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Presidents Brief:

Welcome to our spring edition of our quarterly newsletter.

This edition has a focus on showing as it is only a little over 5 weeks until the NZBGBA's major show of the year.

The NZBGBA 2015 South Island Champs are to be held in Christchurch 11-13th November 2015. The judge for this year is Warwick Ferguson.

Other shows with Boer Goat Classes:

Otago Taieri A & P Show 23rd January 2016

Upper Clutha A & P Show 11-12th March 2016

Most breeders will be well into kidding for this season now. I hope you all are having (or have had) a good breeding season and your kids on the ground are growing well.

Last year with the 25th anniversary of the forming of the NZBGBA, lapel badges were made. Additional badges are still available at a purchase price of \$20.00. Please contact myself if you wish to purchase badges.

During the winter the executive have started putting together some promotional material for use by members when promoting goats. These are currently in development, with each executive member contributing on a variety of topics based on their own experiences. These will not be definitive but some starting points for conversations.

Here in North Canterbury we are coming out of a drought. Keeping condition on does going into kidding and post kidding have been very challenging, with low levels of rain, pasture growth has been limited. Hopefully this will come right with the onset of Spring.

With the positive feedback from the last AGM, the executive will be looking at continuing this format for the next AGM. Would members please think about possible locations and topics they would like on next year's agenda, and come back to the executive by the end of 2015.

Remember that this newsletter will only be interesting, informative and successful if members continue to provide some of the content and photos.

Regards Brian Loughhead

New Zealand Boer Goat Breeders Association

South Island Boer Goat Championships

2015 marks a major milestone for this show – the 10th Anniversary.

The first show was held in November 2006 with a good number of breeders and Boer goats present. The judge was Jackie Jordaan of the famous South African Stud #101. At the time Jackie was living in Australia and was very pleased to be able to help educate the South Island breeders about showing and breeding. With a lot of hard work, donated time and perseverance this show has grown and has become an accepted feature of one of the biggest agriculture shows in the Southern Hemisphere.

The following is the CV of your 2015 Judge:

I have been breeding Boer goats for 19 years and have been a member of the NZBGBA for the same time. Currently I am also a member of the Australian Boer Goat Association and the South African Boer Goat Association. For the past 3 years I have been a NZBGBA Executive member.

During my 19 years I have been fortunate to breed one or two show champions and also to participate in both the NZBGBA North Island and NZBGBA South Island Boer Goat Championships.

My judging career started in 2004 under South African Senior Judge Jackie Jordaan and I committed to becoming the best I could when South African Boer Goat Association Vice President and Senior Judge Francois Maritz took a Level 1 school in Hamilton. In 2008 I crossed the Tasman to do a Level Two School under Francois Maritz and Theuns Botha. During 2012 I travelled to South Africa and passed the first step of their Senior Boer Goat course. During this year I have passed a Level 2 “S” school in Victoria, being one step away from the prestigious Australian Level 3.

In between these achievements there have been trips to the Australian National Boer Goat Show in 2004, 2009 and to the South African National Boer Goat Show in 2008, 2012.

Actual judging of shows include many in central & upper North Island, Wanaka Show – a few times, 2010 Goulburn Show – Aust, 2011 Royal Brisbane - Aust, 2011 Royal Melbourne - Aust, 2013 Shepparton Show – Aust, 2014 Kyabram Show – Aust.

Education and training is always on going, the latest being in May, I was Ring Steward / Ring announcer at the Australasian Show in Cohuna – Aust and next week I will be Ring Steward at the Shepparton Show and the following day, one of the Presenters for a Level 1 Judges School – Aust.

Hope to see you in the ring

Warwick Ferguson
South African Accredited International Boer Goat Judge

SHOWING...

A lot of breeders may see showing as too much effort and criticise those who show (any animal) as “pot hunters”. However for the serious breeder the reasons for showing are primarily two fold, as a marketing exercise and an educational tool. As a marketing exercise it is a good way to get out and promote your stud and the best of what you are breeding as well as the Boer goat industry in general. Banners, business cards, taking the time to speak to the public many of whom have never seen Boer goats before, and are amazed at their size, all help to sell your animals and promote the breed especially at agricultural shows in your area.

As an educational tool it encourages you to benchmark your animals with others. We have all been guilty of staring out the window admiring the beautiful animals we have in the paddock, but until you get out in the real world and compare what you are breeding with others you will never know if you are moving forward in your breeding program towards the “ideal” Boer goat. Obviously they will still be beautiful to you even if they are not winners, and the animal with the red ribbon is longer than yours, wider in front or carries more meat behind. However looking at those animals with the red we are motivated to breed the next generation better. And this is what it is about, breeding for better conformation, more meat, more muscle and finally the icing on top an ennobled head. This is the commercial reality, breeding a better meat goat, and the closer we get at breeding this at the top end of our stud program the better all our goats will be through these genetics.

The old adage “cock of the walk one week, feather duster the next” is certainly true of showing. Keep an open mind; enjoy the camaraderie and social side of showing as well as the networking it offers. Use the experience to honestly appraise where you are headed and how you can improve your animals to breed the “ideal goat”.

Following is an article by Marie Barnes, Micathel Boer Goat Stud, on her thoughts on showing...

Chasing the felt!

Ahh, Showing!

Love or hate it, it's been around a lot longer than the Boer Goat itself and from that perspective, there are many lessons to be learned from other livestock industries where showing has either made or broken the breed.

Shows and exhibiting livestock are an important part of rural culture, and many of us have been ‘chasing felt’ in various and sometimes numerous industries for generations. – So why do we do it, and why is it such a contentious subject? Showing, or lets refine our definitions here, the exhibition of **livestock** has been around a long time and serves more purposes than merely opportunity for committees to argue at length.

In this discussion, I am only making comparison of the exhibition of Boer goats with like industries, in particular sheep and beef, and ignoring the irrelevant examples of the dog, cat, cavie and show hack world – because they are truly just beauty contests and the owners don't tend to eat their unsuccessful show entries!!!!



An agricultural show is a showcase of the finest produce from every industry that is conducted in the region. It is about promoting agriculture to the community, promoting your produce to your peers and your clients and what should be friendly competition amongst those with like interest. For many who show, it's not the ‘broadie’ that is the most treasured prize – it may be a highly commended ribbon with line-up of extremely high quality animals in front of you, or a fifth with one you worked hard to create, and sometimes even the kind word of encouragement from a decent judge is as good as any ribbon.

With any subjective livestock exhibition, the competition result is decided by a human being (the judge) and we all say it, but we really need to remember it – “the result is just one person’s opinion on the day”.

And I guess that’s where the argument comes in that shows are irrelevant in our industry. The cynic would say – ‘They are nothing more than a subjective assessment of an overfed, over groomed caricature of what we should be producing, by one person’s opinion on the day’.

Well that could be true and it was certainly nice to see the overfed animals penalised at some of the major shows this year. Overfed and animals of extreme breed type were popular in the cattle and sheep show world in the 1990’s, until buyers realised that they were not getting the results from stock that their ribbons would imply and breeders toned down their Hollywood diets and produced a more relevant type of animal that was functional and not a freak of feed and breed character. Something for us all to think about in that one, maybe we can learn a few lessons....

Showing if well organised, with a good venue, a good judge and competitors of fair spirit remains one of the best ways to promote our breed, and compare our stock with our industry peers. A decent judge will recognise and reward sound animals with commercially relevant traits, he/she will find them even if you’ve missed a few hairs on the tail, and will also see through layers of fat put on in an attempt to hide a fault!!!

I remain a supporter of the development of methods of objective measurement that can compare the performance of various bloodlines within our breed for commercially relevant traits, but there must remain a balance between objective and subjective assessment. A well run show is a darn nice way of having a day of subjective assessment!

If showing were totally irrelevant for our beef, sheep and goat industries then how can the Australian Sheep and Wool Show and events like Beef09 continue to grow and thrive? Why do the major studs from those industries still make the effort to compete and be seen at our Royal Shows all over the country – we can all look up where they stand on Breed plan...

The answer is simple, showing isn’t everything, and neither is objective measurement. There needs to be a balance of the two, and a show is a good marketing stage if you are confident with your product.

So, to those of you, who like me, love the shows for the atmosphere, the experience and just occasionally for catching that piece of elusive felt, let’s do our best to ensure that we endeavour to show the best of our breed and not chase a particular trait or fashion to the point of danger.

And to those of you who can’t understand it, just take it all with a grain of salt, because at the end of the day, most of us really do understand that our most important judges are the ones with chequebooks who return each year as satisfied repeat buyers!!!!

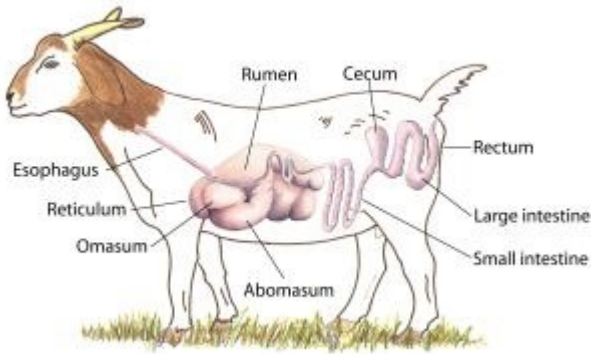
We just like the competition!

Marie Barnes

Micathel Boer Goat Stud
Australian Level 3 Judge

The NZBGBA thanks Marie for her approval to use this article.

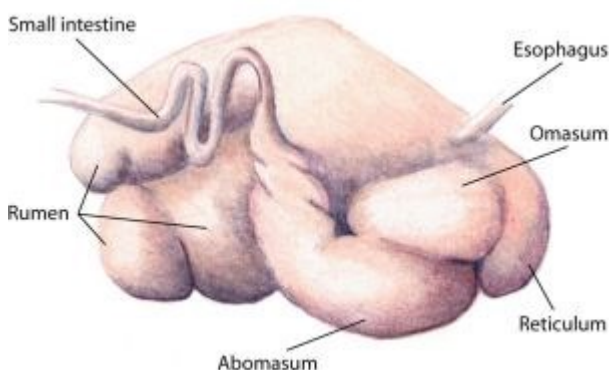
The ruminant digestive system



Digestive tract of a goat.

Goats are ruminants, animals with a four-compartment stomach, as are cattle, sheep and deer. The compartments are the reticulum, rumen, omasum and abomasum, or true stomach. Monogastric or simple-stomached animals such as humans, dogs and cats consume food that undergoes acidic breakdown in the stomach and enzymatic digestion in the small intestine, where most nutrients are absorbed. In ruminants, feed first undergoes microbial digestion in the reticulum and rumen -- together, often called the reticule-rumen -- prior to acidic digestion in the abomasum and enzymatic digestion and nutrient absorption in the small intestine. The microbial digestion in the reticule-rumen allows ruminants to consume and utilize grass, hay, leaves and browse.

The reticulum and rumen form a large fermentation vat that contains microorganisms, mainly bacteria, that breakdown and digest feedstuffs, including the fibrous component of grass, forbs, and browse that cannot be digested by monogastric animals. Some of the breakdown products produced through digestion of feed by bacteria are absorbed by the animal through the rumen wall and can supply a large part of the energy needs. The rest of the by-products of digestion, undigested feed and ruminal microorganisms flow out of the reticule-rumen into the omasum where large feed particles are trapped for further digestion and water is reabsorbed. Material then flows into the abomasum where acidic digestion takes place and then to the small intestine for further enzymatic digestion and nutrient absorption.



Rumen, reticulum, omasum and abomasum.

The rumen provides several advantages to the goat in addition to digestion of dietary fibre. The bacteria in the rumen are capable of synthesizing all B vitamins needed. Bacteria can also synthesize protein from nitrogen recycled in the body, which may be advantageous in low protein diets. For proper ruminal function, goats require a certain level of fibre in the diet, measured as crude fibre, acid detergent fibre or neutral detergent fibre. They have bacteria in the rumen that can detoxify anti-nutritional factors like tannins.

This enables goats to better utilize feedstuffs containing high tannin levels such as those found in browse. There are very few situations in which a goat will not consume adequate fibre, but they may do so when being fed a very high-grain diet. Inadequate fibre consumption can then lead to several disease conditions. The most serious disease condition is acidosis, or an extremely low pH in the rumen, causing decreased feed consumption.

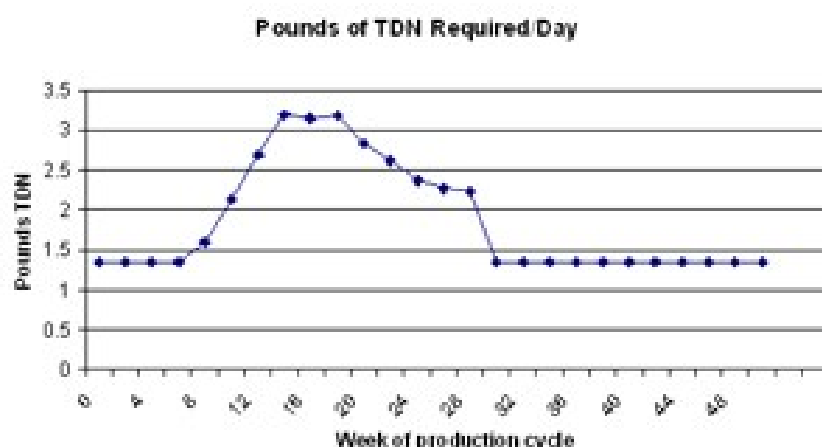
When ruminants are born, the first three compartments of the stomach are underdeveloped and the stomach functions similar to that of a monogastric animal. This enables absorption of antibodies in colostrum and efficient utilization of nutrients in milk. As the young ruminant consumes solid feed, especially high in fibre, and the microbial population is established, the rumen is stimulated to develop. The rumen must have an acceptable degree of development for successful weaning.

The greatest asset goats have is the ability and tendency to utilize woody plants and weeds, not typically consumed by other species of animals like cattle and sheep, converting these plants into a saleable product. These plant species can be inexpensive sources of nutrients and make for a very profitable goat enterprise. Goats typically consume a number of different plant species in any one day and can utilize some poisonous plants because they do not consume levels high enough to be toxic. Similarly, goats are believed to have a relatively high ability to detoxify absorbed anti-nutritional factors. Goats are more resistant to bloating than other ruminants and after a brief adaptation may graze alfalfa without bloating.

The effect of the Kidding Season on Nutrient Requirements.

The nutrient requirements of does will change dramatically with each stage of reproduction. Requirements increase dramatically the last six weeks of gestation due to increasing foetal growth. They remain high in early lactation (kidding occurred on week 20 in chart). During the month prior to kidding and for the following three months, assuming weaning at 12 weeks of age, the doe will consume nearly as much nutrients as in the remaining eight months of the production cycle. Thus, during that time it makes sense to supply nutrients from an inexpensive source, typically pasture. The cost of providing the same nutrients as hay is more than twice that of pasture, and supplying through purchased feeds may be four to five times greater than for pasture.

Kidding should be planned for a time when pasture is rapidly growing. This period corresponds to late spring for pastures comprised of warm season forages such as Bermuda grass or native range, browse and forbs. But it could be either fall or early spring for cool season grasses such as ryegrass, wheat, orchard grass and fescue. Cool season grasses usually produce less forage per acre than warm season forages but generally are higher in energy and protein. The accompanying figure shows the relative production of cool and warm season forages for central Oklahoma. Consult a local pasture specialist or livestock specialist for local forage growth patterns. Rapidly growing pasture is high in protein and energy. A major consideration in determining the date to kid is level of forage production at that time. However, there are other considerations in selecting kidding date, such as parasites and market opportunities. Some markets provide a substantial price premium from kidding at a specific time of the year, such as producing prospect show wethers or registered animals. However, it may take a considerable market premium to cover the cost of purchased feed, so general reliance on pastures and forages is best.



This is based on American seasons but the information still applies to your Boer does. To give your kids the best start in life you need to feed your does well in the last month of gestation and the first 3 -4 weeks of lactation. A healthy, strong kid at birth will continue to grow quickly and cause few issues for the breeder.

Artificial Rearing of Kids

Sometimes it is necessary to bottle feed young kids due to death of the mother or the mother's refusing to take them. Milk feeding of commercial meat goats is usually not economical. It may be avoided by cross-fostering kids onto another doe as described under the goat management section. If a bottle raised kid is with other kids and does, it may learn to steal sufficient milk to raise itself. Kids can be raised on cow milk replacer, lamb milk replacer, or if neither is available, cow colostrum / milk.

It is very important that kids receive colostrum as soon as possible after birth but certainly within 12 hours of birth. After 12 hours, antibodies absorption decreases. Colostrum may be milked from another doe that recently kidded. Colostrum contains antibodies that strengthen the immune system for the first months of life. A kid should be fed 100g of colostrum per 1.6kg of weight (average birth weight 3.2kg, 200g of colostrum) at each of three feedings in the first 24 hours. If the kid is too weak to nurse, it is appropriate to provide the colostrum via eye dropper, small syringe or stomach tube. This does take some practice, but obtaining colostrum is critically important to kid survival. Whichever way you choose be very careful not to force the colostrum into the lungs of the kid.

Initially kids can be fed using a baby bottle or a nipple such as the Pritchard teat, which fits on a plastic fizzy bottle. Kids can be bottle fed twice a day, although three times a day the first 4 to 6 weeks of life may increase growth rate. Kids are very susceptible to bloating and other gastrointestinal problems from milk replacers that contain a high level of lactose due to use of dried whey in their formulation. Reduced-lactose milk replacers will reduce bloating problems. Adding yoghurt to each bottle daily can help control bloating.

To save stressing yourself and the kids a compartmented calf feeder can be the way to go if you are hand rearing a number of kids.

A calf starter feed (with a coccidiostat such as Rumensin or Baycox, sometimes called medicated) and high quality hay should be made available the 2nd week of life. Baycox can be used in the milk from week 2-6 to prevent coccidiosis. After 4 weeks of life, kids can be limit-fed milk at 500mls in the morning and again in the afternoon. This will stimulate consumption of starter feed and facilitate weaning.

Kids can be weaned after 8 weeks of age if they are consuming 85g of starter per day and weigh two and a half times their birth weight (about 10 kg). Weaning shock can be reduced by going to once-a-day milk feeding for several days to encourage consumption of the starter.

More kids have died due to over feeding rather than under feeding.

It is possible to rear kids on an adapted system of "Once a day feeding of calves" – see www.ngahiwifarms.co.nz

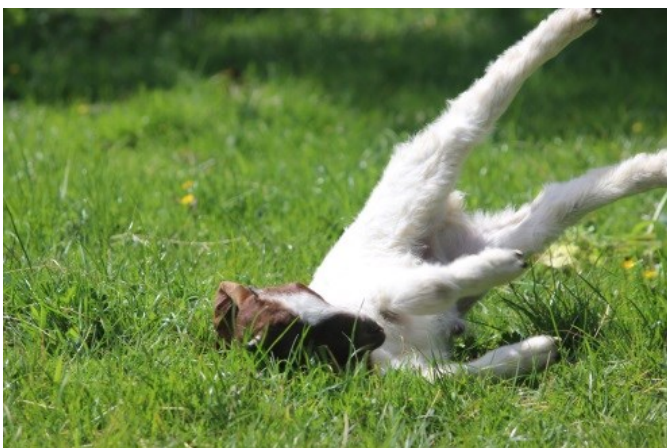
Goat photo Corner



Great to hang onto but not for Boers



Kid time exploring



Summer fun

Your goat related photo can appear here, take photo add suitable caption and send to ferg2@slingshot.co.nz