

# Goat Thoughts

Listed below are some things that we have learned in our travels up the "learning curve" of raising goats. These are things that work or did not work for us. We do not intend to insinuate that other management styles are wrong; everyone has to raise their goats to the best of their abilities using what works for them. We are also under the opinion that there is never only one way to do anything. We always like to talk "goats" with people, exchanging ideas and thoughts - that's how we continue to evolve our skills and knowledge base.

In November of 2001, while living in Southeast Georgia we purchased a herd of "brush goats" - seven of them plus two kids - paid a grand total of \$200 for all. We were very glad that we started with them as they were very durable and forgiving of the things we did or didn't do. When we started adding the Boer goats that we paid a more for, we started moving quickly up the "learning curve" and trying to convince ourselves to "not give up."

Even though we now raise Kiko goats, most of what we have listed here also applies to raising them. All goats need some attention. "You can't starve a profit out of a goat or anything else."

Most important -- find a good goat vet -- or at least one willing to learn about **goats**.

DISCLAIMER: We are not vets; this is what has worked for us.  
Your situation may be different.

## Parasites

**WORMS** - If you don't worm goats -- they die. We lost the first Boer buck we bought (plus five others) to worms, we didn't know that the wormer and the amount we were using was not working. We were using what had been told to us by a "vet" who said he knew how to treat goats -- in our opinion he didn't. We now have an outstanding vet that truly does know goats and listens to us.

We have learned to check their eyelid color, their hair condition and general appearance. We do not worm on schedule, but we do check each goat about every six - eight weeks, more if has been raining for a while. Our Boers needed to be wormed about every three weeks, most of the Kikos are running four to five months (some even longer) between worming.

All does are "usually" wormed the same day that they kid - because the worms become very active in the doe right after kidding. We will check the nursing doe every couple of weeks for the first couple of months, to make sure that she does not need to be rewormed. Her kids are also check at that time. We use Cydectin (pour on) orally at the rate of 1cc per 20 pounds.

**COCCIDIOSIS** - We used to feed a non-medicated feed and we would have to treat our Boer kids for cocci at two weeks, four weeks and six weeks of age with Sulmet and treat the entire herd a couple of times a year. We change our feed to one medicated with rumensin - the kids are growing bigger, healthier; none of them have the classic "pot-bellied" look. Best of all we don't have to catch them and treat them with Sulmet anymore. NOTE: If you use rumensin - take heed that it will kill equines.

**LICE** - Biting and sucking lice will kill a goat. We treat our herd at least once a year for lice using Synergized Lice-No-More spray.

## CL (Caseous Lymphadenitis)

CL can be brought onto your land by goats, people, birds, snakes, rodents, deer, anything that can or has come in contact with contaminated land, fences, barns, hay, feed bags, and etc.

We do not believe that CL is the end of the world. The goat will always be a carrier - - but the disease can be managed --by vaccination, which protects the non-infected goats and suppresses the infected goats.

When we first got into goats, we had never heard of CL - one of our original goats had it. We didn't find out until we took him to auction to sell him - that is where we first heard of CL. When we got home we researched all we could about the disease. We were not sure if the land (in Georgia) was contaminated. The research and answers that we found were so varied. One person said that we needed to kill and burn all of our goats, burn the barns and burn the land and not put goats on it again for five to six years. Another person said not to worry about it and let it run its course. Ok, now we were really confused -- is it so terrible we have to burn everything or is it nothing to worry about.

We contacted our vet for his opinion. He said there was a vaccine that could be made, it would protect the non-infected goats and should suppress the disease in the infected goats. Downside - the vaccine is very expensive. We decided to have the vaccine made and manage the disease. We asked if they get infected through breathing, he said that in goats - the goat has to be infected through a break in their skin - sheep are normally the ones that it is internal.

We would never sell a goat that we suspect is a carrier to anyone. They ALWAYS go for slaughter. At this time, as far as we know, we do not have any CL positive goats in our herd.

Some people will say that they do not have CL in their herds, and do not - nor will they ever vaccinate for it. They run a "closed and clean" herd and therefore will never have CL. The research we have done, information from several vets, various chat groups and knowledgeable people is that if you don't have it yet -- you might in the future through an unknown reason.

The only way that this disease will be eradicated will be for everyone to vaccinate -- kind of along the same lines of the human small pox and polio vaccine.

## Nutrition

FEEDING - When we first got goats, we were told that we needed to feed them grain twice a day at a rate of 3 pounds a goat. We were going broke - their food bill was higher than ours. We now feed the nursing does and young kids about 0.3 pounds of a special feed mix, made for our area, per doe in the evening. Depending on the forage and hay condition - they may be provided protein blocks. They are given goat minerals, developed for this area, on a continuous basis.

REMEMBER - You can't starve a profit out of any animal.....

WATER - We were told that goats had to have fresh water every day, so we were emptying tubs and refilling every day. The Livestock Guardian Dogs would get in the water during the summer, making it dirty. So dump the water, refill the water - over and over. We all (humans) got pneumonia at the same time in 2003 and it was all we could do to feed them - so no fresh water three or four times a day. They survived and didn't look any different. Now we leave the water on a slow drip and dump the tubs and scrub them out every couple of months, depending on how bad they are. During the summer, we put wading pools out for the dogs to climb in, but the goats would rather drink out of them, Guess they don't have a problem with "doggie poisoned" water - so we don't either. Makes life easier and chores get done quicker.

## Medical & Vaccinations

VACCINATIONS - We vaccinate all goats (except slaughter kids) with Calvary 9. We figure that it is cheaper to vaccinate than to treat a sick goat. Our goats are goats/livestock, BUT we will not stand by and let one die if we can do anything about it. We get shot lumps, everyone does, haven't figured out yet how not to get them. We use one needle - per vaccine for each goat - less chance of disease transfer. We do our vaccinations in the "armpit" behind the front legs and sometimes under the chest. That way if there is a lump in that place, we know where it came from.

FEET - Goats feet grow, can't change that fact, but the less corn and grain they get the slower their feet grow. Our Kiko feet grow slower and wear off better than the Boers we had. We have not had foot rot, but we check feet when we check for worms. We try to have a pile of rocks the pastures that they play on which helps to wear the feet down. PLUS it fun to watch the little kids play "King of the Mountain."

KIDDING - We used to kid in a very small pasture - every kidding. One year we lost a bunch of kids from ecoli. Per our vet, this is caused from a "dirty area," after that we had the does kidding in the large pastures. The kids are stronger and the does seem to bond better with them as there is not so many kids in a small area.

We still like to be there when they kid, mainly because we get such a kick out of seeing new life being born. But we are also there in case the doe gets in trouble and we have to assist in the birth. Assisting in birth is NOT fun - makes for sore hands and a sore doe, but better than a dead doe. We worm the doe, weight and tag the kids as soon after birth as possible.

HOUSING - We make our goats be goats. There are barns/sheds in all the pastures for them to use when it is raining hard. There are woods for them to go to when it is just sprinkling. They don't like getting wet, but as long as they don't get cold they won't die - of course they try to tell us differently. Sleeping out in the open air is always healthier for them. Always remember - Goats can handle being wet and they can handle being in the cold. But, they do not handle being wet and cold very well.

## Misc Thoughts

Auctions: Good goats can be bought at auctions, if and a big if, you know what to look for and separate them from your herd for a quarantine period. Most of does (until late 2005) came from auctions. We brought them home, wormed, vaccinated, trimmed feet and keep them separate for awhile. We didn't buy goats that had runny noses, diarrhea, very thin, knots or lumps, blown udders, coughs, bad feet, dull coats, dull eyes, head and tail hanging down and etc. We used to see all of our excess at auctions, but after

learning how to advertise and sell of the farm we prefer to do that. We still take some to auctions – the ones that we won't sell as breeding stock are sold as slaughter goats.

Fencing: Field fence is good, but goats rub on it, lean on it, climb on it and guard dogs dig under. Electric fence is good, but goats and dogs jump it. Field fence with electric about 6 inches out and 9 inches from the bottom – Perfect.

Guard Dogs: With our first goats, we did not have livestock guardian dogs, didn't even know what they were. We were blessed that none of the dogs packs that roam around the area we lived in while in Georgia bothered the goats. The more research we did, the more we realized that we needed to have guardians for the goats. We decided on the Great Pyrs. The first one came from Arkansas – really don't know if she had ever really been a good goat dog, but she was a great perimeter dog and did an outstanding job training the three pups we purchased. We purchased three eight week old pups from the same litter. "They" say that normally, you shouldn't get pups from at the same time because they will "feed" off each other and try to play with the livestock. Festus, Dillion and Jeannie had each other to play with and rarely tried to play with the goats. They know that "Mom" is the alpha dog – all Lez'le has to do is just look at them and they stop right in their tracks. If the "look" doesn't work the growl of "mine" or "leave it" stops them. When we are in the pasture and they want to be loved on, they come up, flop down and roll on their backs. They will also roll on their backs when they are in trouble with "Mom" – a very good sign. We would hate to have to discipline them now that they weigh between 150 and 185 pounds.

The first three pups worked out really well being from the same litter, so after moving to Texas, we got three more pups. Maverick, Hoss and Annie have matured into outstanding guardians. Hoss lives with the bucks, because he is a little more active than we prefer with young kids. He can be seen "cuddling" with Conan and Ranger and sticks very close to them. Annie has matured into a very good "baby dog". She is very calm and gentle around the newborns, yet is a very aggressive "sky dog". She is constantly watching the sky for the many buzzards in the area.