Tooey's Place

This has been one wild winter for us on the east coast, and as I'm in the wooded mountains near West Virginia, the melting is much slower and accumulations are a few inches more than surrounding areas.

In February, when these shots were taken, the snow had accumulated enough to where it was literally to my waist when I tried to walk out to feed the goats, and I still don't really know what exactly about the weather caused this, but for some reason snow that high put Abbey (the leader) in 'unfriendly overdrive' and she was kicking around Tooey like never before. Not being much of a goat psychologist I wasn't sure what to do and after several attempts to solve the problem various ways, I got so worried about her one night I decided I'd rest easier if I brought her inside.

So I put her in the tub with a bunch of straw and hay, and closed the door to give her privacy (from the dogs) and she was so cold and hungry that after a nice munch, she went to sleep. Next morning early I bolted out of bed from a shriek that nearly gave me heart trouble, and raced to the bathroom. Tooey had woken up, hopped out of the tub, and had her front hooves propped on the bathroom vanity and had freaked herself out by seeing her reflection in the mirror. This started the dogs barking, so while I ran to get them quiet and luckily thought to grab the camera, on my return noticed she'd jumped ON the vanity and that's how this little insane photo op came to be! Wish they were clearer shots, but only had a few secs before I really needed to get her back out to the pen -- a little chaos can be fun, but that was enough for all of us!

Sorry for the short novel—but my office pals are just shy of having me committed to the looney bin when I told them I ended this evil winter with one of my goats spending the night in my bathroom, so I've learned to try and justify myself!!!

Annie Sharman
Sharpsburg, Maryland

Annie's dogs trying to make their way through deep snow. That's a car peeking out on the left.

"Mirror mirror on the wall...
...where the heck am I?"

Facts and Opinions

USDA Small Farm Digest Fall/Winter 2002/2003

Average age of a farmer today: 55. In the next 10 years, as these "old farmers" retire, there will be massive land areas for sale for aspiring small farmers.

Trend in agriculture: The disappearing middle—agriculture is trending toward two opposites: large farms and small farms. Midsize farms are being squeezed our due to economics and technology. Midsize farmers are too large to have time to work both in town and on the farm, and too small to be competitive in the commodities markets of corn, wheat and soybeans. (Small farms are defined as those less than 180 acres and grossing less than $50,000 per year—or $250,000 per year, depending on whose definition you use.)

Sustainability: Large scale agriculture is generally not sustainable, as evidenced by recurring farm crisis situations.

Where's the profits? For a large farm, profit is in processing and marketing, not in production.

Where the small equipment? American farm equipment is mostly geared to bigger production units, so we do not see small-scale farm equipment being made in the U.S. Small scale equipment is available from overseas manufacturers.

Farming Success: Some assume that you need large acreage and big machinery to guarantee farm success. Not! A farm's profitability comes from the farmer's management and marketing abilities.

Maraz (cashmere) goats, Erbil, Iraq
Photograph by Ali Hussein Hamad Khoshnaw

Maybe It's More Than Just a Bad Hair Day!

Did you ever wonder if the hairstyles on your goats might be linked to their personalities? Of course you haven't—you do have a life after all—but maybe you should! Perhaps the hair on that new kid might prove to be an early indication of the goat's future behavior and enable a culling decision even before the cashmere begins to grow.

Recent research into hair patterns on bulls indicates that hair patterns may indicate more than just the animal's keen fashion sense. Certain hair patterns may have a direct link to the animal's attitude.

The research conducted by Temple Grandin at the Colorado State University looked at behavior of 1,500 bulls in auction rings in Texas and Colorado and noted the position of the "facial hair whorl" on the bull. Some had the whorls higher on their foreheads than others. Some (about 10%) were completely whorless. The research team found that the position of the facial whorls had a link to the bulls' attitudes.

Researchers found that cattle with whorls absent or carried high on their foreheads were more likely to become agitated in the auction ring. Those will low whorls were more likely to keep their cool.

Researchers noted that changing an animal's hairstyle is unlikely to change their behavior. Apparently the hair whorls form from the same layer of cells in the embryo as the nervous system. Hair patterns and skin can offer markers of neurological development, Grandin suggests. Are cashmere goats with longer guard hair more mellow? Are those bucks with the Elvis curl likely to develop bad attitudes? Inquiring

The Study of Phenotypic Description and the production of the hair Quantitatively and Qualitatively for the Maraz Goats in Betwata Area

By Ali Hussein Hamad Khoshnaw
Erbil, Kurdistan, Iraq, May 2002

A thesis submitted by Ali Hussein Hamad Khoshnaw To The Council of College of Agriculture/ University of Salahaddin - Erbil In partial fulfillment of requirement for the Degree of Master in Animal Resource/ Sheep and Goat production May 2002

This Study was carried out on (151) Goats (138 Females and 13 Males) in Betwata village and Dol Naran in Rania District / Suleimania Governorate in the late of March 2001. The animals belonged to five age groups (2 years and less, 3, 4, 5 and 6 years and more), three flocks, two status for the animal (barren and kidding) and four colour groups (Black, White, Brown and Red). This work was conducted to study some phenotypic characteristics, body measurements and hair characteristics in addition to some factors affecting (site, age, animal's status and colour). The analysis of data for females was carried out only due to limited number of males available. The result can be summarized as follows:

دراسة الصفات المظهرية
وانتاجية الشعر كماً ونوعاً لماعز الـ(مهروز)
في حوض بيتواته

رسالة تقدم بها

علي حسين حمد خوشناو

الى

صفر
1423 هـ

ايار
2002 م

The title page to Ali's thesis. Fortunately, he translated the cover page and Abstract into English for us.

1- It has been found that Maraze Goats are middle-sized animals, the face is straight with the existence of beard and horns in both sexes. In males horns are directed to the back with the curvedness opening to the outside. In females, they have a crooked shape. Ears are either short (6cm), medium (11cm) or long (13cm) and their width are similar (6cm). The body is covered by two coats of hair (the undercoat and outer coat) excepting the head and the legs.

2- The average body weight was 25.46Kg. The body weight increased with advance of the age.

3- The average fleece weight reached 0.88Kg and the rate of the clean hair was 88.54%. All studied factors affected the fleece weight significantly but they did not affect the percent of the clean hair.

4- The staple length was 13.35cm and the average fiber length reached 14.52 cm. Only flock affected them significantly ($p<0.05$ and $P<0.01$, respectively).

5- The average fiber diameter of the total fibers was 35.18 Microns. The average diameter of fibers (20 micron and less) was 16.96 micron. The average diameter of the fibers (more than 20 to 40 micron) was 32.22 micron and the average diameter of fibers (40 micron and more) was 50.5 micron. Total fibers and (more than 20 to 40 micron) fibers were affected significantly by flock and age ($P<0.01$) and by the colour ($P<0.05$). Average fiber diameter of the (40 micron and more) is affected by the colour ($P<0.01$).

Ali

6- It has been found that the percent of the fibers of the undercoat (Cashmere) by weight was 3.40 % whereas by number it was 7.70 %. The flock had a significant influence ($P<0.01$) on the percent by weight only. Age had a significant influence ($P<0.01$) on the percent by number. No significant influence appeared for the animal's status on any of the two characteristics whereas the coat colour had significant influence on the percent by weight ($P<0.01$) and by number ($P<0.05$).

7- The percent of the outercoat by weight was 93.20%, whereas by number it was 82.43%. Site and age had a significant influence ($P<0.01$) on both characteristics whereas none of the percentages were affected significantly by the animal's status and colour.

Continued on next page

Maraz Goat Reserach

Continued from previous page

could be done by farmers.

8- The rate of Kemp fibers by weight was 3.4 % while it's percent by number amounted to 8.99%. Site and Colour had significant influences (P<0.01) on both percentages whereas no significant influence of age and animal's status appeared on both.

9- The average fiber diameter of the undercoat, outercoat and Kemp fibers were 23.24, 38.64 and 66.36 micron respectively. None of them were affected significantly by the studied factors.

10- The average fiber length for Cashmere, intermediate, outercoat and kemp fibers were 2.28, 8.82, 16.72 and 3.72 cm respectively. The flock had a significant influence (P<0.01) on the outercoat fiber length only whereas the colour had a significant influence (P<0.05) on the outercoat fiber length and (P<0.01) on the Kemp fiber length.

11- The average percent for the total medullation was 4.77 %, the continuous medullation was 3.24 %, the discontinuous medullation was 0.73 % and for Scattered medullation was 0.80 %. Site and the colour had significant influences (P<0.01) upon all the percentages whereas no significant influence of the age and the animal's status appeared on any one of them.

12- Significant positive correlations existed between the body weight, and the different dimensions of the body, and also between body weight and each of the following: fleece weight, fiber length, total fiber diameter and percent of the outercoat by weight. In addition, there was also a significant positive correlations among each of the fleece weight, staple length, fiber length, total fiber diameter and rate of the outercoat by weight. On the other hand correlations between the percent of the undercoat by weight with all studied properties were significant and negative. The negative correlations between the undesired Kemp fibers and most of the studied properties indicated that selection against the kemp fibers

Maraz (cashmere) goats

Photographs by Ali Hussein Hamad Khoshnaw

Housing for Sheep and Goats

From the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization

Sheep and goats are important sources of milk and meat. Both readily adapt to a wide range of climates and available feed supplies. They also have similar housing requirements and will therefore be treated together.

Management Systems

Depending primarily on the availability and use of land, three systems of production are practiced:

1 Subsistance, in which a few animals are tethered during the day and put into a protective shelter at night.

2 Extensive, in which the flock/herd grazes over large areas of marginal land unsuited to agriculture. The flock is usually shut into a yard at night. Both these systems are practiced extensively in East Africa.

3 Intensive, in which the animals are confined to yards and shelters and feed is brought to the flock. This system offers the greatest protection for the flock from both predators and parasites. Although it may make the best use of limited land resources, this system also increases labour and the capital investment required for facilities.

Housing

Housing in tropical and semi-tropical regions should be kept to a minimum except for the more intensive systems of production. In the arid tropics no protection other than natural shade is required. In humid climates a simple thatched shelter will provide shade and protection from excessive rain. Sheep and goats do not tolerate mud well; therefore yards and shelters should be built only on well drained ground.

Figure 10.54 (next page) shows a sheep/goat house for 100 animals. Unless predators are a serious problem, gum poles can be substituted for the brick walls. If thatching is difficult to obtain, a lower pitch roof of galvanized steel is feasible, but some insulation under the roof is desirable.

Where housing facilities are provided, it will be necessary to have in addition to water, feed troughs and permanent partitions, provision for temporary panels to help divide and handle the flock when necessary to carry on such operations as disease treatment, docking, shearing, milking and lambing.

In temperate climates and at high altitudes a more substantial structure may be needed. An open-front building facing north provides wind protection and a maxi-

Continued on next page

Table 10.18 Recommended Floor and Trough Space for Sheep/Goats in intensive Production Related to Live Weight

	Weight	Floor Space			Trough Space
		Solid Floor	Slatted Floor	Open Yard	
	kg	m^2/animal	m^2/animal	m^2/animal	m/animal
Ewe/Doe	35	0.8	0.7	2	0.35
Ewe/Doe	50	1.1	0.9	2.5	0.4
Ewe/Doe	70	1.4	1.1	3	0.45
Lamb/Kid		0.4 - 0.5	0.30 - 0.4		0.25 - 0.30
Ram/Buck		3	2.5		0.5

Table 10.18a Recommended Floor and Trough Space for Sheep/Goats in intensive Production Related to Live Weight
A Chart for the rest of us - the metric impaired

	Weight	Floor Space			Trough Space
		Solid Floor	Slatted Floor	Open Yard	
	lb	ft^2/animal	ft^2/animal	ft^2/animal	ft/animal
Ewe/Doe	77	8.6	7.5	21.5	1.1
Ewe/Doe	110	11.8	9.7	26.9	1.3
Ewe/Doe	154	15.1	11.8	32.3	1.5
Lamb/Kid		4.3 - 5.4	3.2 - 4.3		0.8 - 1
Ram/Buck		32.3	26.9		1.6

Housing for Sheep and Goats

Continued from previous page

Slats shall be 70 to 100mm wide, 25 to 30mm thick and laid with 25mm spaces. Individual lambing pens should be 1.5m depending on the weight of the ewe and number of lambs expected.

A feed trough should be 0.3 to 0.4m deep front to back and have a 0.5 to 0.6m high front wall facing the feed alley.

In areas of high rainfall it may be desirable to keep the animals off the ground. Stilted houses with a slatted floor which is raised 1 to 1.5m above the ground to facilitate cleaning and the collection of dung and urine are shown in Figures 10.55 and 10.56.

Milking can be facilitated by providing a platform along the feeding fence where the animals can stand while being milked from behind. Such a platform should be 0.8m deep and elevated 0.35 to 0.5m above the floor where the milker stands.

Parasite Control

A dipping tank and crush are essential in the layout for a large flock or for a community facility for the use of many small holders. A typical dipping tank is shown in Figure 10.57 (not shown). In areas where the Bont tick is a problem, simple walk-through tanks or footbaths may be needed. Figure 10.58 shows plans for a footbath.

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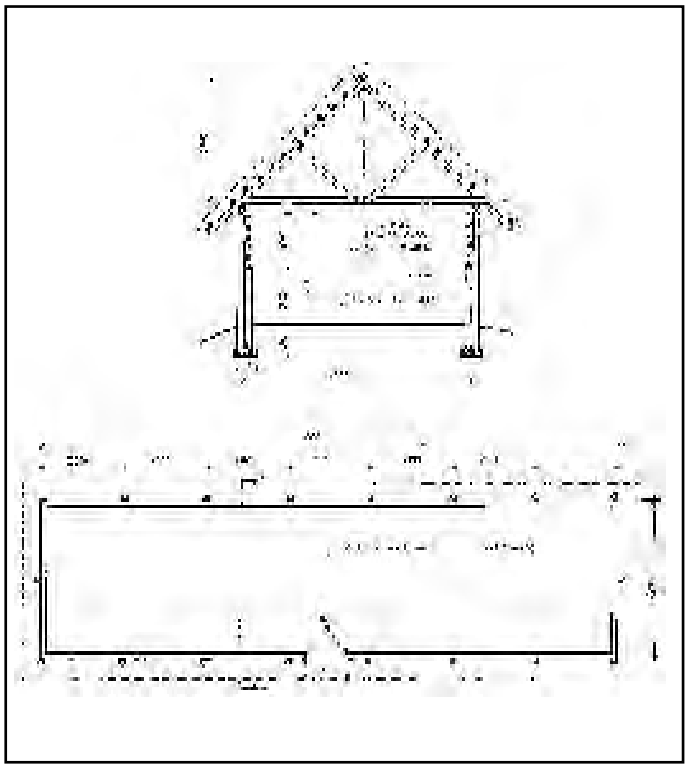

Figure 10.54 Sheep/goat house for 100 animals. In warm climate gumpole rails are preferable to masonry walls in order to provide for better ventilation.

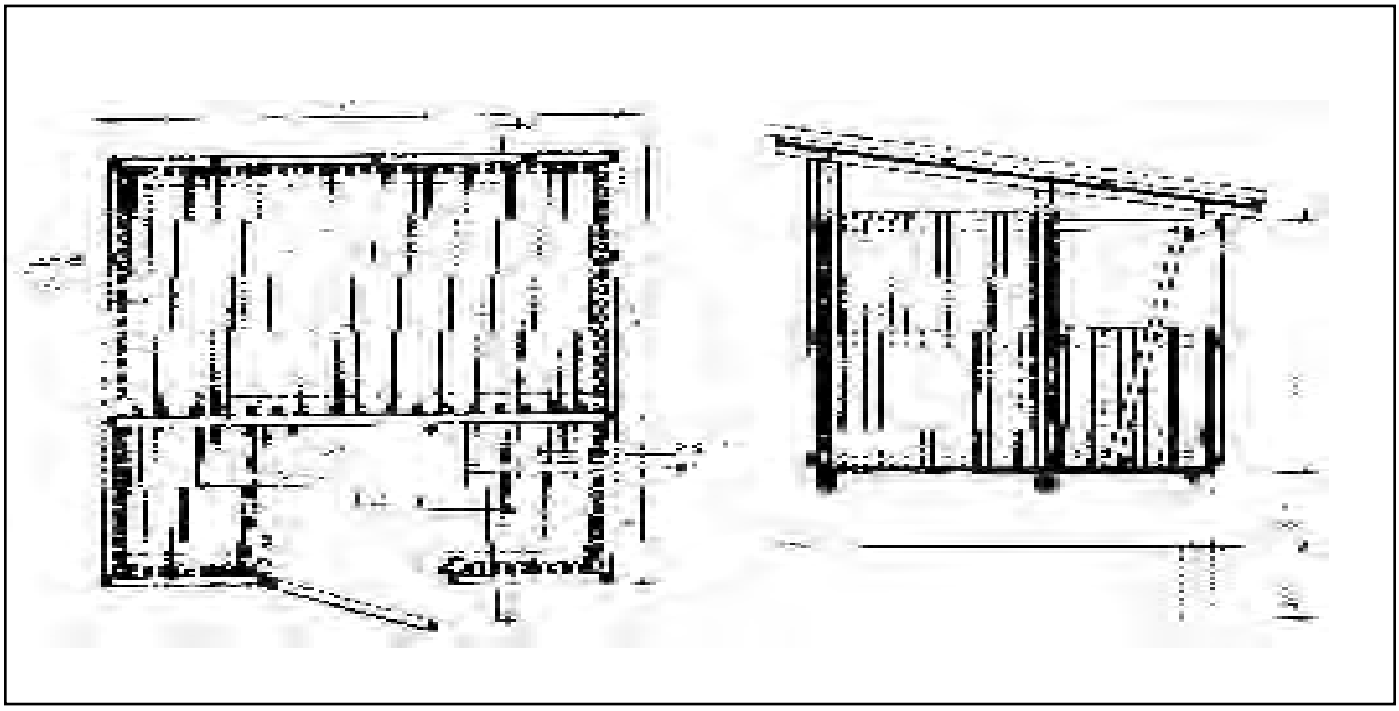

Figure 10.55 House for 2 to 4 sheep-goats in intensive dairy production.

Housing for Sheep and Goats

Continued from previous page

Editor's note regarding the less than perfect drawings: The drawings accompanying this article were low-resolution gif files obtained from the FAO's internet website. There are notes on the drawings relating to sizes (in the handy metric format), but most of these are not readable even on the internet document. Perhaps these plans may be best used by us as general ideas and actual sizes required may be defined by using the requirement table on page 9. However, if you would like to scrutinize the website drawings to try and decipher a bit more than is printed here, it might help. The website is: http://www.fao.org/inpho/vlibrary/s1250e/S1250E17.htm

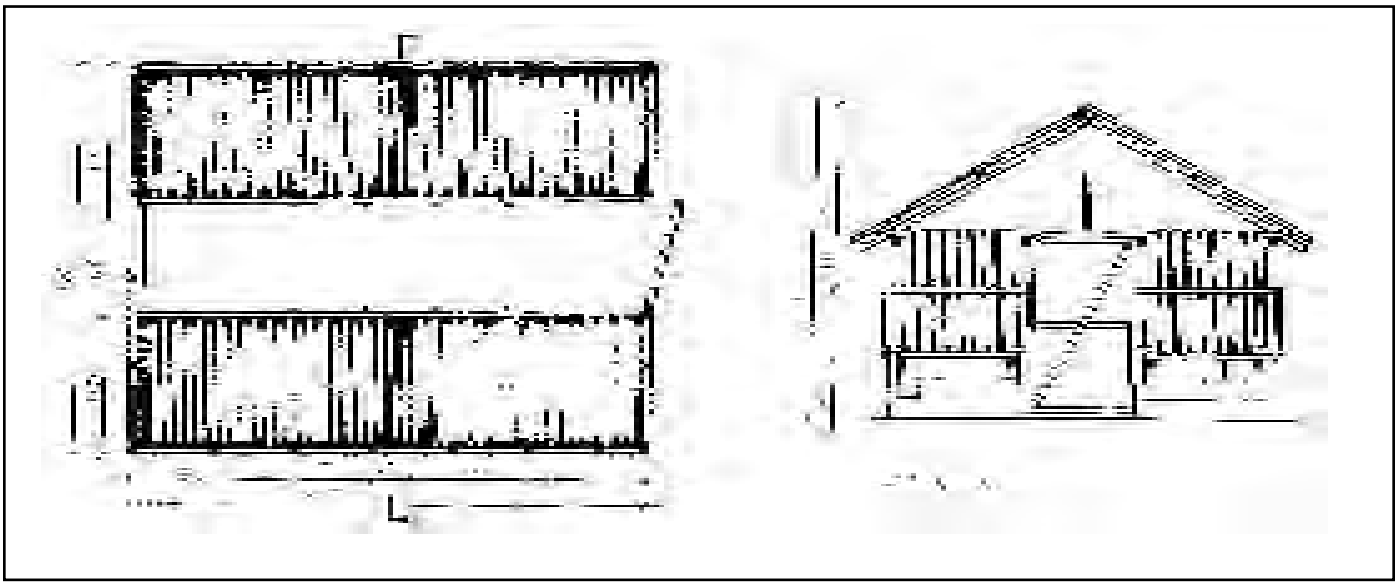

Figure 10.56 House for 12-18 sheep-goats in intensive dairy production.

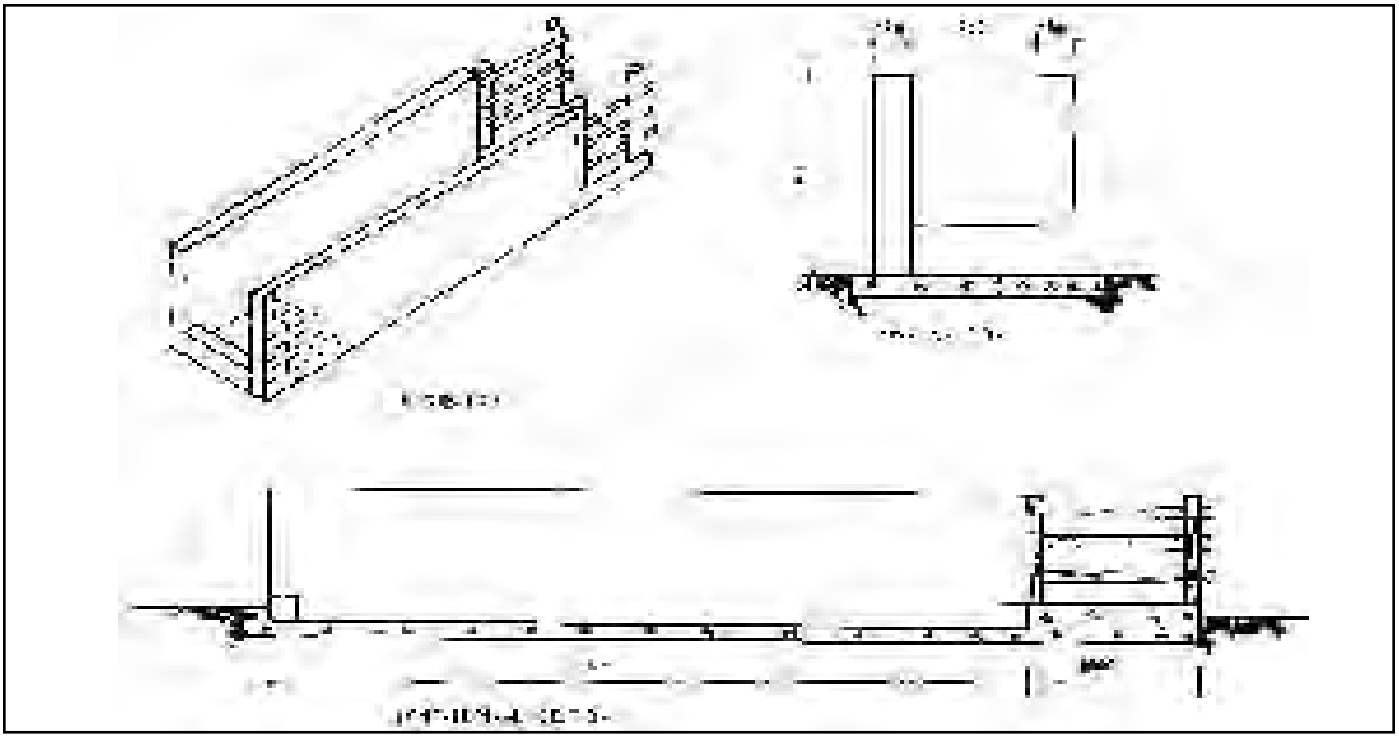

Figure 10.58 Plans for a footbath.

Extinction—Genetic Diversity at Risk

Information from the UN FAO

A new FAO/UNEP* report warns that 1,350 mammal and bird breeds face extinction.

The good news is that we now know more than ever before about the biodiversity of the world's farm animals. Over the past decade, FAO has helped assemble data from some 180 countries on almost all of the estimated 6,500 breeds of domesticated mammals and birds: cattle, goats, sheep, buffalo, yaks, pigs, horses, rabbits, chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese, pigeons, even ostriches. The bad news is what FAO's latest analysis of those data reveals: of the domestic animal breeds for which precise population data exist, at least one-third—a total of 1,350—are at risk of extinction, 119 are officially confirmed as extinct and another 620 are reported to be so.

"If anything, these are conservative figures", says Keith Hammond, responsible for FAO's Global Databank for Farm Animal Genetic Resources. "Over the past five years, the number of mammalian breeds at risk of extinction has risen from 23% to 35%. The situation with avian breeds is even more serious, with the total percentage of those at risk of being lost increasing from 51% in 1995 to 63% in 1999."

WWL-DAD:3

The increasingly grim outlook for those livestock breeds—and for the farmers who depend on them—is detailed in the third edition of the FAO/UNEP World watch list for domestic animal diversity, released in December 2000. Known in-house as WWL-DAD:3, the 726-page volume provides a detailed inventory of domestic breeds, both globally and in each of the world's regions, highlighting those at risk. It points out that this biological diversity is being lost as human population and economic pressures accelerate the pace of change in traditional agricultural systems.

"Maintaining animal genetic diversity allows farmers to select stocks or develop new breeds in response to environmental change, disease threats, consumer demand, changing market conditions and societal needs, all of which are largely unpredictable," says Beate Scherf, who compiled the WWL-DAD:3. "Genetic diversity also represents a storehouse of largely untested potential—wild relatives of common breeds, in particular, may contain valuable but, as yet, unknown resources that could be useful now and in the future."

The FAO databank provides these quick profiles of what could be lost in the decade ahead:

Yakut cattle (Russian Federation)—tolerant to the freezing Siberian climate, they now number less than 1,000. Namakwa Afrikaner sheep (South Africa)—developed by the Hottentots, highly adapted to desert environments.
Blanco Orejinegro cattle (Colombia)—found at altitudes up to 1,800m, good general resistance to blood parasites, now number less than 3,000 head.
Pak Angora goat (Pakistan)—disease-resistant, heat-tolerant, reduced to a single herd on a government research station.
Pomeranian coarsewool sheep (Germany)—resistant to foot-rot and internal parasites, less than 1,600 animals remaining.
Khayan duck, Myanmar.
Bronze turkey, USA.

"Improved breeds"

Keith Hammond says the greatest threat to domestic animal diversity is the wholesale transfer of breeds suited to high-input production systems from developed to developing countries. "We estimate that 4,000 of the world's remaining breeds are still popular with farmers, but only about 400 are the subject of genetic improvement programmes—almost all of them in developed countries," he says. "Development policies on both sides favour their introduction, and work against the survival of local breeds. Artificial insemination services are often free of charge and provide local farmers with access to exotic genotypes at lower cost than would apply for AI of local breeds, if it was available."

Breed choice is also influenced by credit schemes, exchange rates, producer prices, inflation and interest rates. Many countries provide direct subsidies on feed and other inputs—which tend to favour exotic breeds— and indirect subsidies on production inputs, such as fuel and fertilizer to produce concentrate feed.

It may take years before farmers, initially enthusiastic about the "improved breeds", begin to appreciate the significance of the local breed loss. "Improved breeds have been primarily developed under comparatively high input, low-stress production environments," Hammond says. "The accumulating evidence suggests that much, though not all, of this major animal genetic resource assistance effort has been in vain. Farmers gradually realize that this exotic genetic material is actually inferior in their local environment. Very different cost structures, shortages of quality feed resources and low technical and management capacity mean that stock in many developing countries must survive, reproduce and produce for more years than the exotic breeds were designed for."

Country action

More than 180 countries will be asked to contribute to the first Report on the state of the world's animal genetic resources, to be published by FAO and UNEP in 2005. The report will provide a holistic assessment of each country's domestic animal diversity. It will also contribute to development of a Global Strategy for the Management of Farm Animal Genetic Resources and of countries' management capacity.

Very few reliable comparisons of local and exotic breeds have been undertaken in developing countries. Trials are frequently

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Extinction!
Continued from previous page

brief and poorly designed, with substantial feeding and management biases favouring the exotics. Life-cycle productivity is usually not considered even though it is critical to sustainable intensification in the medium-to-low input, high-stress production environments of developing countries. Comparative research is often done in environments where feed, water, disease control and management inputs are very different to those in the real farming community.

Knowledge gap
In fact, says Hammond, "our level of ignorance about the vast majority of the world's animal genetic resources" remains a major obstacle. "A serious issue for good management of animal genetic resources in most countries is the extremely limited technical documentation available for decision making on breed use. While local communities generally possess extensive knowledge of the observable characteristics of their breeds, there is negligible documented research data for about 85% of all breeds and even less sound breed-comparison information."

The real value of genetic diversity may not be properly reflected in current choices of breeds and associated technologies. "Breeds that utilize low-value feeds, or survive in harsh environments, or have tolerance to, or resistance against, specific diseases may realize large future benefits," Keith Hammond argues. "And the complete cost of exotic genetic material must be fully considered. Genetic material is often donated or provided at low cost to speed up 'genetic improvement' in developing countries—but progress toward what breeding goal? Will this 'quick fix' development be sustainable?"

How many of those 1,350 domestic animal breeds now at risk will disappear before that question is finally answered?

** FAO: United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization*
UNEP: United Nations Environmental Programme

A (Beautiful) Use for Guard Hair!!

Cashmere goats have made the Spin Off magazine news again. However, this time they're not talking about that exquisite cashmere. They're featuring the throw-away guard hair!

The article begins on page 64 in the summer 2003 issue and is entitled "Hairy Rug." The author, Barbara Kent Stafford, introduces us to her woven rug made of hair from a goat, cashmere goat, llama, camel and horse along with Karakul wool. The resulting product is a work of art and much too nice to put on the floor for foot traffic. I hope she hung it on the wall!

She spun all the hair individually—the author details her technique for successfully spinning cashmere goat hair. Stafford obtained her cashmere goat hair from a mellow billy goat owned by Eileen Cornwell of Royal Cashmere Goats in Nevada. She ran into Eileen at the 1999 SOAR retreat in Lake Tahoe, California.

The fleece was unprocessed, so it contained cashmere as well as the goat hair. It is interesting to note that the author had to comb out the undesirable cashmere in order to clean up the goat hair for her work. She describes this goat hair as long, smooth and silky, but still very coarse. She spun a smooth, lustrous yarn measuring 7 wraps per inch for her rug and used this yarn for white accent stripes. She notes that goat hair needs to be at least four inches long to work well.

Stafford noted that she had previously used Chinese cashmere goat hair in her rugs, and it contained dander and other "incidentals"; she said the resulting yarn had an interesting texture, but lacked luster. She had also experimented with guard hair from local dehairing mills. Even though it was cleaner and shinier than the Chinese hair, it was generally too short to give good results.

The finished "Hairy Rug" measures 3 X 5 feet. Various hairs create a striped pattern. The rug is "a weft-faced plain weave on a linen warp set at 4 ends per inch. Three picks of Karakul alternate with one of hair."—whatever that means.

If you want a beautiful use for all that discarded hair from your longer-haired goats, you might want to check this out.

NWCA Events at Stanwood Fairgrounds, Washington May 16 - 17, 2003

The (baby) buck show. What do you enter in the "bucks less than one year" class when your goat show is early in the year? Baby bucks! This may sound like a foolish endeaver, but the spectators loved it.

Right: What helps a goat show to succeed? Good helpers! Leslie Moore (left) and Carole Spencer take care of the details for the goat show.

Right: Roberta Maier and her doe, Y0034, in the Senior doe class. (She placed third)

It isn't always the goat's first choice to be in the ring. This one tried (unsuccessfully) to leave.

Right: "I like that one!" Mickey Nielsen's doe Toppenish takes first place in the Doe Kid class. This class was interesting. Due to the timing of the show, this class included two goats who were considerably older than the third one. The two goats on the left were born in 2002 and the one on the far right was born this year.

A Photographer's Nightmare—black goats as far as the eye can see (and most of their beatiful details due to be lost at the hands of the photographer and the printer.)

Ashley Lynch and her impressive buck, Jackson. He is only two.

Right: Marie Nielsen and doe.

NWCA Goat Show—Photos!

The spectators and participants had a good time at the "Baby Buck Show"—bucks under one year of age. Wes checks teeth and other vitals. There were six entrants; they were all black and extremely cute. That's Cliff Nielsen with "Max", the winner on the right.

Doug Maier, Breezy Meadow Cashmere Farm and the Grand Champion Buck, Black Jack, a yearling.

The show lineup of adult does. Wes inspects the fleece from one of them.

NWCA Cashmere Goat Show
May 17, 2003
Stanwood, Washington

Judge: Wes Ackley
Number number of total entries: 25

GRAND CHAMPIONS
Grand Champion Doe
Brandy #Y0015 Douglas Maier, Breezy Meadow Cashmere Farm.
Reserve Grand Champion Doe
Seattle #3 Mickey Nielsen, Liberty Farm
Grand Champion Buck
Black Jack #R26 Douglas Maier, Breezy Meadow Cashmere Farm
Reserve Grand Champion Buck : George #61 Mickey Nielsen, Liberty Farm

DOES

Class 1 Doe kids under 12 months
1st: Toppenish #55 Mickey Nielsen, Liberty Farm
2nd: Mary #54 Mickey Nielsen, Liberty Farm
3rd: #Y117 Douglas Maier, Breezy Meadow Cashmere Farm
Class 2 Yearling Does 12-24 month
1st: Seattle #3 Mickey Nielsen, Liberty Farm
2nd: Lacky #25 Mickey Nielsen, Liberty Farm
3rd: Miss Moses #0028 Karen Bean, Brookfield Farm
Class 3 Adult Doe 2-4 years
1st: Sally, Mickey Nielsen, Liberty Farm
2nd: #Y44 Douglas Maier, Breezy Meadow Cashmere Farm
Class 4 Senior Doe over 4 years
1st: Brandy #Y0015 Douglas Maier, Breezy Meadow Cashmere Farm
2nd: Morena #W6 Mickey Nielsen, Liberty Farm
3rd: #Y34 Roberta Maier, Breezy Meadow Cashmere Farm

BUCKS

Class 5 Buck Kids under 12 months
1st: Max #34 Mickey Nielsen, Liberty Farm
2nd: King Tut, Derek Partlow
3rd: Lance #42 Mickey Nielsen, Liberty Farm
Class 6 Yearling Bucks 12-24 months
1st: Black Jack #R26 Douglas Maier Breezy, Meadow Cashmere Farm
2nd: George #61 Mickey Nielsen, Liberty Farm

WETHERS

Class 12 Senior Wethers over 4 years
1st: Waldo, Leslie Moore
2nd: Midnight, Leslie Moore

NWCA Cashmere Fleece Competition
May 16, 2003
Stanwood, Washington

Judge: Wes Ackley
Total number of entries: 66

CHAMPIONS
Combed Grand Champion Buck
RU 414 Chance Wayne, Jeanne Austin, Blackberry Slump, Augusta, NJ
Combed Reserve Champion Buck
P44 RSC Eric, Diane Thompson & Dan Workman, Riversong Farms,Quesnel, BC
Combed Grand Champion Doe
002 Monica, Jeanne Austin, Blackberry Slump, Augusta, NJ
Combed Reserve Champion Doe
BBS 962 Ruth, Jeanne Austin, Blackberry Slump, Augusta, NJ
Shorn Grand Champion Buck
None awarded
Shorn Reserve Champion Buck
None awarded
Shorn Grand Champion Doe
X0015 Brandy, Douglas & Roberta Maier, Breezy Meadow Cashmere Farm, Bellingham, WA
Shorn Reserve Champion Doe
512, Moon & Diana Mullins, Still Waters Cashmere, Twisp, WA

Sue Lasswell Trophy for best handspinning fleece
BBS 962 Ruth, Jeanne Austin, Blackberry Slump, Augusta, NJ

COMBED FLEECES (43 entries)
Bucks, Kids, age less than 1 year (4 entries)
1 P44 RSC Eric Diane Thompson & Dan Workman, Riversong Farms, Quesnel, BC
2 FXMF Duncan, Carol & Carrie Spencer, Foxmoor Farm, Silverton, OR
3 VA08006-0201Fargo, Bob & Rita Russo, Smithville, TN
Bucks, 2nd & 3rd year (1 entry)
1 G42 Duddley, Diane Thompson & Dan Workman, Riversong Farms, Quesnel, BC
Bucks, 4th - 7th year (1 entry)
1 RU 414 Chance Wayne, Jeanne Austin, Blackberry Slump, Augusta, NJ

Does, Kids, age less than 1 year (9 entries)
1 Mikimoto, Pat Bacon, ROKA Farm, Jefferson, NH , Riversong Farms, Quesnel, BC
2 P11 RSC E.T., Diane Thompson & Dan Workman, Riversong Farms, Quesnel, BC
3 W59 Whitney, Denita Wallace, Salem, OR
Does, 2nd & 3rd year (12 entries)
1 BBS 002 Monica, Jeanne Austin, Blackberry Slump, Augusta, NJ
2 Esmarelda, Pat Bacon, ROKA Farm, Jefferson, NH
3 Misty, Debbie Speer, Battleground, WA
Continued on next page

NWCA 2003 Fleece Competition

Continued from previous page

Does, 4th - 7th year (9 entries)
1 BBS 962 Ruth, Jeanne Austin, Blackberry Slump, Augusta, NJ
2 B17 RSC Bijou, Diane Thompson & Dan Workman, Riversong Farms, Quesnel, BC
3 Tess, Pat Bacon, ROKA Farm, Jefferson, NH
Does, Senior, over age 7 (2 entries)
1 BBS 936 Elvira, Jeanne Austin, Blackberry Slump, Augusta, NJ 07822
2 Coco, Moon & Diana Mullins, Still Waters Cashmere, Twisp, WA

Wethers, all ages (5 entries)
1 Ermilio, Pat Bacon, ROKA Farm, Jefferson, NH
2 Midnight, Leslie Moore, Woodinville, WA
2 Waldo, Leslie Moore, Woodinville, WA

SHORN FLEECES (23 entries)
Bucks, Kids less than 1 year (1 entry)
1 R26 Black Jack, Douglas & Roberta Maier, Breezy Meadow Cashmere Farm, Bellingham, WA
Bucks, 2nd & 3rd year (2 entries)
1 G0066, Douglas & Roberta Maier, Breezy Meadow Cashmere Farm, Bellingham, WA
2 G0067, Douglas & Roberta Maier, Breezy Meadow Cashmere, Bellingham, WA

Does, Kids, age less than 1 year (7 entries)
1 512, Moon & Diana Mullins, Still Waters Cashmere, Twisp, WA
2 504, Moon & Diana Mullins, Still Waters Cashmere
3 521, Moon & Diana Mullins, Still Waters Cashmere

Does, 2nd & 3rd year (7 entries)
1 125, Moon & Diana Mullins, Still Waters Cashmere
2 317 Michelle, Moon & Diana Mullins, Still Waters Cashmere, Twisp, WA
Does, 4th - 7th year (5 entries)
1 X0015 Brandy, Douglas & Roberta Maier, Breezy Meadow Cashmere Farm, Bellingham, WA
2 Y0022 Spring, Douglas & Roberta Maier, Breezy Meadow Cashmere Farm, Bellingham, WA
3 Y34, Douglas & Roberta Maier, Breezy Meadow Cashmere, Bellingham, WA

Does, Senior, over age 7 (1 entry)
1 Freckles, Douglas & Roberta Maier, Breezy Meadow Cashmere Farm, Bellingham, WA

The Judge inspecting fleeces. A very organized contest, facilitated by a laptop computer, good light and lots of helping

Fleece competition judge, Wes Ackley, and eager helpers/ students inspect fleece. NWCA member, Leslie Moore and her mother generously provided space in their vacation home for the competition and participant lodging. The contest room was large and had lots of natural light. At first, Wes spent considerable giving lessons to helpers. Later, when time became an issue, he settled down to business and thoroughly graded 66 fleece entrants.

Wes's Fiber Classing Workshop

By Linda Fox

Wes Ackley, from Buckfield Maine, drew a crowd for his fiber classing workshop held at Stanwood, Washington, on May 17th. The Northwest Cashmere Association sponsored the event. Around 30 participants arrived at 8:30 am ready to learn, with notebooks in hand. The class continued past its 12:30 scheduled completion time. Wes mentioned early that he was trying to fit a normal two-day information workshop into half a day and we weren't going to cover nearly all he wanted to cover. He was right—we ran out of time long before he ran out of information.

Objective of the Class

Wes's stated objective was to cover enough so that we left competent with enough basic classing skills to judge our own goats, one against the other, and to a certain degree, judge our goats against a set of standards. Wes stated that his information is based on the information Terry Sim brought over from Australia, except for a few of his insights, which he would point out to us.

History of Cashmere in U.S.

Wes briefly covered the history of cashmere goats in this country, starting with the early Australian embryo implant program which showed a low success rate and required big dollars of those involved. Results produced by the embryo program were inconsistent and participants often needed to sell resulting stock at high prices to recover some of their costs. Grant money obtained by Colorado people started the Cashmere America Cooperative and brought over Terry Sim from Australia for organizational and educational efforts. A polarity developed between breeders who listened to Terry's message and those who weren't willing to hear that their expensive goats might be worth less than inexpensive Texas cashmere-bearing stock. Terry also educated listeners about the angora-cashmere cross breeding mistake in Australia (by design) and in Texas (by accident).

How to Learn?

Ways to learn about fiber classing include classing workshops like this one, fleece competitions, live goat shows, laboratory tests—objective testing, and outside evaluations—such as the Cooperative or others.

Fleece Competitions

The value of fleece competition is limited, but useful. To evaluate different fleeces and breeders of animals, compare the results of various years' contests. Is it the same animals entered year after year that are winning? Or, does the winning breeder show up year after year winning with different stock? You can tell more about a sheared fleece than a combed fleece, as you can usually lay out the shorn fleece to determine where on the goat sections of the fleece grew. The neck of the goat usually produces the coarsest cashmere and sometimes this coarser cashmere extends down to the shoulder. The side usually produces the finest and longest cashmere. It used to be that the finest (but shorter) cashmere was found on the rump, but that rule is broken frequently, especially on goats with less coverage.

When you harvest a fleece by combing, this mixes the different parts of the fleece together. Also, combing can change characteristics of the fleece.

Wes Ackley looking dapper in his cashmere sweater.

Live Goat Shows

Live goat shows are good as a learning tool, although it is generally expensive and can be risky (health, parasite exchange) to compete. However, competition is wonderful as groups of breeders can meet, exchange ideas and receive the opinion of a different judge each year. Breeders have a variety of goals and objectives. Goat shows have chances for great variability in their results.

Objective Testing

Objective testing is good as a check for your eyes, to make sure that your eyes don't get out of practice. For testing samples, some growers use a mid-side sample for testing, however a random sample of the entire fleece is probably best. The use of a random sampling grid to place over your fleece to determine where samples will be taken is useful.

Fiber Length

Fiber length on a goat may vary and the variation may be considerable. An easy device for measuring fleece is your own finger. Measure your index finger and determine where one inch and two inches fall in relation to your joints. Knowing this, you are armed with a handy field measuring device that will always be with you. Measure fiber in its relaxed state—don't stretch it out. Use the measurement for the majority of the fibers on the goat. Terry Sim's method was to look at the fiber length in the middle of the rib cage, and then validate this by going up and down the goat from that point to see if the measurement held. Terry Sim's length score was the measurement after shearing. So, if he plucked fiber from the goat, he would automatically deduct 1/4" for the length lost by shearing. Wes suggested moving back on the goat from the shoulder to find the spot where the length of the fiber is consistent to take your measurement.

Continued on next page

Fiber Classing with Wes

Continued from previous page

Style!
Style, also referred to as crimp, is an important attribute of cashmere. Style denotes curvature along various planes rather than regular waves. Good style helps the spinability of fiber, facilitates dehairing and improves the end product all along the production process. Good style is general indicative of a finer fiber with Spanish goats being an exception to this rule—some Spanish goats have poor style even though their fiber is very fine. A style 3+ will generally have fiber in the 14 micron diameter range. A solid style 2 will be a good micron, but a medium micron.

Judging style is difficult, but not a huge mystery. Doug Winter, from Australia, had developed a 5-point scale for grading cashmere, based on number of crimps per centimeter (3/8" = 1 cm). Style 1 = one crimp per centimeter and style 5 = 5 crimps per centimeter. Terry Sim's scoring was done on a 4-point system, with 1 being "poor, cashgora type" and 4 being "excellent cashmere type, ideal". Wes noted that Terry's 4-point scale was, in practice, a 3-point scale—the style 4 was frequently referred to as a "mythical four". Terry seldom rated a fleece a style 4.

Wes's scale is a 3-point scale with the use of pluses and minuses between the whole numbers. It is based on crimps per centimeter, with a style 1 as poor style, style 2 as fair and style 3 as good. Terry's old "mythical 4" is a 3+ in this system. I asked Wes how these pluses and minuses would translate into a computer-based system which generally requires numerical entries to work well. He said that you could enter the + and - as decimal equivalents, with a + and - each being worth 3/10, so that a 2- would become a 1.7 to a computer and a 2+ would become a 2.3. My computer likes this. Wes noted that the Ackley style is totally consistent with the Terry Sim style scoring method.

There are factors that confound the scoring of style, like straighter ends on the tips of the cashmere. A straighter tip end can be a "blow out", a natural occurring event, or it can be a weather damaged tip left unprotected by shorter guard hair. Another factor is harvesting method. A combed fleece has been stressed in the harvest and may show less style. You might also find variability in the style of a fleece. You may find a fleece to be mostly style 3, but find style 1 or 2 fibers running through it as well.

It is helpful to choose an appropriate backdrop for your inspection of style. Wes found Carrie Spencer's dark shirt an invaluable aid in the fleece competition Longer fibers are generally coarser—they need the larger diameter for growing strength.

Class members inspect fiber samples.

Bagging our own Samples and Class Materials
Wes distributed several fleece samples to the students. The class tried their hand at judging fiber style, diameter and length. These guesses were compared against the objective measurements for the samples. Class members bagged their samples with cards noting the objective measurements.

In the students' class notebooks were also a 1995 article by Doug Winter "Cashmere Evaluation", an article "Evaluating Goats—It's not as hard as you think" by Marilyn Ackley, a farm evaluation chart created by the Ackleys, and several filled-in farm

Continued on next page

Fiber Classing with Wes

Continued from previous page

worksheets for various Ackley goats. The class compared the characteristics of various Ackley goats using these worksheets. Also included was the Cashmere America Cooperative Fleece Appraisal form and key to the evaluations—the forms used by Terry Sim over the years for his fleece appraisals. (I don't believe we've every printed the Cashmere America form—yet—but the Ackley form and article can be found in the May 2001 CM—Ed.)

To Skirt or Not to Skirt—That was a question
The group had a brief discussion on the issue of skirting a fleece for competition purposes. In the sheep world, growers routinely skirt their fleeces, discarding the less desirable portions of the fleece, areas that are stained, especially dirty (even for sheep) or wool that is of lesser quality. One participant noted that when shearing on their farm, they choose to not shear the neck of the goat if it is poor quality, and discard shorter hair on the lower leg or fleece from the rump containing excessive, long guard hair. However, when a skirted fleece is entered in competition, the judge would not be judging the entire fleece on the goat. Is the goal of fleece competition to judge the entire fleece contained on the goat or just the "good" fleece on the goat? Wes suggested that the entire fleece from the goat be saved from the harvest, but the grower consider sub-bagging the lesser quality fleece when entering competition fleeces.

Beyond the Fleece
And of course, the fleece isn't the only consideration. Culling and breeding decisions will be based on mothering skills, whether the goat passes on their good characteristics and other factors.

Other Information/Tips from Wes
Learn how to shear your own goats, so you can pick the day they are sheared.

On the Ackley farm, kids don't grow much during the winter. Does don't gain and sometimes the bucks gain a little. They begin to gain again when they get back out on pasture.

Cashmere goats reach their full maturity at age 4.

The weight tape, as defined by the Australian group, not the dairy goat folk, is fairly accurate for cashmere goats. It provides a good alternative to lugging/hoisting a goat onto a set of scales.

If you have fleece from a two-tone goat, one with two different cashmere colors, this was originally considered a culling factor. Wes does not consider this so now. You would want to separate the two colors when classing your cashmere into lots, however.

Kid fleeces can change with age—but they won't get better style.

A young kid who appears to have curly hair will generally turn out to have longer guard hair as an adult.

For spinning yarn, fleece consistency in every way is important—consistency in style, diameter and length.

Old Sweet Face
Many times during the class, Wes referred to "Old Sweet Face", as an example of style, and a beloved goat on their farm. You know Old Sweet Face? She is the mother of Egypt, who is the mother of Feather. Feather, in Wes's opinion, is the perfect cashmere goat—if she only had a bit longer legs. Wes promised to send us a photograph of Old Sweet Face.

Calendar of Events

June 20 - 21, 2003
Black Sheep Gathering, Lane County Fairgrounds, Eugene, Oregon. Wool show & sale, sheep, angora goat and angora rabbit shows, fiber arts competition, workshops, vendors. Info: 541-484-1011, leslie@fishwhistle.com

June 26 - 29, 2003
Lake Metroparks' Fiberfest '03, Kirtland, Ohio
The Festival June 28 - 29, The Forum (workshops) June 26 - 29, Fiberart Show June 11 - 29.
Vendors, demonstrations, workshops, animals. For information booklet - 800-366-3276
www.lakemetroparks.com

July 1 - 4, 2004
Convergence 2004
Denver, Colorado
Handweavers Guild of America
"Fiber with an Altitude: Connecting People, Connecting Time"
Information: www.weavespindye.org

July 9 - 13, 2003
Creative Strands Fiber Arts Conference, Bucknell University Campus, Lewisburg, PA. Registration materials: 570-473-8278, info@creativestrands.com
www.creativestrands.com

September 30, 2003
ECA Fleece Competition at the Virginia State Fair. Detailed instructions for entry on page 22, this issue.

October 4 - 5, 2003
Vermont Sheep & Wool Festival, Essex

Association Contacts

Cashmere America Cooperative
Joe David Ross, Manager, 915-387-6052
fax: 915-387-2642, Email: goat@sonoratx.net
Wes Ackley (Maine) 207-336-2948
Marti Wall (Washington) 360-424-7935

Eastern Cashmere Association (ECA)
Ann Wood, President
937-834-1122, tamarackranch@core.com

North West Cashmere Association (NWCA)
Diana Mullins, President,
509-997-2204, 509-429-0778, dmullins@methow.com
Carol Spencer, Membership Coordinator
503-873-5474, message: 503-873-5511
cspencer@foxmoorfarm.com
Website: http://www.nwcacashmere.org

Pygora Breeders Association (PBA)
Inga Gonzales, Secretary
PO Box 565, Knightsen, CA 94548, 925-625-7869
email: Igonozo@goldstate.net

Texas Cashmere Association (TCA)
William (Bill) Nagel, President
4625 Sandy Fork Rd., Harwood, TX 78632
830-540-4707, email: bnagel@bvtc.com

Fairly Nice Barn...

Rhudi—checking out new living quarters. Photograph by Lisa Vailes, Silver Branch Farm, Staunton, Virginia.

Breeders Directory

CALIFORNIA

CAPRETTE CASHMERE
Barbara Fiorica
13059 Cherry Rd.
Wilton, CA 95693
916-687-6406
ROFIORICA@AOL.COM

CONNOR'S RUN FARM
Pete and Charlotte Rhoads
6300 Lofty View Road
Placerville, CA 95667
530-642-9931
fax: 530-642-9936
email: prhoads@mindspring.com

HENRY LOWMAN
PO Box 2556
El Granada, CA 94018
650-225-1171
email: hlowman@compuserve.com

COLORADO

GOATIQUE
Ann Bertschy
607 County Road 730
Gunnison, CO 81230
970-641-5383
goatique@pcrs.net

JABBERWOCKY FARM
Susanne Roth
408 Cty Rd. 59
Guffey, CO 80820
719-689-9502

K. BULLARD/CHALK
7225 E. County Rd. 18
Loveland, CO 80537
970-667-2999

MARSHALL'S ORGANIC ACRES
9217 N. County Rd. 7
Wellington, CO 80549-1521
970-568-7941
Borganic2@aol.com

CONNECTICUT

THUNDER HILL CASHMERES
Coleen Nihill
165 Boston Post Road
Old Saybrook, CT 06475
860-873-3403

MAINE

BESSEY PLACE CASHMERE
Wes and Marilyn Ackley
319 Brock School Road
Buckfield, ME 04220
207-336-2948
ackley@megalink.net

BLACK LOCUST FARM
Yvonne Taylor
PO Box 378
Washington, ME 04574
207-845-2722
yvonne@blacklocust.com

SPRINGTIDE FARM
Peter Goth & Wendy Pieh
PO Box 203
Bremen, ME 04551
207-529-5747
fax: 207-529-5739
wpieh@lincoln.midcoast.com

MARYLAND

MIDDLETOWN FARM
George and Barbara Little
8123 Old Hagerstown Rd.
Middletown, MD 21769
phone & fax: 301-371-8743
glittle640@aol.com

MONTANA

CASTLE CRAGS RANCH
Steve and Diana Hachenberger
894 Pheasant Run
Hamilton, MT 59840
phone & fax:
406-961-3058
cashmere@bitterroot.net

PMF CASHMERE CO.
Ann Dooling
3299 Anderson Lane
Dillon, MT 59725
406-683-5445
ann@montanaknits.com

SMOKE RIDGE CASHMERE
Craig Tucker
Yvonne Zweede-Tucker
2870 Eighth Lane NW
Choteau, MT 59422
406-466-5952
fax: 406-466-5951
smokeridge@marsweb.com

NEVADA

DOUBLE BAR J CASHMERE
Betsy Macfarlan/Jeff Weeks
P.O. Box 150039
Ely, NV 89315
775-742-1189
goatsnsoap@idsely.com

ROYAL CASHMERE
Eileen Cornwell
Byron Higgins
5455 Reno Highway
Fallon, NV 89406
phone & fax: 775-423-3335
cashmere@phonewave.net

NEW HAMPSHIRE

ROKA Farm
Jefferson, NH
Pat Bacon
97 Success Rd
Milan, NH 03588
603-449-6797
mswhmtns21@hotmail.com

NEW YORK

HERMIT POND FARM
Pamela Haendle
10601 Merrill Road
West Edmeston, NY 13485
315-899-7792
hermit@borg.com

MOO'S MEADOW FARM
Judith E. Paul
Springville, NY 14141
716-941-5826
judithepaul@hotmail.com

NORTH CAROLINA

Flying Fiber Farm
Sandra Basel
941 Vanderpool Road
Vilas, NC 28692
828-297-3046
fax: 866-728-4141
FlyingFiberFarm@aol.com

OHIO

HIGH COUNTRY CASHMERE COMPANY
Chris and Kathryn Cooper
12840 Cowan Road
Athens, OH 45701-9539
740-594-3350
email: kcooper@eurekanet.com

TAMARACK RANCH
Bob and Ann Wood
12575 Collins-Arbogast Rd.
South Vienna, OH 45369-9514
937-834-1122
tamarackranch@core.com

OKLAHOMA

TEXOMA KIDS & CASHMERE
J. D. and Karen Chandler
Rt 1, Box 37
Mannsville, OK 73447
580-371-3167
fax: 580-371-9589

Continued on next page

Breeders Directory
Continued from previous page

jkc@flash.net

OREGON

ABORIGINAL FIBRE
razberi kyan (Pat Almond)
PO Box 899
Mulino, OR 97042-0899
503-632-3615
razberi@teleport.com

AYER'S CREEK RANCH
19655 NE Calkins Lane
Newberg, OR 97132
503-554-9260
Linda_Lowell@beavton.k12.or.us

CASHMERE GROVES
Pat Groves
16925 S. Beckman Rd.
Oregon City, OR 97045
503-631-7806
pgroves@ccwebster.net

DUKES VALLEY FIBER FARM
Fran and Joe Mazzara
4207 Sylvester Drive
Hood River, OR 97031
541-354-6186
FMAZZARA@gorge.net

FOXMOOR FARM
Carol and Carrie Spencer
1178 N.E. Victor Point Road
Silverton, OR 97381
Phone: 503-873-5474
Message: 503-873-5511
foxmoorfarm@foxmoorfarm.com

GOAT KNOLL
Paul Johnson/Linda Fox
2280 S. Church Rd.
Dallas, OR 97338
503-623-5194
goatknol@wvi.com

HARVEST MOON FARM
Guy and Karen Triplett
63311 Abbey Road
Bend, OR 97701-9743
541-388-8992
harvest@empnet.com

HAWKS MOUNTAIN PYGORA'S
Lisa Roskopf & George DeGeer
51920 SW Dundee Rd.
Gaston, OR 97119
503-985-3331
Fax: 503-985-3321
lisa@hmrpygoras.com

MCTIMMONDS VALLEY FARM
Janet and Joe Hanus
11440 Kings Valley Hwy.
Monmouth, OR 97361
503-838-4113
janhanus@open.org

ROARING CREEK FARMS
Arlen and Cathy Emmert
27652 Fern Ridge Road
Sweet Home, OR 97386
503-367-6698
cashmere@proaxis.com

PENNSYLVANIA

DANCING HEART FARM
Marc & Cindy Briggs
RD 1 Box 1327A
Russell, PA 16345
814-757-8119
mncbriggs@kinzua.net

TOAD HAVEN FARM
Gloria Rubino
RR 2, Box 2248A
Saylorsburg, PA 18353-9568
570-629-6946
Toadhaven@aol.com

TENNESSEE

CUDROW CASHMERE
Jim & Cindy Crisp
1936 Calderwood Hwy.
Maryville, TN 37801
865-856-5264
CudRowCashmere@msn.com

CUMBERLAND BLUE FARM
Bob and Rita Russo
607 Old Blue Springs Rd
Smithville, TN 37166
615-215-8837
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John and Marilee Williamson
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Buchanan, VA 24066-4938
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mhwabc@juno.com

GREENWOOD CASHMERE GOATS AND HIGHLAND CATTLE
Mary and Douglas Waters
163 Zion Hill Road
Fincastle, VA 24090-3668
dooglecw@aol.com

SILVER BRANCH FARM
Chuck and Lisa Vailes
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Staunton, VA 24401
540-885-1261
crvailes@cfw.com

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

WASHINGTON

BREEZY MEADOW CASHMERE FARM
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360-733-6742
fibergoat@earthlink.net

BROOKFIELD FARM
Ian Balsillie/Karen Bean
PO Box 443
Maple Falls, WA 98266
360-599-1469 or
360-715-1604
brookfarm@earthlink.net

LIBERTY FARM (NLF)
Cliff and Mickey Nielsen
5252 Hwy 12
Yakima, WA 98908
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mnielsen7@aol.com

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Jeremiah and Nancy Shea
4652 S. Palouse River Rd.
Colfax, WA 99111-8768
Phone: 509-397-2804

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Twisp, WA 98856
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Internet listing of these breeders and a link to their email addresses and homepages, can be found on the internet at:

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Maremma Sheepdog Club of America, Maremma Livestock Guarding dogs, PO Box 546, Lake Odessa, MI 48849, 616-374-7209. Free information and Breeder Directory.

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The Deadlines:

Articles, photographs, advertising and other information submitted must be received by the 25th of the month prior to magazine issue date.

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

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