

Marketing, Supplies and Foot Rot

I have been asked in the past why I don't inform members about publications etc. that are of importance to our education about goats. I have refrained from this, as I don't want to seem like I am showcasing one particular entity over another. Enough of that. Here is my stamp of enthusiastic approval for a magazine that goes beyond just another advertisement rag. My friend Sharon Findling introduced *The Goat Rancher* to me a few years back. At first glance, I wasn't impressed, as it just seemed to be page upon page of advertisements for fancy goat ranches. I want to highlight the word glance. I never took the time to really look at each and every page. It might be that there wasn't much there at the time but it certainly is a great source of education now. The articles are very informative each and every month. Since it is not a product of the Pacific Northwest, some of the information is less pertinent or doesn't quite address the unique needs of our wet environment but nonetheless it is a treasure trove of information. Most of the articles come from farmers just like you and myself as they are written with practical economy in mind. I find it to be a worthwhile investment. The next best thing to subscribing yourself is to get a few goat folks to do a group subscription to share. Less traumatic to the environment as well. Even though we are seeing some dry days, I am still dealing with hoof rot. I purchased a vaccine called Footvac that is touted to be a treatment/preventative for 10 strains of bacterium that cause hoof rot. I immunized the whole herd and this is what I have learned thus far. I have my herd divided into two containment areas. My bred does are using a pasture with open shelters. Mud is less prevalent in this area. My moms and kids are in the barnyard area and they have exposure to a lot more muck. The vaccine has seemed to be more effective in the bred does. Duh!! I really wasn't thinking that giving the vaccine without fixing the muck problem was going to work miracles but it did show to be somewhat effective nonetheless. I am now cross fencing so that I can move the maternity crew to better digs. I did receive a call from Harriett Hughes up in Philomath. She had a foot rot problem and was successful at treatment with footbath. I haven't had a chance to return her call about what solution that she used but I will bet that after treatment she did not move her herd back onto the same pasture. According to what I have read, the bacteria only live for 8 or so days. In order to have this work, you would have to treat your goats as they move into a new clean area. So this brings us back around to pasture rotation for another reason. Don't you just love all of those t-posts that you get to pound in?!?

A date has been set for the Fall Pen Sale in Prineville. It will be on September 6th, which is a Saturday. This is not just an event where you can take your goats to sell. OMGP is making this into an education event as well. We will have a day full of seminars. A Jack Pot show is planned as well as a vendor's area. If you have some nice stock to sell, get your pens reserved. If not then plan to come for the education. There are several motels in town and there is also lots of camping nearby. The date was moved to early September to avoid the hunting season. It's a beautiful time of the year in central Oregon so plan to make a weekend of it!

As you all are painfully aware, the economy is in a slump. It makes it hard for farmers as feed prices have gone up. This and fuel costs are causing some to reduce or eliminate their herds. I recently took some of my market kids up to Larry Jackson and came home with not only a check but also some words of wisdom. With summer coming, we tend to think in terms of needing less feed until the fall. As the pasture forage dwindles, we start thinking of having fewer mouths to feed through the winter.

Add to this the fact that there are a lot of market kids reaching weight in the fall and it adds up to a glut of animals going to market. This creates a problem for the buyers in that they have a huge inventory to move. Their bottom line doesn't allow them to hold and feed animals until the need is higher. Right now we are going into barbecue season, so if you are thinking of reducing your herd it might be a good idea to start moving some of those animals now to avoid the rush. Supply and demand is a driving force in obtaining a decent price for our product. Flooding the market could certainly lead to a lower per pound price so plan ahead to keep Larry and the other buyers stocked at their needy times. Another thought that comes with the economic down turn is buying in lots. Talk to your fellow goat farmers as well as other livestock raisers about making bulk purchases. Fencing

and feed are two areas where buying larger amounts might bring savings. I get a tonnage price on my feed. I deal with a smallish local feed store and he is very willing to work with me on supplies that I need. My recent purchase of vaccine was made through him. Not only did I not have to pay shipping but also he sold it to me below the price that it was offered through the Premier catalogue. I am calling him tomorrow to see if I can get a deal on cattle panels. This is a time not only to make wise choices on costs but it is also a time to be supporting local vendors.

Support your local independent feed stores as much as possible. Ask for possible discounts and group rates. I went to Coastal Farm in Eugene yesterday. It is way on the other side of town but I didn't know if my feed store would carry farrier supplies and I knew that Coastal did. I found that what I wanted was in a locked cabinet. I asked twice in a 15-minute period for help. There were numerous employees milling about and very few customers but I was ignored. I walked out vowing never to return. I went to my local feed store, got waited on immediately despite the fact that the store was busy with the Saturday rush. They have to order what I need but bottom line is they were eager to do so and I will bet you that it will be at a lower cost than I would have had to pay at the chain store. That is customer service and that is what will keep my business in the future.

Summer is coming. Plan ahead for fly and wasp control. Killing those queens now will lower your incidence of problems during the summer months. Use pesticides wisely. Your health and the environment will thank you. *Linda DeHart - Vice President*