

KEYS

TO PROFITABLE PRODUCTION

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KEYS TO PROFITABLE ANGORA GOAT PRODUCTION

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Type of Production

Doe and kid operation should consist of a flock of healthy animals of productive age, 3 to 6 years of age. Raise replacements to make improvement in flock. Keep Spanish or meat-type animals separate. Sell all crossbred kids so they do not become mixed in the Angora flock. Replace wether goats for mohair production when the mohair becomes coarse and loses its character. Stock goats at a rate that will insure maximum mohair production with a minimum of supplemental feed.

Range Management

Use stocking rates consistent with the area of production. Practice mixed grazing of livestock consistent with the area of production. Practice rotation grazing for pasture improvement and internal parasite control. Follow range improvement practices recommended for the area and consistent with ranch economics. Make use of supplemental grazing when available.

Breeding Practices

Flush does by supplying $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ pound of supplemental feed daily or move to a fresh, rested pasture about 2 weeks before turning bucks out. Protein blocks may be used in flushing when range conditions are not too severe. When ranges are extremely dry, it may pay to give does vitamins A, D and E 2 weeks before breeding.

Follow a good selective breeding program. Mate best does to best bucks, second best does to second best bucks, etc. Save replacement does from top two

groups. Adaptability to the area of production is probably the most important single point. Good bucks are essential to a good selective breeding program. Purchase bucks from one breeder whose goats possess the desired characteristics to produce a uniform flock. Select animals for quantity and quality of mohair but do not sacrifice size and vigor. Fleeces also should be uniform in quality and length over the body of the goat.

Use three to four bucks per 100 does, depending upon the size, brushiness and roughness of the pastures. Avoid using one buck per pasture in commercial goat production. Condition bucks by supplemental feeding about 2 weeks before turning them out. Breed does in September and October for February and March kids. It is not good management to run does and kids in the same pasture with wether goats. Wether goats travel too much.

Supplemental Feeding

Angora goats respond to supplemental feeding more than other livestock. They reflect this through heavier fleece weights. Feed goats during dry periods and especially during the winter months.

Feed $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ pound of cottonseed cake, $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 pound of yellow corn or $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ pound of goat cubes per head daily depending upon the condition of the pastures and the does. Pregnant does require larger amounts of feed than dry animals. Abortion often can be prevented by supplemental feeding.

Self-feeding, using salt as an inhibitor, may be used in large, rough or brushy pastures. Keep salt as low as possible and place the feeders $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 mile from water. Move feeders for better pasture utilization. A popular mixture is 3 parts of ground milo, 1 part cottonseed meal and 1 part salt. Salt-controlled

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feeding is not recommended unless all other methods are impractical.

Feed kids during winter months to insure good growth and development. This will improve the kid crop on 2-year-old does. Cull undeveloped kids that do not learn to eat. Protein blocks may be fed during kidding season. This method of feeding prevents kids from becoming lost from their mothers.

Kidding

Use rested pastures for kidding and do not disturb does during the kidding season. Kid in a small pasture, confine kids and let does out to graze until kids are large enough to follow mothers.

Marking

Vaccinate kids for soremouth and earmark for identification when most of the kids are large enough to travel. Plastic ear tabs are a practical way of identification.

Castrate kids the following December or January when the kids are about 9 to 10 months old. This produces a heavier horn on wether goats that buyers prefer.

Shearing

Spring shearing time is January through March depending on the area of production. Goats may be shedded during this period.

Goats may be caped. Caping is the practice of leaving a strip of unshored mohair about 8 inches wide down the neck and back of the goat. This should be sheared after a month or 6 weeks. If capes are not sheared, they should be taken out and packed separately at shearing.

Goats may be sheared with special goat combs. These combs leave about 1/4 inch of stubble on the goat and give him about 2 weeks start over goats sheared with regular combs. Producers usually supply the special combs and pay a small premium for shearers using them.

Goats are sensitive to weather changes for a month to 6 weeks following shearing.

Fall shearing runs from July through September. Most producers shear with regular combs in the fall but some prefer the special combs.

The responsibilities of the producer are to:

- Provide a clean place to shear.
- Instruct the shearing crew so they know what is expected.
- Separate kids and third shearing goats from older goats so they can be sheared separately.
- See that goats are dry and not too full for shearing.

- Supervise the shearing pen or provide a supervisor other than himself.
- Register complaints with shearing crew captain.
- Caution shearing crew about cutting off teats of does.
- When vegetable matter is a severe problem, a change in shearing dates may be advisable.
- Do not pack mohair in plastic bags.

The responsibilities of the shearer are to:

- Keep fleeces clean and remove each fleece in one piece.
- Avoid double cutting.
- Avoid injury to animal.

Spraying

Spray goats out of the shearing pen and again in 12 to 18 days for best control of external parasites. Follow recommendations in B-1306, *Texas Guide for Controlling External Parasites of Livestock and Poultry*. Change sprays occasionally to get best control. Spray so goats will dry before dark. Use only recommended sprays or dips in strengths advocated by the Food and Drug Administration. Follow guidelines for spraying or dipping animals to go to slaughter. Do not spray under a shed or barn. Spray *with* the wind, not against it. Do not mix solutions with your hands. Spray or dip animals at a time of day when you will be able to bathe and change clothes. Do not mix chemicals.

Drenching

Watch animals closely for signs of internal parasitism and drench as necessary. Drench out of the shearing pen using one of the recognized drenches. Change drenches occasionally so that parasites do not built up resistance to any specific drench. Move animals to a fresh pasture following drenching. Phenothiazine salt is not recommended for goats because it stains the mohair. Use care in drenching animals so that the linings of the mouth and throat are not injured.

Weaning Kids

Leave kids in the pasture and move does. Kids are familiar with the pasture and know where to water and rest. Wean in the drylot. This practice gentles kids, teaches them to eat and builds up their strength. Do not wean in an overgrazed, internal parasite-infested pasture. When weaning in a different pasture, move kids to a rested pasture along with a few gentle does who can lead them to water.

Marketing

Some producers sell kids out of the hair after first shearing. Most producers prefer to market as year-

lings after the second shearing. Sell through a reputable commission man or through an auction that specializes in handling goats. Market mohair through one of the Texas wool and mohair warehouses. Select one that provides service to meet your requirements. If the bulk of your clip is finer than 24s, it may pay to have your clip graded. Follow the recommendations of your warehouseman in preparing and marketing your mohair. *Do not artificially oil goats.*

Defect Control

Rearrange shearing dates so that a minimum of vegetable matter is in the fleece. Use supplemental pastures to avoid vegetable contamination. Provide for control of burr-producing plants in your pasture improvement program.

Records

Keep accurate records of percentage of kid crop, fleece weight by age group and staple length to assist

with the breeding program. Keep records of costs and returns to aid with income tax returns and planning business program of the ranch.

References for Additional Reading

B-1306, *Texas Guide for Controlling External Parasites of Livestock and Poultry*. Texas Agricultural Extension Service.

MP-834, *External Parasites of Sheep and Goats in Texas*. Texas Agricultural Extension Service.

B-926, *Texas Angora Goat Production*. Texas Agricultural Extension Service.

MP-385, *Selecting Angora Goats for Increased Mohair and Kid Production*. Texas Agricultural Extension Service.

B-1136, *Reproductive Efficiency in Angora Goats*.

and the breeding program. A copy should be sent to the county extension agent for his information and to aid with income tax returns and planning. The extension agent of the county should be contacted for a copy of the form.

References for Additional Reading

1. *Animal Husbandry*, Texas Agricultural Extension Service, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas.

2. *Animal Husbandry*, Texas Agricultural Extension Service, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas.

3. *Animal Husbandry*, Texas Agricultural Extension Service, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas.

4. *Animal Husbandry*, Texas Agricultural Extension Service, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas.

5. *Animal Husbandry*, Texas Agricultural Extension Service, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas.

Following December or January when the kids are about 5 to 10 months old, the producer should review the notes that he has written.

Wearing

Wearing kids from January through March separates them from the area of production. Kids may be separated during the winter.

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Acknowledgment

James A. Gray, former Extension animal husbandryman, coauthored the original manuscript for this publication.

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