



# The Goat Source

## *The Goat Source Newsletter* *Volume 4 Number 2 February 2007*

Here is your February issue of The Goat Source Newsletter. Boy am I glad I decided to kid out late this year! January was cold and snowy, not what I like for mommas to be having kids! We still have ranchers in Eastern Colorado that haven't found all of their livestock yet. Please feel free to pass this newsletter on to your friends.

### **What's New This Month?**

- Protecting Your Goats From Predators
  - This Month's Quiz...
  - Classified Ads
  - Answer to the February Quiz
  - Zapped! Electric Fence Training Kids by Connie Reynolds
  - Helpful Hints
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### **Protecting Your Goats From Predators**

I have written in earlier newsletters about keeping your goats safe. It came home just a couple of weeks ago, when one of my neighbors had a kid killed by a mountain lion. She has lived in the same place for almost 30 years and has never had any trouble with lions. I thought that I would touch on some of the high points of keeping your animals safe. Even

with precautions, sometimes you will have predators get in and kill your animals, so just remember, nothing is 100% sure!

First off fencing should be in tiptop shape and adequate to deter casual predators. Hot wires should be hot – checked frequently and fixed whenever necessary. Depending on your area, fence height will vary. Domestic dogs can be some of the most dangerous threats to your goats. I have seen a large dog clear 4 feet with no problem. I would want my fences to be at least 5 feet high and higher in an area with severe problems. An offset wire on the outside may help keep fence jumpers out. Make sure that nothing can go under the fence, also. Guard dogs are another option. There are many different breeds and they all work a little differently. Unless you are familiar with using dogs, you will need to do some research before going out and purchasing a dog. Talk to several breeders and to people who are using dogs for protection. Some dogs guard by staying with the flock, some by barking, some roam fairly far from the goats. Look for dogs that come from working parents and have been raised with sheep or goats.

If you do lose animals to wild predators, you may be eligible for compensation from the State Fish and Game Dept. You will need to have a value set on the animal by an appraiser experienced with your breed of livestock and have your vet file a report stating that the loss was due to predation. This may vary from state to state. Compensation may not even approach the value of the animal lost.

I hope that the precautions you take will save you from ever coming home to frightened, injured or dead goats.

Here are some websites to check out:

<http://www.clemson.edu/agronomy/goats/handbook/housing.html>

<http://www.das.psu.edu/goats/production/>

<http://www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/bse/442-131/442-131.html>

<http://www.luresext.edu/goats/training/Predator.pdf>

### **This Month's Quiz...**

Besides dogs, what animals are used as guardians for sheep and goats?

### **Classified Ads...**

Computerized recordkeeping for your goats – [The Goatbreeders Notebook](#)  
Easy to use and affordable for the small herd.

Great Holiday Presents for the Goat Person in Your Life!! Check them Out Here - [Valentine Gifts for the Goat Lover!](#) Save \$5 off \$20 Use the code BEAUSMARGIN at checkout – expires Feb. 5th, 2007

Learn how to say “Good-bye” to city life! Learn about raising animals, gardening and making your own bread!! [Click Here](#)

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### **Answer to the February Quiz:**

Donkeys and llamas can also be used for predator protection. For more information, See [http://www.coopext.colostate.edu/wildlife/Andelt\\_1996\\_Carnivores.pdf](http://www.coopext.colostate.edu/wildlife/Andelt_1996_Carnivores.pdf)

**ZAPPED!** by  
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Connie Reynolds  
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Zap! "NAAAAaaaaaaaaaaaaa." This is what we hear a lot when we are training our kids to the electric fence. It's a heart breaker to hear and worse to watch and actually witness. It will send two big grown people (me and Lee) cowering behind buildings so we don't have to watch. Hearing is bad enough.

Why are we being such cruel people and why hasn't someone locked us up so we can't keep torturing kids? Because everyone else in the area is trying to use electric fence too, to contain their animals. With our steep hillsides it's not the easiest thing in the world to run woven wire fence everywhere. Plus, we move our electric fence around to have the goats grazing in different areas.

But, training our beloved babies to the fence is very hard on us and not exactly so easy on them either. Our fence is not the nice fancy permanent electric 5 strand fence with electric on every other wire. Ours is the two strand that you can take down and move easily, unfortunately the deer have also learned to take it down and move it easily. They just don't put it back up, but leave it strung on the ground everywhere, just waiting for an innocent woman to walk by and step on it and get a good hair curling shock.

Years ago, one of the first things we learned was that when a goat touches the electric fence, they don't back up and say "Oh My", and stay away from it. They just charge on through. Personally, if I touch something that hurts, I back away fast. Not a goat. They go screaming on through. It's almost like they are saying, "Ouch! That Hurt! I might as well finish killing myself!"

So, you end up with our type of electric fencing broke down and strung everywhere and with goats blitzed out of their minds and in no mood to return home, when they are first learning the electric fence. Now we do things a little differently. In training the babies to the electric fence, we make sure they are at first kept in an area that actually has woven wire fence as the perimeter and then on the inside of the fence we put a single electric fence. I tie little tags or ribbons on it so they can see this extra strand of wire. I save torn plastic grocery bags to rip into strips and tie on the electric fence. Their attention then is drawn to the electric fence by the wavy little strips and when they get zapped they know that anything with a strip of plastic tied to it is dangerous.

Having the electric on the inside of the woven wire works well in their training area in that when they hit the electric fence wire (at first curious as to why plastic strips are on the wire, put there by some evil woman) and they naturally shoot forward instead of away, the woven wire stops them from escaping. They learn fast to stay away from the strand of wire with the strips on it and eventually from a strand of wire in general.

In the old days when we tried training the goats by just using two strands of electric fence. A goat or goats would walk up and touch the fence, get shocked, shoot forward into the fence, tear down the fence, and we would have a whole herd

escaping in terror . If for some reason one touching goat shoots forwards and doesn't tear the fence down but is now on the other side of the fence away from her buddies, she is usually so freaked out by it all she's next to impossible to catch. And, if you do catch her and she hasn't totally turned her mind off and ran back through the fence, really tearing it down this time to get back to her friends, you have to find someplace to get her back through the fence. Either someone has to walk all the way back to the house to turn off the electric fencer so you can lift up the bottom wire and convince her the fence is really off and push her back through, or in a fit of frustration and he-man strength and aggravation, you just pick the goat up (usually the two hundred pounders run through) and drop her on the correct side of the electric fence.

So, you can see why we are now starting new goats in woven wire enclosures with a strand of electric fence to the inside of the fence. When they get zapped and they shoot forwards, that woven wire will stop them and they don't escape. They learn real quick to stay away from the single strand of wire then. No confusion as to what exactly bit them.

There is an odd thing about goats and their tendency to want to run through anything that shocks them instead of just backing away. Let's say they are on a side of the woven wire fence that doesn't have the electric fence on it, but it's on the other side of the woven wire for another pen. I've seen "trained" babies time and again walk up the woven wire fence, stick their heads through and look at the electric wire on that other side and go, "Hmmm. Wonder what this is?" and stick their moist little noses right on it. Of course, the result is a screaming kid and them trying to go through the woven wire so they can continue going on through the offending electric fence. Where's their reverse? Can't they go backwards? I know that gear is on them. I see them use it all the time in play or wiggling out of briar patches. Whatever, once zapped it's full steam ahead.

When we are selling 4-H kids or babies in general and they are in their "training for electric fence" pens, Lee and I make customers very nervous. You see, we have been "training" these kids usually for a couple of days and have been hearing our sweeties getting zapped and crying out and we are nervous wrecks. We hate to hear our babies getting zapped, but they have to learn to respect the fence before they can go out onto our hilly pastures. So, we are wild eyed as we walk through the pens with the customers, on the look out for babies about to touch the electric fence. These are big pens so it's not like the kids can easily get zapped. But, zapped they will get eventually.

The customers are totally naïve, not realizing we are doing electric fence training. Oh, training the customers to not touch the electric fence is really easy. You just scream hysterically, "DON'T TOUCH THE ELECTRIC FENCE!" and they pretty much stay away from it.

The customers don't fully understand the electric fence training of the kids until they see you staring at a kid approaching the electric wire and hear you moan under your breath, "No, no, no, no, no." This rivets their attention to where you are staring in horror. And as the kid puts it's little nose on the electric fence, everyone hears a loud ZAP! And you screech the same time the kid does, that customer's attention is really focused on the electric wire now and any innocent approaching kid to it.

Soon the customer is clutching your arm and saying, "There goes another one. She's going to touch it!" And you both screech the same time the kid touches it. It's

very nerve wracking.

But, I'd have to say business gets done quickly. By this time the customers very hurriedly pick the kid they want, slams the money in your hand, and takes off before another kid wanders over to investigate the electric wire. Business is done in record time as you both hurry out of the pens.

So electric fence training continues each year on the farm in order to make electric fence wise goats that can calmly go anywhere and stay in a two strand wire electric fence. It's just the two frazzled looking owners with the nervous twitches and the tendency to screech out suddenly that look odd on the place.

THE END

### **Helpful hints:**

Freezing buckets of water can cause lots of extra chore time this time of year. I have two buckets that I use for my dog's water. In the morning, I place the frozen bucket, upside down by one of the trees in the yard and leave it for the day. The dog gets a fresh bucket of water and the sun melts just enough in the other bucket to get the ice out without banging it against a rock (and breaking it). As a bonus, the tree gets a little water.

That's all for this month, ...  
See you next month!!

## *Leslie, The Goat Source*

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