

Educational Article on Marketing

*By
Linda DeHart*

First on my list of things to yak about is something that resulted from the last council meeting that was held earlier this month in Redmond. It all started out with a rather heated discussion but the end result was the formation of a committee to promote marketing. We hear from many new members that don't have a buyer for their goats. In the Willamette Valley we have the advantage of having Larry Jackson in Shedd that will buy most if not all of the goats we produce. He is honest with a table price that he is willing to pay. If he hands you a check it will be good at the bank. A very important attribute, wouldn't you say? There are other buyers out there and it is the aim of this new committee to provide a list that will be published in the newsletter each month. They will also be exploring the concept of cooperation amongst we goat farmers to provide a quality animal that will be available throughout the year. This will mean that the autumn breeding season will need to be tweaked to accommodate buyer's needs. Not all does are willing to cooperate but that is part of selective breeding. I for one am looking to have does that will cycle for kidding in the mid fall and mid spring to avoid having kidding at the holidays and the darkest months of the year. With a decent barn, I will be able to keep my fall kids in for feeding and to reduce the exposure to the cold and wet. I am hoping to see this committee produce a list of buyers in the very near future. It will be up to all of you who use these buyers to provide that committee with any good or bad feedback as to any problems with payment, price or availability. Please be patient as these willing volunteers put this enterprise together.

One of the concerns that was also expressed at the council meeting was the quality of goats being offered to the buyers. Everyone has a different idea of how to breed and feed their animals. Some prefer to run their operations on a bare bones budget while others have their stock living in the lap of luxury. The quality of each meat goat will differ. One of the ideas thrown out is that the price per pound should not be the same for all goats offered to the buyer. Those that have been raised on good quality feed are going to produce better meat than animals that have been raised on scrub feed. It is felt that there should be a rating system that would result in a tiered system of price per pound at market. This makes sense. I am not sure if supply and demand is going to cooperate with this sort of system, especially around the high demand times of the year but it is worth looking into. When I took my last group of kids to market, there was a guy who had a group being weighed before me. My goats were far more filled out and healthy looking but we both got the same price per pound. I think that having this tiered system will stimulate goat farmers to put more effort into creating a top animal.

I was fortunate to be a part of Area 4's meeting up at the Scio Lamb and Wool Show. This area is lucky to have Marie Layman as their youth coordinator. She is a judge and works at many shows through out the western states as well as Alaska. She gave us an excellent overview of what she is looking for in a good meat goat. This presentation was followed by a goat show for youth. We had the opportunity to see a good cross section of 4H and FFA project animals. She spent a great deal of time educating both the animal owners as well as the audience about the attributes of each animal. She also explained about the development at different ages. This was an awesome opportunity that sent you home with a whole new way of looking at your animals. It will take me a bit of time to be able to take what I learned and apply it on my own farm. I learn well by repetition. Luckily we have many upcoming shows and fairs throughout the states to attend with the opportunity to educate ourselves. The next opportunity will be at the Cottage Grove Show on June 21st. I highly recommend that you plan to attend some of these events. Not only do you get to support youth in their endeavors but also you will take home many tidbits that will help with improving your herd. When you go to these show you will notice that OMGP will have some sort of presence in the form of awards. We are currently providing funds for the awards upon request. We are also working on a scholarship fund for youth that will be based on need. Not all of the youth that want to raise a

market kid to show can afford all that is necessary to be competitive. Now in discussion is to have leaders identify members in their youth groups and encourage them to submit an application. This process would include an essay that will be published in the newsletter and also the expectation of a follow up on how things went for those that received these funds.

Finally, I want to do a follow up on remedies for hoof rot. Harriet Hughes of Philomath was gracious enough to call me regarding her success with her herd this year. She implemented a system of footbaths for her herd. She did not rotate pastures but rather created a walkway for her goats to come in to feed and return for water. She purchased a cattle pan and kept a solution of zinc in that pan. If the goats wanted their grain or water they had to pass through the pan. She said that it was amusing in that some of the goats tried to tippy toe along the rim but overall the process was highly successful. She lives in an area that has moist pastureland. She does follow a schedule of hoof trimming. She has had a big problem in the past with foot problems. NOT THIS YEAR! I have already starting mapping out a similar plan for my goats for the fall.

Well, I have maidens that are ready to kid and a fence line to complete...see you at the Fairs?

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