



The Goat Source

The Goat Source Newsletter *Volume 3 Number 1 January 2006*

Here is your January issue of The Goat Source Newsletter. I hope your holiday season was enjoyable and that your New Year will be prosperous and fun!! Be sure and visit my website and see the new things I have added. Please feel free to pass this newsletter on to your friends.

What's New This Month?

- NAIS – Livestock Monitoring Program – A Threat to Our Privacy!
 - Body Condition - How to Tell If Your Goats are Fat or Thin
 - This Month's Quiz...
 - Classified Ads
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 - Answer to the January Quiz
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National Animal Identification Standards - A Threat to Our Privacy

When I first started this newsletter, I had an article on the Scrapie Identification Program that all sheep and goat raisers were required to enroll in. It has come to my attention that the government is in the process of implementing a program that would **require ALL** livestock owners to register their premises and every animal on it with the Animal and Plant Health

Inspection Service. All movement of animals would have to be reported. If the government decided your operation was a “risk” (their definition) they would be empowered to seize and destroy all of your animals. You would have no recourse and no compensation.

This would prove to be a huge burden to most small livestock producers and a gross violation of our right to privacy. It sure sounds like “Big Brother” to me! Now is the time to protest to our elected representatives before it is too late. Once the government implements this, it will be virtually impossible to get rid of it (have you ever seen a government program that is disbanded once it is funded and running?) It will provide us with another layer of inefficient, costly and invasive bureaucracy. To find information on this program, first go to the government website dealing with it:

<http://animalid.aphis.usda.gov/nais/index.shtml>

Read the Draft Strategic Plan and the Draft Program Standards.

Visit these websites for information on opposition to this program:

<http://www.stopanimalid.org/index.php>

<http://www.backwoodshome.com/forum/yabb/forum.pl?board=Animals:action=display:num=1135349465>

On my website on the Articles page there is a PDF file with more information. Feel free to copy it and pass it on.

If you think this won't affect you, think again...

- If you own animals (sheep, goats, horses, llamas, alpacas, chickens, pigs, bison, deer, elk or fish).
- If you produce your own meat, milk or fiber
- If you buy home grown farm items
- If you value your privacy
- If you value your freedom

Big Brother is alive and well and coming to your neighborhood.

Fat or Skinny? Body Condition Scoring (A teaching tool)

By Carolyn Eddy

This time of year it's hard to tell whether or not those fuzzy goats are fat enough. Here's a quick no-brainer way that only requires you put your hands on the goat to tell. This scores the goat from 1 to 3 and, while not really complex helps you make an instant assessment.

First: Run your finger across the ribs parallel to the ground and the spine. Start at the front of the ribs about where the goat's barrel starts to round back in. (Approx. 4-6 inches from the spine on a small kid up to about 8-12 on a larger goat.

Then, take one hand and make a fist. Then with the other hand, run the index finger of the other hand along three places on the fisted hand.

1. Just above the back of the hand on the fingers, (Where a ring would sit if you were wearing one on each finger). This will feel very bumpy, as you will hit over and between each finger.

2. On the back of the hand just below where the fingers are attached and just below the knuckles. Remember you are still making a fist. This should feel very smooth.

3. Across the back of the hand just above the wrist. Unless you are very thin, you should feel no bumps.

HOW TO SCORE:

After checking each spot on your hand, compare it to your feeling on the ribs. If it matches the first, the goat is too thin. If it matches the second the goat is about right, maybe slightly thin but healthy. If it matches the third the goat is on the verge of too fat. If you can't feel any bumps at all, it's diet time.

The beauty of this method is that you can apply it quickly as you walk through the barn. The only way to tell if a fuzzy goat is fat enough is with your hands. You can do this with every goat a couple of times a week and see if problems are building or if it's just right. And you need no special equipment, in fact, after you get good at it you can just run the finger on the ribs and you will know if the goat is losing, gaining, or staying the same.

Carolyn Eddy
"Sweet Goat Mama"

www.goatracksmagazine.com

Thank you Carolyn for giving us an excellent teaching tool!!

This Month's Quiz...

Does the tapeworm (*Moniezia expansa*) require an intermediate host?

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**Classified Ads...**

Get the Completely Digital Beginners Guide for only 10\$ See it here:

[http://www.goatsource.com/completely\\_digital\\_beginner.htm](http://www.goatsource.com/completely_digital_beginner.htm)

Contains many useful resources for the beginning goat owner!!

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Comments on Management

By Jan Huffaker (Excerpt from an email in the Yahoo packgoats list)

I am amazed at how often I see and hear about poorly raised and abused livestock, including horses, cattle, and goats. I am so glad to hear about the people in this group who take in abused goats and bring them back to health. With any abused animal, it takes mainly lots of time and good, consistent care. They may never come back to 100% condition, but at least we can make their lives relatively pain-free and healthy and happy.

I just cannot understand how people can starve an animal and sleep at night. I know there are some people who are very ignorant and just don't understand what a healthy animal looks like, but most of the time it's just plain carelessness, usually coupled with the excuse that they don't want to spend any money on the animal. My answer is, if they don't have or want to spend the money, they shouldn't own the animal in the first place and they should sell it, give it away, or put it down rather than let it suffer.

And for me, good, basic animal care makes economic sense. A shiny, healthy, strong animal is much easier to keep, makes a much better pack animal/breeding stock, than a sickly animal. I'd much rather spend a bit more for good clean hay and basic vet care like worming and vaccinations, then spend a fortune treating sickly animals.

When I first came to the Akron, CO area, I worked for a rancher whose cattle herd was part of a university research project. This rancher was an excellent cattleman, his cows and calves were big and healthy. He didn't do anything fancy, just good grass and hay, daily observation (of 400+ mother cows), preventative care, and immediate treatment if a problem occurred. I learned a lot about good livestock management from him. Anyway, twice his herd was divided into groups and used to research antibiotic feed additives and hormone ear implants. Both times the additives had little impact on his cattle's growth, and weren't economically feasible. The additive cost more than the increased gain netted. But both times the university researchers said that the additives were useful in herds where the management wasn't so good and the cattle not so healthy. So if you had a poorly managed herd, the synthetic additives would help compensate for the poor management and increase the weight of your beef animals.

This taught me that purely from a pocketbook point of view, it's better to have good, sound, healthy animals than to cut corners. I realize I'm preaching to the choir here, that most goatpackers really care for their animals and will go the extra mile for their goats. To you newbies out there, just a reminder that cheap feed that is moldy or full of undesirable stuff is costly in the long run. Poor fences and facilities are also costly (I learned that especially raising pigs!). It only takes one broken leg or such from a bad fence for you to wish you had put in a proper fence from the beginning.

Daily observation can stop a lot of problems before they explode into big problems. Take advantage of vaccines and wormers as needed, keep their feet trimmed, and if you are inexperienced with goats it doesn't hurt to have someone come over and look things over with a veteran's eye. Also, buying 'cheap' goats can be costly in the long run. I've had cheap or free goats that were okay, but I find you usually get what you pay for, and buying kids or packgoats from an experienced, reputable goat raiser can save you headaches later on.

My appreciation to those who are helping these abused animals recover!

Carpe Diem!

Jan Huffaker

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Thanks to Jan for her kind permission to reprint her comments!

Answer to the January Quiz:

Yes, the intermediate host, in this case, is a tiny beetle mite that lives in pastures. For an interesting animated explanation, see <http://www.imagecyte.com/animations/moniezia.html>
A heavy infection of tape worms can cause impaction and death in goats. A light load usually does no harm and causes no clinical symptoms. Younger animals may be more severely affected than adults. Consult with your vet for what wormers to use for this pest!!

Helpful hints:

Use WD-40™ on your gate hinges and in locks to prevent squeaks and freezing. Safe and non toxic to your goats. Its main ingredient is fish oil!!

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

Leslie, The Goat Source

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