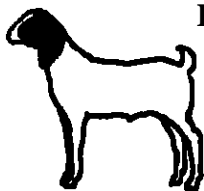


MEAT GOAT MEMOS



Kipp Brown-Area Agent-4-H Livestock/Meat Goats
Mississippi State University Extension Service

P.O. Box 59
Carrollton, Ms 38917
662-237-6926

kippb@ext.msstate.edu

March 2007



Kidding season for most of Mississippi is past the halfway point. Most commercial producers will be finishing up any later kidding does while club goat/registered producers are finishing out their peak during late March/early April. These kids will have the benefit of spring forage to maintain milk production in their dam as they grow and develop. Later born kids will have less advantage, as their dam will be milking on forages past prime growth and development. These kids will have a slower growth curve during the summer months due to the heat, humidity, and poor forage quality, but can catch up to the earlier born kids once they get on feed in the fall. Supplementation of the wet does will help to keep the milk flowing and kids growing during times of poor forage quality.

Good records are a must in any type operation. Kidding records that show the sire and dam, date of birth, birth weight, etc. should be maintained throughout the kidding season. Records and tagging are good tools for producers. Without accurate records, a producer will have little chance to move forward with their breeding program. In addition to tagging, some producers will need to tattoo their goats for registration or record keeping.

Recommendations for tattoo application on goats is as follows:

1. Determine positive ID on the kid and load the proper digits into the pliers. (Be sure that the letters/numbers are loaded properly. Test your pliers on a blank sheet of paper to see that the tattoo is not backwards or digits out of order.)
2. Firmly secure the goat's head.
3. Clean the ear with alcohol. (Soft cloth or alcohol wipes)
4. Apply ink to an area between the veins of the ear. (Latex gloves will keep the ink off your hands. Ink can take a few days to wear off your hands.)
5. Move the pliers over the inked area and apply gentle but firm pressure. (Do not press as hard as possible, but firm enough to insert the needles into the skin.)
6. Apply ink over the tattoo and work into the holes with a soft toothbrush.
7. Rub baking soda on the tattoo to help stop any bleeding and promote healing.

This process should result in a good clean tattoo that will identify the kid for life. A small animal (5/16") tattoo outfit and the green roll on type ink tend to work best on goats.

Now is the time for producers to determine if a creep feeding program for their kid crop will benefit them or not. Economics show that creep feeding can pay when early bloom is an aid to marketing. (Buyers are willing to pay in excess of normal market price.) Creep feeding is not economically feasible in most commercial situations where there is no opportunity for a substantial premium to be received above market price.

A good quality, balanced ration around 18% protein is recommended for creeping kids. Ideally the feed should be a smaller (starter) pellet for young kids. The feed should have a ratio of two parts calcium to one part phosphorus in it as high levels of phosphorus in relation to calcium can cause urinary calculi. Added ammonium chloride in the ration will help in the prevention of urinary calculi. The ration should also contain a good quality coccidiostat to help prevent coccidiosis in growing kids. If kids are slow to start eating from the creep, a little chopped alfalfa or molasses can be added on top of the feed to get their interest started. Closing the kids up in the creep area for short periods of time will train them eat and to come into the creep.

Quick Notes and Information

*In Mississippi, numbers of market goats shown in the junior livestock program from all districts increased from 57 head in 1999 to 260 head in 2006. The market goat show at the Dixie National Junior Roundup had a total of 67 head in 2001 compared to 182 head in 2007.

* All goat inventories in the United States on January 1, 2007, totaled 2.93 million head, up 3 percent from 2006. Breeding goat inventory totaled 2.44 million head up 3 percent from 2006. All market goats and kids totaled 494,000 head, up 4 percent from a year ago. On January 1, 2007 meat and all other goats totaled 2.40 million head, up 5 percent from 2006. Milk goat inventory increased 2 percent to 296,000 head while angora goats were down 8 percent totaling 238,000 head. The 2006 kid crop totaled 1.92 million head for all goats, up 4 percent from 2005. Released February 2, 2007, by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), Agricultural Statistics Board, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

*According to a press release from Commissioner Todd Staples, Texas Department of Agriculture, Texas ranks first nationally in production of goats and has total sales in excess of \$97 million.

*There will be a tour of Egypt Creek Ranch in Sarah, MS on April 26, 2007. Participants will be able to view the commercial and registered Kiko operations of "The Goat Rancher" publisher Terry Hankins. Registration is required by Friday, April 20 to attend. If you have an interest in participating contact Kipp Brown (662-237-6926) or Roy Higdon (601-776-3951) with the MSU Extension Service for more information.

*The Mississippi Club Goat Association will sponsor the fourth annual "Dixie Opportunity Sale" on July 7, 2007 at Hinds Community College in Raymond, MS. This year's sale will feature over 100 head of market wether and replacement doe prospects. Any goat producer in the state of Mississippi is invited to participate. Goat producers interested in consigning to the sale should contact Wade Henson, Sale Manager, at 662-310-0250 to obtain all sale requirement information.