

Feeding a Productive Herd

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I know some of you will think that I am daft. No, I don't as yet have a way of confining my goats to do all of those things that you need a stilled goat for. My daughter, Brenna and I get those critters rounded up in a corner and the rodeo begins. Sort of like tackle football and more. We took advantage of a recent sunny weekend to get the herd rearranged in preparation for the usual holiday kidding. I swear that the girls plan it this way. I would like to say that I take a good look at my goats feet on a monthly basis but life gets in the way. With the very wet November that we had and the reminder that my goats hooves were a rotten mess last year, I really held my breath as I picked up the first hoof. Except for a little scald or pit here and there, I was surprised to see healthy anatomy. Good cushion and thick soles. I didn't have to ponder this long to realize why this was so. **IT WAS MY FEEDING PROGRAM!** The vast majority of my herd, even those that have been notorious in the past, had healthy feet.

Many of you out there have established a feeding program that works for you and your pocket book. Some of those programs are a little 'out of the ordinary' i.e. tortillas, but if it works then you need not read any further. I had stuck with the tried and true local hay with added wet cob for supplement. I put the generic mineral block out and thought this should suffice for a goat's needs. It actually did as long as I was just feeding some pet wethers. A herd of working does and their progeny is a whole different story. This last summer, I broke down and bought some of the Payback Boer Developer. I don't feed anything other than the local hay as roughage on top of this. My goats gain weight, have healthy coats and far less feet problems since I added the Developer in. I am always skeptical of new things. Especially if they cost a lot more than what I am already using. This excellent source of protein and minerals does a fine job. I am sure that there are other sources of complete feeds out there that work as well. I am not trying to be a commercial for this feed but rather a testimonial to a feeding program that helps your hard working goats thrive. I don't have the best looking or best producing herd but they are mine. I look at them with a lot more pride now.

The message here is that if you are struggling to control illness and foot problems it is important to look to your feed program for many of the answers. We certainly need to keep cost in mind to continue a functioning farm but sometimes spending a little more will return much better gains in the long run.