Build a Comprehensive Management Plan

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- Web site www2.luresext.edu
- Research
  - Nutrient Requirements
  - Vegetative Mgt
  - Internal Parasites
- Quarterly newsletter
  - Field Day  April 25th
- Meat Goat Handbook
- www.scsrpc.org
Very few management factors affect only one facet of a goat operation. For instance, nutrition may affect health, parasite control may affect animal performance, genetics may affect health. Holistic or Comprehensive management is considering how management decisions in one aspect of the production system can affect many aspects before making the decision.
Topics

- Do you have a management plan?
- Planning for good, cost-effective nutrition
- Reproduction for your bottom line
- Animal selection to make animals like you like them
- Health plan to enable animals to do their job
Management Plan

- Do you have a business objective? Why are you in the goat business?
- Entertainment or hobby?
- Companion animal?
- Development of breeding stock?
- Commercial goat meat production?
- Goats for brush and weed management?
- Show goats?
Management Plan

- You cannot make a management plan until you decide why you are in the business.
- Once you decide why you are in the goat business, you need to set some goals for the business.
- Every management decision must be evaluated as to whether it will get you closer to your goals.
Management Plan

- Do you have a budget?
- Is your goal to make money, break even and have fun while you do it?
- Break even while controlling weeds and brush?
- Aid the development of the breed without it costing you too much?
Management Plan

- What is your market?
- Are you trying to develop your market?
- What is the future market?
- Ethnics need goat meat. We can make a little money just producing meat. We need another angle to increase profit. May be producing breeding stock. Could be grazing goats with cattle.
Nutrition Plan

- Nutrition has a greater affect on the health, well-being, production and profit of a goat operation than any other management area.
- Do you have a plan to provide the necessary nutrients in a cost-effective manner?
- Match animal production to forage production.
Forage is our cheapest nutrient. It is even cheaper when it is unwanted vegetation.

If you roll forage up in a round bale, it doubles the cost of the forage.

Can you stockpile forage to reduce the amount of hay fed?

Can you move your kidding season to reduce the use of hay/purchased feed?
Nutrition Plan

- Minerals—we know less about goat mineral requirements than we do for any food producing species.
- Find out from county/area extension specialist what minerals are deficient for cattle. You know that you have to pay attention to these.
- More is not always better. A few goat minerals have excessive copper.
Nutrition Plan

- Some mineral supplements provide about 15% of the animal’s mineral requirement.
- Don’t be cheap, but pricey is not always better.
- You need to have a free-choice mineral mix available to your animals at all times.
- Evaluation of animal mineral nutrition status is complex.
Nutrition Plan

- Vitamins A, E needed when there is no green forage available, assuming animal gets sufficient sun to meet his vitamin D requirement.
- Vitamins lost their potency in mineral mixes over a period of months in heat.
- Purchase mineral in the fall about time of frost to have greater vitamin availability.
Nutrition Plan

- Pasture is the cheapest source of nutrients and pasture is the most expensive source of nutrients.
- Seldom pays to plant a forage for a goat if you have to prepare a seedbed and plant something.
- Frost seeding may be cost effective
Nutrition Plan

- Best pasture for goats is--
- Goats like diversity and will do best on a pasture that has brush, broadleaf weeds and grasses.
- Goats do poorest on grass monocultures, especially bermudagrass.
- May be a good investment to rent a run-down cattle pasture for your goats.
Nutrition Plan

- Woody species can pull up minerals from deep down. Some plants are better at accumulating certain minerals than others.
- Probably part of the reason goats do better on a diverse pasture.
Body condition will tell you the protein and energy adequacy.

Minerals adequacy more difficult to evaluate.

Better to start on the front end to provide necessary minerals and avoid mineral deficiencies.

Mineral deficiencies affect health, parasite and reproduction in goats.
Reproduction Plan

- The goat is the most reproductively competent of the food animal species.
- When do we kid?
- What is our market?
- Do you kid on pasture? Do you want animals that will take care of themselves and their kids?
Reproduction Plan

- Do we want sire records?
- Records on herd conception rate, litter size and survival to weaning.
- Do you have goals for these parameters?
Reproduction Plan

- Bucks have a high fertility rate. Only about 5% have poor or no fertility.
- Breeding soundness exam?
- Marking crayon during breeding season?
Breeding Plans

- What are your breeding goals?
- What characteristics differentiate the Kiko from other goat breeds?
- Are you breeding to maintain these characteristics?
- That is why the AKGA needs breeding standards, so breeders have similar breeding goals.
You are fortunate to have an EPD program that is up and coming. Another goat breed that has such a program has about 2% participation in the EPD program. Are you really interested in selling goats that are functional in the field or just selling goats with papers.

Access to forage based buck tests.
Breeding Plans

- Breed the best to the best.
- Best in what? Rate of gain, good looks, maternal characteristics, parasite resistance?
- Measures of best?
- EPD program will help in answering these questions
Breeding Plans

- Breed the best to the best
- Cull those that don’t measure up.
- If we mate a buck from the top 5% of the population with a doe from the top 5% of the population and make assumptions on heritability etc. 10% of the progeny will equal or exceed the parents. 10% will be in the bottom ¼ of the herd and should be culled or not used for replacements.
Breeding Plans

When goats are valuable, all are kept for replacement or sold (no culling). The end result in several generations you accumulate a significant proportion of individuals with inferior genes. We have seen this in another breed where commercial producers do not want that breed because a majority function poorly under commercial conditions.
Breeding Plans

- The breed could be improved for commercial purposes by culling a majority and then culling heavily the next generation. The Kiko breed can end up in situation very easily. Don’t sell a breeding animal that you would not want to keep for a replacement.

- Learn from the mistakes of others!
Maternal Characteristics

- Kid without assistance.
- Kids nurse and does takes care of them.
- Implies good teats/udder and adequate milk production.
- Doe brings kids in at weaning time without your interference or help.
Goats are healthy animals except for what man does to them.

A healthy immune system will prevent most animal diseases.

If we take care of the immune system with adequate nutrition, avoid/reduce stress and avoid big germ challenges, we will have very little disease.
Health Plans

- What diseases cause you the most problems? Do you keep a list of animal deaths and suspected cause? Do you keep a list of what you treat animals for.
- Vaccinate for what diseases you have as well as tetanus and overeating disease.
- Get animals posted, especially if one has symptoms like the one last week that died.
- What is your death rate?
Health Plan

- Do you have caseous lymphadenitis or abscesses?
- Can/should our goal be to eradicate this disease?
- Do you have abortion diseases? How can you sell breeding animals if you do? Blood testing is good, but imperfect.
Health Plan

- Parasites are the greatest health problem in goats, causing more deaths than the total of the next 3 leading causes of death.
- Parasite control involves pasture management, nutrition and genetics. Dewormers should be a last resort and seldom used.
- Are you breeding for parasite resistance?
Health Plan

- You need to know as much about parasite biology as you do goat production unless you are in a dry climate or have very parasite resistant animals.

- The second most important parasite is coccidiosis. It is related to stress, especially in a young animal. One can use coccidiostats when animals are stressed such as during weaning.
Health Plan

- Has anyone ever tried a low stress weaning program such as some cattle people are using?
In Conclusion

- We must know why we are in the goat business.
- We must know what type of animal that we want to produce.
- We must use genetic selection and culling to develop that type of animal.
- Animals need supported with good nutrition, good health and good management to be able to do their job.