

Review of Presenters at Annual Dinner

OMGP Education Article December 2007

I spent a recent day tractoring gravel into the main goat yard and just hanging out looking at the herd. My does are looking healthy and this year's kids are a big improvement over last year's crop. I had a couple of does that got so large toward the end of their pregnancies last year that laying down and just getting about became a huge chore. From my reading I have learned that these particular does can really get into trouble before they kid. One of the major problems is that the kids they are carrying get so large that they take up the space that is set aside for the digestive tract and these does can literally starve! As we breed for size and fast growth this can become more of a problem in a herd that is finally turning the corner toward improved production.

Our recent annual meeting gave me a lot of information from vendors. I know that all vendor speak has to be sorted through for the practical realities. I was quite pleased to see one item that is new to me. I am going to try to tout this product without seeming to be biased to the vendor. He had a very large feed tub filled with protein and minerals as well as my personal favorite, molasses. When I had my cattle, I used a similar tub for my herd when they had increased calorie needs. The novelty of this product was it was formulated especially for goats. I plan to put a couple of these tubs out for my end of pregnancy porkers that can barely walk to the hay and grain much less eat it! I have luckily not had any problems as yet but I am hoping that I will avoid any by having this source of nutrition and energy available to them. Now if I can figure out how to keep them from peeing and pooping in it, but that is a whole other subject isn't it?

We had the privilege to have Aurora Villarroel DVM from OSU speak at the annual meeting. She did a wonderful job of covering parasites in goats. I took away a couple of very valuable pieces of information. The use of pasture rotation is paramount in preventing reinfestation in your herd. We don't have a huge arsenal at our disposal to keep our goats as parasite free as possible. In fact, only two products are available and LEGAL to use in goats. The first is SafeGuard and the other is . The others that are on the market are to be prescribed by a licensed veterinarian only although they are readily available in our feed stores. I have learned in the past from other veterinarians that goats should be dosed at double or even triple the recommended dosage on the label. Aurora brought up a very valid point. If we continue to use these drugs without utilizing pasture management and not culling those animals that require more frequent dosing to stay healthy, we may eventually find ourselves in a situation that there is nothing available that will work. We are currently seeing this in the human population with the emergence of antibiotic resistant bacteria. In fact, a prevalent 'super bug' is now being found in pigs that is very similar to one that is found in the human population. The pearl of wisdom here is that we really need to be thinking about the treatments that we give our goats. Are we over medicating? Are we treating conditions repeatedly that could be alleviated by better management as a whole? Good conditions for our animals

takes a lot of time and effort. I am exhausted after working a 40+ hour week at my town job, but I am trying to at least take baby steps at making my farm a healthier haven for my goats.

We were also honored at the recent annual dinner to have Alice Royle present information about goat nutrition. Alice runs a specialized feed mill but is also highly passionate and knowledgeable about her specialty. She was very forthcoming with a quick evaluation of protein sources that might be available in certain areas to be utilized by farmers in their herds. She enlightened us about the feed market as a whole in terms of grain prices and what to expect in the future. This is the second time that I have attended a talk by Alice. She covers all the aspects of goat nutrition in a way that is both understandable and easily utilized on your own farm.

This is the sort of educational opportunity that is needed throughout the OMGP membership. I foresee that we will have an increase in special events in the future and each of these dates should be full of learning for all of us. In addition to our newsletter information we need to have hands on experience to foster better farming techniques. The Fall Pen Sale will be one such event. My plan is to have a full day of learning experiences. Numerous workshops on equipment, basic goat tending, nutrition, farm management and perhaps the inclusion of other related groups such as herding dogs should draw a larger crowd. Are you planning a meeting in your area? Are you planning to host a counsel meeting? I am available to help you set up educational opportunities. By doing this we can encourage more folks to be willing to travel to these events. It is difficult when an organization is so far flung geographically to have the membership feel included in the activities of the organization. This becomes even more difficult when some of these areas are remote in nature. One thought is to have someone that is willing to record some of these workshops to create a library that could be available to areas for their meetings. Attending a meeting for some can be seen as a chore, but if that meeting includes an educational feature, then it might be seen in a different light.

The web site for OMGP is being updated. Actually it is being somewhat recreated by Eric to be more user friendly and to include a lot more information. Previous education articles will be included on the site. We will include some of the basics in future newsletter but I am also going to work on presenting more articles that deal with subjects that reach beyond the basics. Rob Folse who puts our newsletter together has let us know that we have more space that can be utilized so it is time to expand out. I know that there are farmers out there who have had to deal with problems in their herd. You may not feel that you can put your experience into words but you sure could provide me with at least an outline to work from. Call me, email me or snail mail your experience and we will create an article that will be helpful to the membership as a whole.

These are my thoughts as 2007 comes to an end. It has been a tumultuous year for OMGP but this created a year of growth for the organization as a whole. The expansion of the goat industry is foremost in all of our minds. Education is a huge part of our mission statement. It is the basis for our ability to market our product in the future as a healthy, locally available source of nutrition for the discerning consumer.

My hope for all of you is to have a safe and peaceful holiday season. May your boots be waterproof and your hay stay dry.

Linda DeHart, Vice President OMGP