



The Goat Source

The Goat Source Newsletter

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Here is your Feb.. issue of The Goat Source Newsletter. February is starting out cold and windy around here. The goats are all woolly, puffy and fat and I am staying by the fire alot! I'm starting to get the gardening fever - I've started lettuce in among my house plants. The neighbors are almost done kidding and I won't even start until the end of April!

Please feel free to pass this newsletter on to your friends.

What's New This Month?

- Feeds and Feeding
- Build a Mineral Feeder (Video)
- This Month's Quiz...
- Classified Ads
- SHANNIGANS & KID SLOBBERS by Connie Reynolds
- Answer to the January Quiz/Congratulations to the prize winner.
- Helpful Hints

Feeds and Feeding

Back when I started raising goats, I didn't have any idea how to feed them. I wanted a "magic formula" that told me just exactly what I needed to feed and how much. Unfortunately, this doesn't exist! Feeding any animal is both an art and a science. "The eye of the master fattens the cattle" is a very old quote and applies to feeding goats as well as cattle!

First, to know what to feed you have to divide you animals into different classes.

- 1) Are they meat, milk, fiber, pet or pack animals?
- 2) How old are they?
- 3) Are they drylotted or on pasture?
- 4) What kind of pasture?
- 5) Male or Female?
- 6) If they are does, are they dry or lactating, and are they pregnant?

7) Are they wethers (or bucks)? Urinary calculi must be taken in account in feeding them.

Goats are ruminants first off and this means that they can digest coarse and fibrous feeds

that may not be palatable to other livestock. This doesn't mean you can throw a pregnant doe out in the back pasture and expect her to survive on brush! As a rule of thumb, the animals that are working hard (milking, pregnant, or traveling long distances (as in the case of active pack goats) or growing, need more and better quality feed. Usually this means a grain supplement of some type. Bucks during breeding season will need to be supplemented, although the challenge with them, is getting them to eat anything at all! Some bucks stop eating totally during breeding and become very thin and run down.

So, lets look at what feeds to offer:

1) Pasture or browse

a) Improved pasture. Great if you can get the goats to eat grass. It is not their first choice. Weedy pastures seem to be more interesting to goats and they will pick and choose what to eat. My goats love bind weed!!

b) Browse or scrub. Make sure none of the browse is toxic!

2) Grain

a) High protein rations. Protein and quantity should be adjusted to the type of goat

you are feeding. Are they making milk or are you raising meat goats?

b) Total mixed rations. I don't recommend them, simply because the goats need what is called the "scratch factor" provided by long stemmed hay or browse.

3) Hay

a) Alfalfa, great for milking does and growing kids. My first choice!

b) Grass, depending on the type of grass - use for goats that are not working hard. My

goats usually won't eat most types of grass hay. Makes very expensive bedding!!

c) Mixed - I like to feed mixed grass/alfalfa to my dry animals. They like it better

with less grass.

d) Oat, bean, or other types. In some areas, oddball types of hay are used. You are on

your own with these - I have never fed any of them! I know mine like oat hay, they eat the oats off and lay on the rest.

4) Minerals

a) Salt, loose, white and free choice.

b) Baking soda, loose and free choice (helps control "acid rumen" in animals fed

large quantities of grain)

c) Minerals, chosen with your area in mind. Some areas are higher in natural minerals

than others and you should look at your mineral mix accordingly. Minerals need to be palatable or the goats won't eat them, and they should be offered in a feeder that the goats can't get dirty or waste the minerals. See my video on building a mineral feeder.

5) Water - This is listed last but is actually the most important thing you need to offer you goats. Water should be clean and fresh and when it is really cold outside, some like it warm. Some of mine actually like it HOT! Offer free choice!! If it is freezing outside and you can't keep ice free water in front of your animals, offer it at least twice daily and as much as they want.

Here are some websites with more thoughts on feeding. Keep cost in mind, some feeds are so expensive as to be totally not practical!

<http://www.attra.org/attra-pub/meatgoat.html#feeding>

<http://extension.missouri.edu/xplor/agguides/dairy/g03990.htm>

<http://www.sa-boergoats.com/asp/4H/Goat-Facts/Feeding-and-Showing-4H-Market-Goats.asp>

<http://www.boergoats.com/clean/librarysub.php?cat=FEEDING>

http://goatconnection.com/articles/publish/article_54.shtml

<http://www.tennesseeameatgoats.com/articles2/feedinggoatsproperly.html>

Mineral Feeder Video

Check out this video I made showing how I made a mineral feeder for my goats.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GgE54LEoMYI>

This Month's Quiz...

What is a Body Condition Score? Why is it important? Remember - the first correct answer to the quiz gets a prize! Email your answers to me at [The Goat Source](#).

Classified Ads...I Love Goats! Pocket Knives Laser Engraved folding pocket knife (opens to 6 ¾ inches). Black composite handle with pocket clip. Every goat person needs a good knife!!

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SHANNIGANS & KID SLOBBERS

by

Connie S. Reynolds

autumnfarmsboers.com

Autumn Farm

Ravenswood, WV

Sometimes I wonder what the neighbors think. I don't often wonder what people think. But, the neighbors that see me day in day out working on the farm, with the goats, with the hay, well, you just wonder if they understand what is exactly going on. Because if they did, I'd go ask them what's going on, because I half don't understand it myself and I'm the one doing the goat farming!

Anyway, I do wonder what the neighbors think. After all, they don't usually get sound with what they watch. It's like watching a colorized version of a silent movie when they watch me and Lee work the farm. I use to think I was a little bit egotistical in thinking the neighbors watched what we did on the farm, but kept getting confirmation that they knew exactly what we were doing every day, but not necessarily understanding why we did it.

How I know they were keeping up on everything was their openness about asking me what on earth I'm doing. Many times I've headed to the mail box and got stopped by the neighbors who had done a mad rush on their 4-wheelers or trucks to just ask me what on earth I had been doing earlier. And, I'd get phone calls wanting

to know what was going on or to tell me if they thought the livestock guard dog had treed something on our place or ask what a certain goat was doing.

Take the other morning, I was walking out through the deep grass in the field opening up gates to let the goats go to pasture. As I was happily walking along, sloshing through the thick dewy grass, I stepped on the end of something and it rose up out of the tall grass about two foot from my leg.

We have a lot of snakes in the area, two types of which are poisonous, but they might as well all be poisonous as afraid as I am of snakes. When that long thin shape rose up out of the grass, my heart leaped to my ears and started pounding. Most people say their hearts leap to their throats, mine has always been athletic and would jump a little higher.

I stopped in my tracks and slowly turned my head to the right to see what was facing my leg now. Sleek and shiny from the dew, the stick just stayed up in the air while I was standing on the end of it. Part of my brain had recognized that it was just a stick, the rest of me had turned into a flurry of action. I was half way up the valley before that part of my brain that recognized I had stepped on a stick could slow the rest of my body down.

Now think what the neighbors saw. They saw me jauntily walking up the valley, opening gates, singing (or talking to myself, they weren't sure which since they don't get sound), looking happy and pleased with life. Then they see me stop dead in my tracks. I stay there a few seconds and then they see me slowly turning my head to the right to look down at something sticking up out of the grass. They see the stick. Then they see me suddenly go into warp drive and I'm half way up the valley before I stop. And, they wonder, just what was wrong with that stick? Was there a little mouse in the deep grass waving it around, threatening my life? Why on earth did Connie streak up the valley like a bear was after her? What was wrong with that stick and should they be careful of sticks in the future? Evidently there was something about them they hadn't realized before.

Then I really wonder what the neighbors are thinking when the very next morning, while walking the same route, I step on the same stick, and do it all over again. I'm half way up the valley before I can stop. I know that I have stepped on the same stick, I know that it is a stick, yet I can't stop my gut reaction of getting out of there. This probably just confirms the fact to the neighbors that sticks are indeed dangerous or that I am wackier then a June bug and need to be closely watched, which they do.

We have a run-in shed near the road that the neighbors can easily see if they ride their 4-wheelers or trucks back and forth. In this run-in shed area are two young does with their 5 kids. I'm out there daily feeding, checking over the moms and kids. Okay, Okay. Mainly I'm playing with the kids. I was just trying to sound more professional about checking on them. I sit down and usually have two or three kids at one time crawling all over me, wanting attention, using me like a trampoline. This one particular kid, Autumn Sugar, is fascinated by my hair. She likes to crawl up into my lap and then reach up and chew on my hair. And, if she could, she would purr like a kitten while I pet her and tell her what a grand kid she is. This is one of the many perks to goat farming, hugging kids.

So, what the neighbors usually see, unless they are on their 4-wheelers on the road looking directly into the shed, is me going into the run-in shed with my normal farm hair style (known as forgetting to comb your hair that morning) and

coming out with my hair kinked up with some type of gooey stuff (known as kid slobbers) because Autumn Sugar has been chewing on my hair again. They probably wonder what on earth is going on that my hair style is one way going into the run-in shed and another coming out. They probably consider it an improvement, but I'm sure they wonder how I do it.

So, you see I can't help but wonder about what the neighbors think. But, I'm sure it works both ways. They are definitely wondering about me.
The End

Answer to the January Quiz:

Here are the answers that were sent in for the quiz. Thank You to all the participants!

Guillaume wrote:

* A ruminant is an animal that digests its food many times. This food is usually tough plant material like grasses. A ruminant will digest its food in two steps, first by eating the raw material and regurgitating a semi-digested form known as cud, then eating the cud, a process called ruminating.

* Ruminants are different from other mammals in that they have 4 stomachs and chew their cud. In ruminants the 4 digestive chambers accommodate a large number of bacteria which help digest the plant material.

Keith wrote:

Ruminant is a name given to an animal that actually creates its own food nutrients in that it has the ability to synthesize essential amino acids and B-complex vitamins. Ruminant is the name given to a herbivorous animal that chews its cud and has split hooves. It is an animal with 4 stomachs and the 4 stomach's in order are the:

- 1). Rumen
- 2). Reticulum
- 3). Omasum
- 4). Abomasum or true stomach.

Melissa wrote:

Animal with a four part stomach. Cows, Goats, camels, deer, giraffes and ox. They digest their food in several steps the first by coughing up and chewing cud.

Merle wrote:

A ruminant is any artiodactyl mammal that digests its food in two steps, first by eating the raw material and regurgitating a semi-digested form known as cud from within their first stomach, known as the rumen. The process of again chewing the cud to break down the plant matter and stimulate digestion is called ruminating. Ruminants include cattle, goats, sheep, camels, alpacas, llamas, giraffes, American Bison, European bison, yaks, water buffalo, deer, wildebeest and antelope. The suborder Ruminantia includes all those except the camels and llamas, which are Tylopoda. Ruminants also share another anatomical feature in that they all have an even number of toes.

Louise wrote:

A ruminant digests its food in two steps by first eating the raw material then regurgitating the cud from its first stomach, then they chew the cud to break down the plant matter and stimulate digestion. Mammals chew or cut their food with their teeth, swallows it and it passes thru to the stomach, and intestines. They do not chew cud.

Here is the definition from Answers.com

Any of various hoofed, even-toed, usually horned mammals of the suborder Ruminantia, such as cattle, sheep, goats, deer, and giraffes, characteristically having a stomach divided into four compartments and chewing a cud consisting of regurgitated, partially digested food.

Guillaume was first with his answer and wins the prize for this month!
Congratulations and I will contact you in a few days!!

Helpful hints:

A dry erase board is handy out in the barn for noting heats, breeding dates, etc. I write down a doe ID number, corresponding to her neck chain number, for each animal, that stays on the board for a quick reference. Great if you need a certain doe out of the pen and your help doesn't have any idea which "black doe with the frosted ears, the big one in the first pen" is the one you want. A neck chain number is a great help! The board is also great to list grain amounts and health notes.

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

Leslie, The Goat Source

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