

KY 4-H Volunteer Forum-Meat Goat Project Basics

Speakers Notes

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NONE

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ONE OF THE MOST CHALLENGING PARTS OF THE GOAT PROJECT IS THE SELECTION OF THE PROSPECTS. HAVING THE ABILITY TO EVALUATE PROSPECTS AT A YOUNG AGE IS CRITICAL FOR THE SUCCESS OF YOUR PROJECT. THE FIRST PART OF TODAY'S PRESENTATION WILL COVER SELECTION OF BABY GOATS AS POTENTIAL SHOW PROSPECTS.

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AN EYE-CATCHING GOAT ALWAYS GETS A SECOND LOOK!

VARIOUS THINGS SERVE TO GIVE THE GOAT A STYLISH APPEARANCE:

FRONT ENDS, BALANCE, CORRECTNESS, COLOR, MUSCLE, ETC

NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS AREA, REALIZING THAT MOST GOATS ARE GENERALLY NOT ATTRACTIVE AND STYLISH, THIS AREA PLAYS A LARGE ROLE IN SELECTING THAT FUTURE CHAMPION.

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HERE IS AN EXTREMELY ATTRACTIVE, EYE-CATCHING GOAT. NOTE THE SUPER SMOOTH FRONT SHOULDER THAT IS STILL SUPPORTED BY TREMENDOUS WIDTH OF CHEST. ADDITIONALLY HE IS VERY LONG NECKED AND STYLISH IN HIS PATTERN. THE SIDE VIEW OF THIS GOAT SHOWS TREMENDOUS WIDTH AND MUSCLE SHAPE IN ADDITION TO HIS BALANCE AND OVERALL PROFILE. THIS GOAT IS DEFINITELY ONE THAT WOULD GET A SECOND LOOK WHEN ENTERING THE SHOWRING.

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COLOR IS ALSO AN ADVANTAGE THAT MANY GOATS POSSESS. WITHOUT A DOUBT, COLORING LIKE THIS KID POSSESSES WILL GET HIM LOOKED AT WHEN IN THE SHOWRING. HOWEVER ONE NEEDS TO REALIZE THAT IF A GOAT IS OF POOR QUALITY AND HAS COLOR LIKE THIS HE WILL GET NOTICED FOR HIS INFERIORITY IN QUALITY IN ADDITION TO HIS COLOR!

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THIS KID IS A GREAT EXAMPLE OF OVERALL BALANCE IN ADDITION TO QUALITY. ALTHOUGH THIS KID IS TRADITIONAL IN COLOR, HE WILL GET THAT EXTRA LOOK DUE TO HIS OVERALL LOOK , STYLE AND COMPLETENESS. THIS KID IS A GREAT EXAMPLE OF ONE THAT SHOULD CATCH A JUDGE'S EYE REGARDLESS OF THE TYPE OF GOAT THAT THE JUDGE MAY PREFER.

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THE SECOND AREA THAT I EVALUATE WHEN LOOKING AT BABY PROSPECTS IS STRUCTURE. ONE NEEDS TO REALIZE THAT REGARDLESS OF MUSCLE AND OTHER POTENTIAL CARCASS CHARACTERISTICS, NO GOAT WILL WIN THAT HAS SEVERE STRUCTURE ISSUES. DUE TO THIS FACT, WE LOOK FOR STRAIGHT LINED, LEVEL TOPPED GOATS THAT ARE SMOOTH DOWN THEIR TOPS. MANY PEOPLE HAVE TROUBLE EVALUATING TOPLINES IN GOATS DUE TO THE FACT THAT MOST GOATS ARE NOT LEVEL BEHIND THEIR SHOULDERS. THE STRAIGHTER LINED A GOAT IS DOWN ITS TOP, THE MORE ATTRACTIVE THAT GOAT WILL BE ON THE PROFILE.

THE RUMP SHOULD BE LONG, LEVEL AND HAVE A HIGH TAIL SETTING. AGAIN, MOST GOATS ARE ROUNDER THROUGH THEIR HIP AND THUS HAVE THE APPEARANCE OF BEING STEEPER RUMPED. WE PREFER GOATS TO BE AS LEVEL AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO PRESENT THE IDEAL PROFILE.

THE FEET AND LEGS ARE EXACTLY LIKE THOSE OF OTHER SPECIES, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF PASTERNS WHICH ARE PREFERRED TO BE MORE ERECT IN THEIR ANGLE TO THE FOOT.

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THIS KID IS A GREAT EXAMPLE OF ONE THAT IS "PERFECT" IN HIS TOPLINE STRUCTURE. HIS STRAIGHTNESS OF TOP AND LEVELNESS OF RUMP IS UNSURPASSED BY FEW IN THE GOAT WORLD. ADDITIONALLY, HIS CORRECTNESS OF FEET AND LEGS MAKE HIM AN IDEAL PACKAGE FROM THE STANDPOINT OF STRUCTURE!

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ALTHOUGH WE ARE EVALUATING MEAT GOATS, I RANK MUSCLE THIRD IN MY EVALUATION. TRUE, WE WANT GOATS EXTREMELY HEAVY MUSCLED YET THE COMBINATION OF THESE OTHER TRAITS IN ADDITION TO MUSCLE EXPRESSION RESULTS IN A FINISHED GOAT THAT IS MORE COMPETITIVE.

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GOATS, LIKE ALL OTHER SPECIES, ARE BEST EVALUATED FOR MUSCLING BY STUDYING THEIR WIDTH ON THE GROUND AS THEY WALK AWAY. REGARDLESS OF WEIGHT, CONDITION, ETC. GOATS THAT WALK WIDE ARE AND WILL ALWAYS BE HEAVY MUSCLED. GOATS THAT WALK NARROW WILL ALWAYS BE LIGHT MUSCLED. WE OFTEN HEAR PEOPLE SAY "THAT GOAT IS NARROW BECAUSE HE IS SKINNY. HE WILL BE HEAVY MUSCLED WHEN HE GETS BIG'. THAT IS A LIE. THE ONLY THING THAT PUSHES LEGS APART IS MUSCLE. NO MATTER WHAT SIZE THE GOAT IS, HE EITHER HAS MUSCLE OR HE DOES NOT! WIDTH FROM BEHIND ON THE GROUND NEVER RESULTS IN A LIGHT MUSCLED FINISHED GOAT.

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THE PLACES WE LOOK TO EVALUATE MUSCLING INCLUDE:

WIDTH OF BASE—WHICH WE JUST DISCUSSED.

STIFLE—THIS SHOULD BE THE THICKEST PART OF THE GOAT. (THE LOWER 1/3 OF HIS LEG)

HIP—THERE ARE TREMENDOUS DIFFERENCES IN HIP WIDTH WITHIN GOATS. JUST BE CAREFUL THAT AS YOU EVALUATE WIDTH OF HIP THAT YOU ARE NOT GIVING THE ADVANTAGE TO A FAT GOAT.

FOREARM—THE FACT THAT THIS MUSCLE IS NEVER COVERED BY FAT LEADS TO THE IMPORTANCE OF EVALUATING FOREARM CIRCUMFERENCE FOR TRUE MUSCLE SHAPE.

RACK—THIS MUSCLE IS THE TRUE TEST OF MUSCLE EXPRESSION IN A GOAT. DIFFERENCES IN RACK SHAPE CAN RANGE FROM A BONE COVERED WITH HIDE TO TREMENDOUS EXPRESSION AND THICKNESS. THIS IS THE EASIEST PLACE TO LEARN TO HANDLE FOR MUSCLE IN GOATS BECAUSE OF THE EXTREME DIFFERENCES IN MUSCLE EXPRESSION IN THIS AREA.

LOIN—ALTHOUGH THIS AREA IS ONE THAT IS OFTEN THE MOST EVALUATED, MY EXPERIENCE IS THAT LOIN MEASUREMENTS ARE NOT AS VARIED AS OTHER AREAS AND ARE A BETTER ESTIMATE FOR FRESHNESS AND LOIN DEPTH RATHER THAN WIDTH.

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THIS LITTLE GUY IS REALLY EXPRESSIVELY MUSCLED. NOTE THE EXTREME WIDTH ON THE GROUND IN ADDITION TO HIS EXPRESSIVE FOREARM AND NICE TOP SHAPE.

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BODY VOLUME IS A CRITICAL AREA TO EVALUATE IN GOATS. OBVIOUSLY CHEST WIDTH IS OF THE HIGHEST IMPORTANCE. WE WANT AS MUCH WIDTH THROUGH THE CHEST FLOOR OF GOATS AS WE CAN HAVE WHILE STILL MAINTAINING SMOOTHNESS AND FLATNESS TO THE FACE OF THE SHOULDER.

RIB SHAPE IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT IN GOATS AS IT RELATES TO TRUE SKELETAL SHAPE AND THUS POTENTIAL RACK MUSCLE EXPRESSION. THE DESIRED LOOK THROUGH THE RIB WOULD BE THAT OF A "CATFISH" AS OPPOSED TO A "BLUEGILL".

LENGTH WITH RESPECT TO BODY VOLUME REFERS TO THE LENGTH FROM FORE TO REAR FLANK. THE LONGER THE BETTER, AS LONG AS THE GOAT REMAINS BALANCED.

I LIST DEPTH LAST. MY REASONING IS THAT THIS MEASUREMENT IS THE ONLY AREA WE EVALUATE FROM A BODY STANDPOINT THAT IS POSITIVELY AFFECTED BY FAT. SINCE FAT (OR LACK THEREOF) IS ONE OF THE CRITICAL FACTORS WHEN PLACING FINISHED GOATS, SELECTION FOR DEPTH OFTEN LEADS TO THE MISEVALUATION OF TRUE DEPTH AND FAT.

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THIS GOAT, WHILE ATTRACTIVE AND STYLISH, IS TOTALLY WRONG IN TERMS OF BODY VOLUME. HE IS FLAT RIBBED, SHALLOW BODIED, DEEP CHESTED AND NARROW BASED. THIS GOAT IS THE TRUE EXAMPLE OF THE "BLUEGILL" DESIGN AND WILL NEVER HAVE ENOUGH POWER OR MUSCLE SHAPE.

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TO REVIEW SELECTION, NOTE THAT THERE ARE BASICALLY 4 AREAS THAT WE EVALUATE, BUT ULTIMATLEY THERE IS REALLY ONLY ONE AREA. FOR A GOAT TO TRULY POSESS THE LOOK THEY MUST HAVE THE 2ND, 3RD AND 4TH PARTS. LEARNING TO EVALUATE GOATS FOR THE LOOK WILL RESULT IN THE ABILITY TO AUTOMATICALLY SELECT GOATS THAT ARE GOOD STRUCTURED, HEAVY MUSCLED AND HAVE THE RIGHT RIB DESIGN.

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THE FACILITIES FOR A GOAT PROJECT ARE VERY LIMITED AND CAN BE PUT TOGETHER WITH MINIMAL INPUT.

THERE IS NOT A MINIMUM SIZE REQUIREMENT FOR A GOAT PEN, BUT REALIZE THAT IF THE PEN IS REALLY SMALL YOU WILL HAVE TO SPEND MUCH MORE TIME WALKING AND EXERCISING YOUR GOAT.

THE MATERIAL THAT THE PEN IS MADE OF IS CRUCIAL. BE SURE THAT THE OPENINGS OR HOLES IN THE FENCING ARE SMALL ENOUGH THAT THE KID'S HEAD WILL NOT BECOME ENTANGLED AND POSSIBLE CHOKE THE GOAT.

BEDDING IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT! KEEPING THE PEN DRY & CLEAN IS CRITICAL FOR THE WELL-BEING OF YOUR PROJECTS.

THE LOCATION OF THE PEN IS IMPORTANT DUE TO THE FACT THAT GOATS PREFER TO BE WARM. FANS ARE NOT A NECESSITY FOR GOATS UNLESS HOUSED IN A VERY HOT LOCATION. LIKewise IF THE LOCATON OF YOUR PEN IS IN A DAMP, DARK AREA YOUR KIDS WILL B CONSTANTLY CHILLED AND WILL NOT PERFORM WELL.

SHADE IS CRITICAL FOR GOATS BECAUSE WHEN THEY ARE SHEARED THEY HAVE A TENDANCY TO SUNBURN. SIMPLY HAVING SOME TYPE OF SHELTER TO BLOCK THE HOT SUN AND FOR THE GOATS TO BE ABLE TO GET OUT OF THE RAIN IS THE ONLY REQUIREMENT

WATER IS CRITICAL FOR GOATS. IT MUST BE CLEAN AND FRESH FOR GOATS TO DO WELL.

FEED TROUGHS NEED TO BE AT SHOULDER HEIGHT TO THE GOAT AND NEED TO BE CONSTRUCTED IN A MANNER THAT WILL NOT ALLOW THE KIDS TO STAND IN OR DEFICATE IN THE TROUGHS.

SOME TYPE OF HAY RACK IS CRITICAL IN ORDER THAT THE HAY IS NOT WALKED ON AND TURNED INTO EXPENSIVE BEDDING.

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NUTRITION IS A CHALLENGING PORTION OF THE GOAT PROJECT. THE STATEMENT THAT “A GOAT WILL EAT ANYTHING” IS DEFINITELY NOT TRUE. MOST RATIONS RANGE FROM 15 TO 18% PROTEIN. ANY GOOD HIGH QUALITY FEED THAT IS FRESH AND THE GOATS WILL EAT CAN ACHIEVE THE DESIRED RESULTS FOR YOUR PROJECT.

MOST GOATS ARE FULL-FED UNTIL THEY BEGIN TO FATTEN. THIS PROVIDES THE GOATS WITH EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP TO THEIR GENETIC POTENTIAL FOR MUSCLE SHAPE AND ALSO KEEPS THEM FRESH. ONCE FATTENING BEGINS, THE RATION WILL NEED TO BE CHANGED AND / OR EXERCISE PROGRAMS WILL NEED TO BE INCORPORATED TO KEEP THE GOATS LEAN.

ONE OF THE GREATEST CHALLENGES IN FEEDING GOATS IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PELLETTED AND TEXTURIZED FEEDS. GOATS THAT ARE DEVELOPED AS BABIES ON TEXTURIZED FEED ARE **EXTREMELY** DIFFICULT TO TRANSITION TO PELLETTED FEED, CONVERSELY, GOATS RAISED ON PELLETTED FEEDS TRANSITION TO TEXTURIZED FEEDS QUITE EASILY.

ONE TYPE IS NO BETTER THAN THE OTHER, HOWEVER, GOATS ARE BAD ABOUT SORTING THEIR FEED AND OFTEN WILL NOT EAT THE PELLETS OUT OF TEXTURIZED RATIONS. LIKEWISE, GOATS WILL NOT EAT FEED WITH FINES AND PELLETTED RATIONS OFTEN HAVE A PROBLEM WITH THIS ISSUE.

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DAILY CARE IS RATHER LIMITED FOR THE GOAT PROJECT OTHER THAN WORKING WITH THE GOAT.

SOME BASIC HEALTH CONCERNS INCLUDE OVEREATING. EVERY KID NEEDS A MINIMUM OF 2, PREFERABLY 3, VACCINATIONS WITH C, D & T.

MOST SHOW GOATS ARE DEWORMED MONTHLY. DUE TO THE LIMITED AVAILABILITY OF QUALITY DEWORMERS FOR GOATS, ONE NEEDS TO HAVE A VET-PATIENT-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR LOCAL VET. THIS WILL ALLOW YOU TO USE OFF-LABEL DRUGS FOR DEWORMING.

LICE INFESTATIONS ARE OFTEN ARE A PROBLEM IN COLDER TEMPERATURES. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF PRODUCTS AVAILALE TO TREAT THESE ORGANISMS. SIMPLY FOLLOW LABEL INSTRUCTIONS ON THESE PRODUCTS AND LICE CAN BE CONTROLLED ON YOUR PROJECT ANIMALS.

MUCH LIKE SHEEP, GOATS ARE PRONE TO FUNGAL INFECTIONS. THE MORE YOU SHEAR AND EXPOSE YOUR ANIMALS AT SHOWS, THE MORE LIKELY YOU WILL ENCOUNTER THIS PROBLEM. FUNGICIDES AND GOOD SANITATION ARE CRUCIAL FOR CONTROLLING THESE OUTBREAKS.

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FOOT TRIMMING IS AN ABSOLUTE MUST TO KEEP YOUR KIDS COMPETITIVE IN THE SHOWRING. IT IS NOT UNCOMMON TO TRIM FEET EVERY TWO WEEKS OR MORE TO KEEP THEM IN SHOW SHAPE. NOTICE THAT THE FEET ON GOATS ARE TRIMMED DIFFERENTLY THAN CATTLE OR SHEEP. THE TOE AND HEEL ARE CUT TO THE SAME LENGTH AS OPPOSED TO TRIMMING THEM AT AN ANGLE.

THE KEY TO SUCCESS IS TO SIMPLY KEEP THE SOLE OF THE HOOF TRIMMED FLAT SO THAT THE GOAT WILL WEAR THE HOOF MORE EVENLY.

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PNEUMONIA IS A HUGE PROBLEM WITH GOATS. CONSTANT SUPERVISION IN ADDITION TO THE USE OF ANTIBIOTICS IS THE ANSWER FOR THIS PROBLEM,

DUE TO THE FINICKY EATING HABITS OF GOATS, SCOURS ARE A CONSTANT CONCERN. LITTLE EXISTS TO TREAT THIS PROBLEM. AGAIN, HAVING THAT RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR VET IS CRITICAL IN ORDER TO USE OFF-LABEL MEDICATIONS SUCH AS SPECTINOMYCIN.

ANOTHER CONCERN IS OFF-FEED ISSUES. IT IS CRITICAL TO KEEP GOAT KIDS ON FEED. EVERY DAY OFF-FEED REQUIRES NUMEROUS DAYS IN RECOVERY TIME,

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CLIPPING GOATS CORRECTLY IS ONE OF THE MOST CHALLENGING PARTS OF THIS PROJECT.

THE TIMING OF CLIPPING DEPENDS ON A NUMBER OF VARIABLES. GOATS GO THROUGH A 12-24 HOUR DEHYDRATION AFTER CLIPPING. WITH THIS IN MIND, FAT GOATS SHOULD BE CLIPPED 12-24 HOURS BEFORE SHOW-TIME. THIS WILL ALLOW THE GOAT'S HIDE TO DEHYDRATE MORE AND THUS FEEL LEANER TO THE TOUCH. THIN GOATS SHOULD BE SHEARED AS CLOSE TO SHOW-TIME AS POSSIBLE. GOATS FEEL THEIR BLOOMIEST AND FRESHEST SHORTLY AFTER SHEARING.

THE EQUIPMENT USED TO SHEAR GOATS CAN WIDELY RANGE. HOWEVER, DUE TO THE COARSENESS OF GOT HAIR, CLIPPERS NEED TO BE FAST RPM, HIGH TORQUE MODELS SUCH AS LISTERS OR PREMIERS. THE PREFERRED BLADE FOR GOATS IS THE "COVER-COAT" OR THE "EXTRA-COVER" BLADE. THESE LEAVE THE HAIR APPROXIMATELY 3/8 OF AN INCH LONG AND PREVENT THE SEE-THROUGH EFFECT OF SEEING THE COLORING ON THE HIDE OF A GOAT. THE REASON WE DO NOT WANT TO SEE THE HIDE IS SO THAT THE BODY WILL APPEAR SMOOTHER AND GIVE THE OPTICAL ILLUSION OF MORE BODY LENGTH. THE USE OF FINE OR SURGICAL BLADES, OR ANY BLADES THAT CUT THE HAIR EXTREMELY SHORT, IS OK AS LONG AS SUFFICIENT TIME IS ALLOWED FOR REGROWTH TO COVER THE HIDE SPOTS. KEEP IN MIND THE TIME EFFECTS IN REGARD TO HANDLING FRESHNESS!!

THE HOW OF CLIPPING IS A BIT MORE CHALLENGING. HAIR GROWS IN A MULTITUDE OF DIRECTIONS ON THE GOAT'S BODY. THEREFORE TO ACHIEVE THAT SMOOTH, POLISHED LOOK ONE HAS TO ALWAYS CLIP AGAINST THE GRAIN OF THE HAIR. (THIS CAN OFTEN BE EVERY POSSIBLE DIRECTION ON THE GOAT'S BODY.) CAUTION! CROSS-CUTTING THE HAIR WILL ALWAYS LEAVE LINES AND RUIN YOUR CLIP JOB.

AS FAR AS WHAT TO CLIP, EVERYTHING FROM THE HOCK LINE AND KNEE LINE UP COMES OFF. THIS INCLUDES THE HEAD, EARS, ETC. EVERYTHING! THE END OF THE TAIL SHOULD BE TRIMMED SHORT SO THAT IT HAS A NATURAL APPEARANCE. (GOATS DO NOT NEED TO LOOK LIKE A POODLE) ALSO THE KNEE AND HOCK LINES NEED TO BE BLENDED IN SMOOTHLY SO THAT THEY DO NOT APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN CLIPPED.

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NONE

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REGARDLESS OF THE MANY CHALLENGING VARIABLES INVOLVED WITH THE MARKET GOAT PROJECT, THE ULTIMATE GOAL IS VERY SIMPLE. TO HAVE GOOD GOATS AND

BY USING THOSE GOATS TO DEVELOP THE THING THAT ALL LIVESTOCK PROJECTS ARE TRULY ABOUT AND THAT IS GREAT KIDS (HUMAN VARIETY)!!!

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NONE