

## Be Kind To Your Volunteers

OMGP Education Article December 2006

On yet another gray and wet November day, I sit and wonder about those goat raising folks on the other side of the mountains. They are looking out on a sunny and cold November day. Their goats are frolicking on dry ground with maybe just a dusting of snow to bother their feet. Mine are sitting in their shelters, not wanting to go out in the mud to eat. I am trying to muster up the mental fortitude to go out and spread more straw and gravel in hopes of keeping the ever existent mud bogs at bay. So far, I don't have anyone limping but it's only a matter of time before the wicked scald and hoof rot rears it's ugly head. Once all of the Thanksgiving company leaves, I have a couple of days off of work to trim hooves and do some early prevention. That is my word of wisdom for the day. Stay on top of those feet! Make sure that you are stocked up on the remedy of your choice and use it often and liberally. It's the time of the year to really get 'up close and personal' with your goats. They will thrive on the attention.

This brings me to another being that thrives on positive input. The volunteer who spends many hours helping OMGP to be what it is today. It takes a lot of energy to produce a monthly newsletter, area meetings, seminars, pen sales and shows. These volunteers give up valuable family, farm and personal time to keep our association growing and developing. For most of us it is a labor of love. We all look to the membership for ideas, suggestions and constructive criticism. The key word here is constructive. Criticism when it stands alone can be very destructive. I have always been taught that if one has to criticize someone they should start with something positive first. When one voices criticism it should be accompanied by suggestions for improvement. Otherwise it is just mean spirited and hurtful. OMGP is an organization of goat farmers that as a collective share ideas and solutions. It is not, nor has it ever been, a service organization. OMGP members will work in the future to continue opening markets for our goats. We must all work together to encourage this goal. We can do this by providing a forum for positive input, collective education and mutual respect. Respect for each other and those that will benefit from our product should be a goal for the OMGP in this next transitional year.

Happy holidays and happy hoof trimming. Linda Dehart