

The Farthest North Goat Association Newsletter

May 2006

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February Meeting Notice

The May meeting will be held at 1:30 p.m., May 13th, in rm. 252 of the Duckering Building, UAF campus.

FNGA webpage:

The FNGA now has a webpage at www.akfnga.org.



February Meeting Business:

Main topics of discussion for last meeting:

- 1) Jennifer Ansley brought up that the Farmers Markert, UAF experimental Farm, and the Cooperative Extension service are bringing up State Legislators on June 23-24 to help promote agriculture in the Tanana Valley. More information about this event is included in this newsletter thanks to Jennifer.
- 2) Paul Finch had some questions about the Boer show and the judge.
- 3) The club would like to create goat milk T-shirts. If you have any design ideas, please feel free to submit them.
- 4) The club is going to purchase an Artificial Insemination instruction video

*******Reminders*******

- **We are still looking for donations for the August Sanction Show. The more the better.**
- **Remember to give your does a Clostridium/Tetanus booster 3-4 weeks before they kid.**
- **If your does are not kidding, they still need the Clostridium/Tetanus booster once a year. Usually spring is a good time to do this. This is a simple preventative measure. You don't want your goats to get Clostridium overgrowth. Clostridium is a bacteria that takes up residence in the digestive system where it tends to out compete beneficial bacteria. Once clostridium takes root, it is very difficult to get rid as it proliferates much quicker than the good intestinal bacteria.**
- **Also your kids need two Clostridium/Tetanus booster at 1 and 2 months of age.**
- **Dehorn/Disbud your buck kids at no later than 1 week and doe kids no later than 2 weeks.**
- **If you want to castrate your young bucklings by banding, this should be done no later than 4-5 weeks of age.**

Best Goat Picture contest

Submit your best and most unique goat pictures

Contest Rules

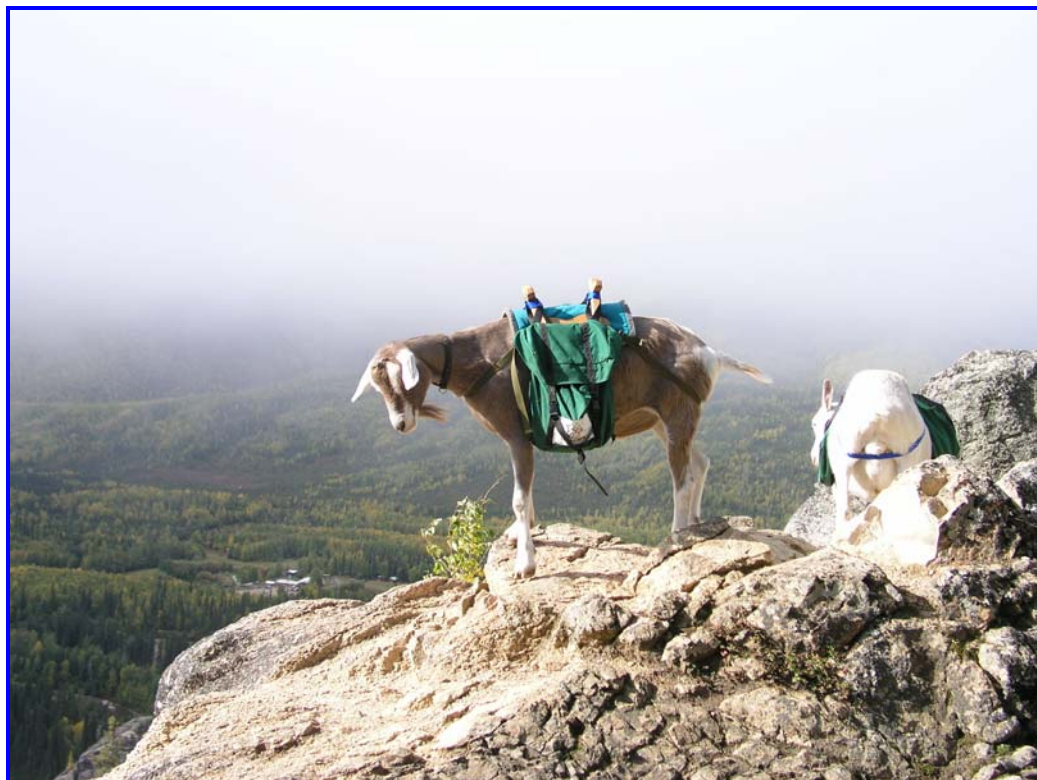
Submit 4"x6" pictures as hard images. If using digital images, please have them printed out. Please send the pictures to the Bray household (1233 Brock Road, North Pole, AK 99705) or hand submission at the goat club meetings. Submission deadline is July 15th. Maximum number of entries = 2. If submission loads are high, then entrants will be asked to choose of one of the two entries.

The Pictures will be posted on the goat club display on the Tanana Valley Fair where the public will vote for their favorite.

First place with consist of a custom framing of the image.

First through third prizes will be awarded.

Subject matter of the pictures is the photographers choice, but goats **MUST** be the focus. Themes may include shows, kids, milking, trail walking, etc...



Disbudding

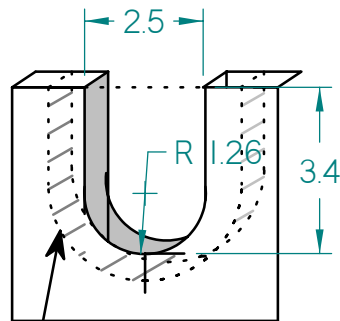
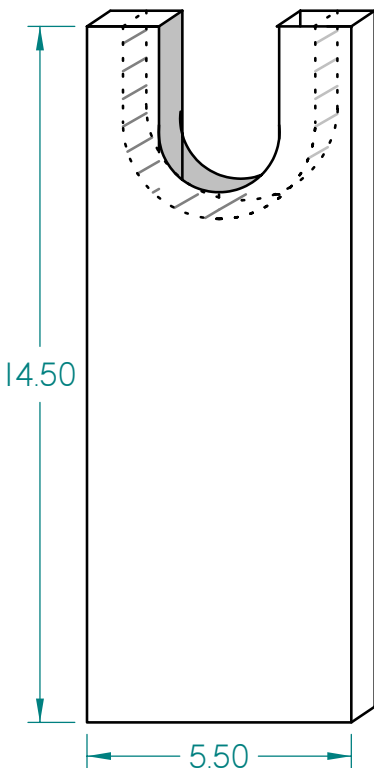
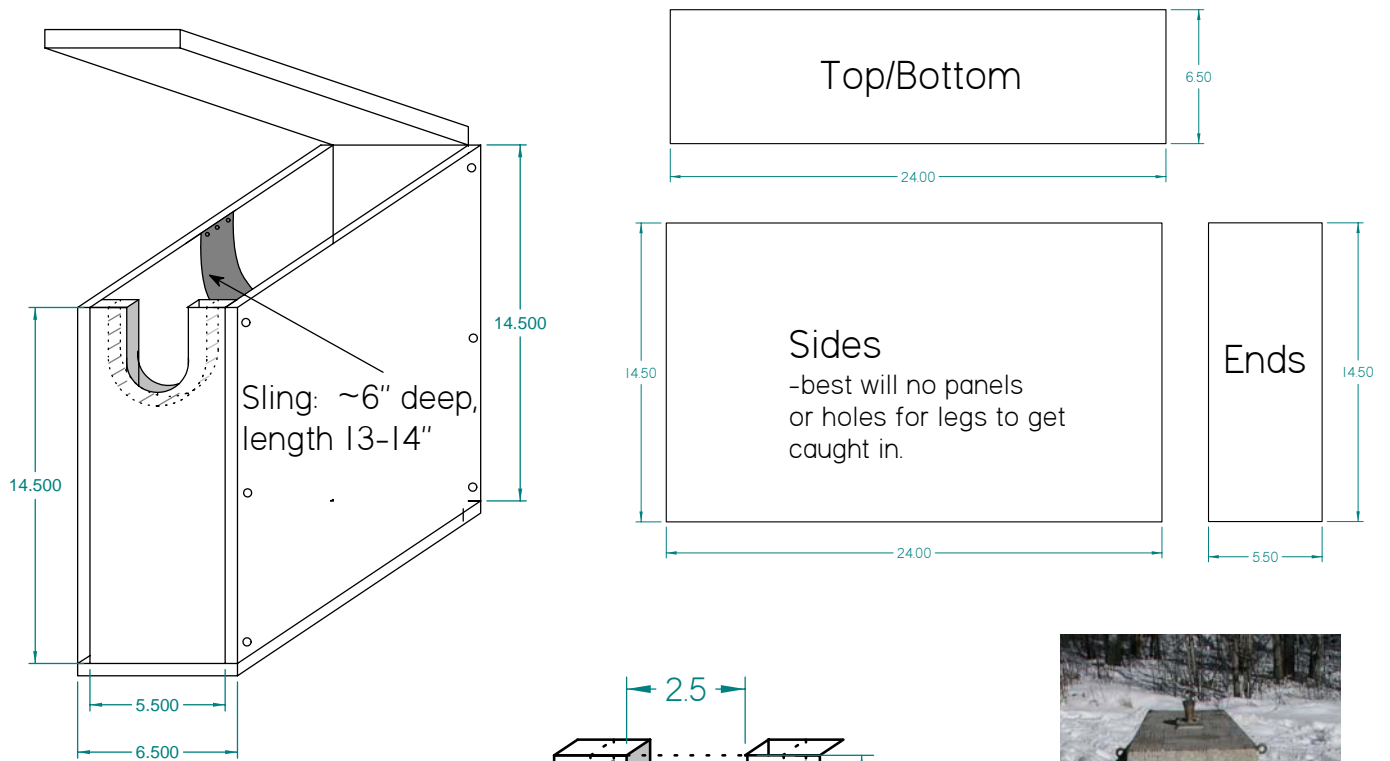
(Disclaimer: The FNGA or the author is not responsible for the use of this information or any problems associated with the disbudding process. The owner is responsible for the disbudding and any problems.)

Disbudding or Dehorning can be a controversial issue among goat owners. Some will say that you must maintain hornless goats and the other will say that you want to keep your goats horned. The advantages to maintaining the horns are: they offer protection for the goat, they serve as radiators as large quantities of blood circulates through the horn, and some think they look good. Advantages to maintaining hornless goats are: management issues are easier, improved safety for humans and goats alike, and goats must be dehorned to register them with ADGA (American Dairy Goat Association). Keep in mind that one can teach a goat not to use their horns, however, eventually a horned goat will either hook another goat or a human. This most likely is not done purposefully, yet it will happen eventually. Also, horned goats can occasionally get their horns caught in fencing and other obstacles. One absolute is, **ALL GOATS IN YOUR HERD NEED TO BE EITHER HORNED OR HORNLESS**. If you have both horned and hornless goats, the horned goats will be the dominant goats and pick on the hornless goats which may result in injuries.

The best time to dehorn your goat is when they are 1-2 weeks of age. This tutorial will be directed towards using a dehorning iron to burn the horn buds. It is the author's view that this is the preferred method of disbudding/dehorning and seems the preferred method among goat owners. The use of caustic paste on the horn buds can be somewhat dangerous. Surgical removal of established horns is a very serious procedure resulting in the removal of large amounts the goats skull, increased risk of infection, and risk of anesthesia. The author has no experience using bands for dehorning. The use of hot dehorning irons may be considered cruel and in a way it is. However, the alternative of keeping goats with horns may be worse if that goat needs to be sold because of issues with their horns or if the horns need to be surgically removed later on in life. After the approximately 20 sec procedure, the young kid is usually acting normal without any ill effects.

The necessary equipment consists of a dehorning iron and holding box. In this article, the Rhinehart X50 216 Watt dehorner with a normal goat tip was used. Keep in mind, that the temperature of irons may vary. The dehorning tip used was the standard goat tip supplied for Rhinehart dehorners. Both pygmy and buck tips can be found for the Rhinehart X50 dehorner as well. One may consider using a buck tip for bucklings as the tip profile is slightly different to accommodate the larger horn base. However, the author has no experience using the buck tip. Preheat the dehorner. When the dehorner easily burns a nice circular ring in a piece of wood, the dehorner is ready to be used. Note: www.fiascofarm.com/goats/dibudding/htm is an excellent source with a step-by-step disbudding discussion and outline. I encourage people to go to this site as well and compare.





Enlarge neck section if deciding to pad with foam (Pipe insulation workds)



Notes; It is recommended that you apply padding to the neck cut-out. Pipe insulation works well. If applying padding, increase size of neck in accordance to thickness of padding. Use eye and hook loops to keep box shut. A handle on the top is nice for carrying.

The sling in the center is made from a durable cloth such as canvas. The box is best without holes in the sides as goat legs tend to get stuck in them. The top is hinged at the back. It also assumed that 1/2" thick wood is being used. If thicker wood is used, scale dimensions accordingly. All dimensions are in inches.

Disbudding

Horn Size:

Ideal horn bud size is approximately 3/8". Bucklings should be dehorned at usually 1 week. Doelings should usually be dehorned between 1 and 2 weeks. This recommendation comes from experience with Toggenburgs and Saanens. The horn buds of other goat breeds may not grow at the same rate. For example, boer goat horn buds tend to grow slower than the swiss breeds. The important thing is to not wait to long. If you wait to long, the problem of horn scurs later in the goats life is quite high. Shown are three photos of the horn buds before disbudding for three separate kids. Shown to the right is the ideal size for disbudding. Shown to the lower left is the horn bud a 11 day old buckling. This horn is slightly larger than ideal. This buckling would have been better to dehorn a few days earlier. The photo located on the lower right shows the horn bud of a young 11 day old doeling. These horn buds are slightly smaller than ideal and are on the cusp of being to small.



Buckling horn bud at 6 days old. This is the IDEAL horn bud size.



Buckling horn bud at 11 days old. This horn bud is getting to large. Horn scurs may or may not result.



Doeling horn bud at 11 days old. These horn buds are smaller than is liked. A few more days of growth would be considered better.

Disbudding

The Process:

Dehorning can be a hazard and proper clothing should be worn. Wear heavy pants and a long sleeve shirt. If possible wear heavy leather gloves. In the pictures shown here, gloves were not worn because the dehorner needed the dexterity to control the head and ears of the goat. If possible, have a second person hold the head thus the use of leather gloves would be easier. The goat kid should be placed securely in the dehorning box. When dehorning, firmly hold the nose and ear closest to the bud to be disbudded. Please note, that you should not hold the mouth shut. Just hold the ear and head down. **DO NOT** hold the nose and mouth shut. If you must, place the **HOT** dehorner over the bud and burn the hair off so that the horn bud can be seen clearly. Once, you are ready, begin burning the horn bud. Make sure the iron stays in contact with the horn bud/head. Typical burning times range from 8-13 sec. Please note that excessive burning can result in damage to the brain. It is better to burn for small increments of time, check, then burn some more. Beginners should proceed cautiously with burn times until you gain a feeling/experience for correct burn times. Larger horn buds require longer burn times. The pictures in this example were taken of the dehorning process on a 11 day old buckling. The typical burn times for this buckling were 12 sec in length. The burning process is done when a bright copper ring is present and **MORE IMPORTANTLY**, the horn bud is easily broken off. If the horn bud does not come off cleanly, then you need to burn a little more until it does. If you want, you can apply a disinfectant such as iodine upon completion.



HOT IRON! Make sure the iron is hot before beginning the disbudding process.



Kid in dehorning box



Kid after disbudding.



Placing the kid in the dehorning box.



Location of horn bud. Note how the head of the kid is being held.



Burning of hair before the actual disbudding.



Burning the horn bud. Use a uniform circular motion while burning. Burning time is usually 3-12 seconds. .



Horn bud after burning. Not the nice copper ring.



Location of horn bud.



Horn bud before disbudding



Using the iron for the actual disbudding



Horn bud after burning



Removal of the horn bud. If horn bud does not come off easily, Burn again.



Horn base after removal of horn bud.



Disbudding Finished!

Tanana Valley Agricultural Tour

Mark your calendars! On **June 23rd and 24th**, the Tanana Valley Farmer's Market, the UAF Experimental Farm, and the Cooperative Extension, among others, are sponsoring a tour of Tanana Valley Agriculture for our State Legislators and other decision-makers. On the 23rd, they will be visiting various farms, ending their day at Chena Hot Springs for a dinner produced entirely in the Tanana Valley. On Saturday, the 24th, the dignitaries will be at the Farmer's Market from 9-11 where they will be available for us to share our ideas. This is a great opportunity for FNGA to try and affect the dairy regulations in the state of Alaska.

Currently, as we are all aware, it is legal only for Grade A dairies to sell milk and milk products. In the 2005 Alaska Division of Agriculture study "Milk Production in Alaska," E. Bruce Godfrey states:

"At the highest level of debt being carried by the dairies surveyed, and at an interest rate of 5%, it would take over \$65,000 in net returns just to pay the cost of interest without any funds being available for either family living or payment of principal on the debt. To service this level of debt, a dairy operator in Alaska needs to have a level of production that is higher than any of those reported. In addition, this same dairy would also have to have production costs, exclusive of debt payments, that were lower than any of the dairy operations surveyed."

Obviously, there is no economic benefit to goat owners in Alaska to meet Grade A requirements if it entails such an unbearable burden of debt.

Many people are interested in the so-called "cow-share" alternative in which people buy or rent "shares" in a dairy animal and are therefore entitled to a portion of the milk that animal produces. This is not the direction we should go for several reasons.

First of all, several years ago in Virginia, the state sued a woman who had been selling shares in her goats. The judge ruled that it was obviously a scam designed to circumvent the dairy laws and ordered her "goat-share" shut down. So, should these dairy-shares ever be contested in Alaska, there is a legal precedent in which the share programs lost.

Secondly, there is no consistency of dairy hygiene in these share programs. In Washington State a few months ago, several people became ill with E.coli infections which were traced to raw milk from a cow-share. Now that these activities have been brought to the state's attention in such a negative fashion, it is likely that Washington will also specifically ban any such share programs.

Here are the points we need to make to our legislators:

The future of Alaska's dairies need not be in doubt (as was suggested in the [Fairbanks Daily-News Miner](#), April 19, 2006) if we switch from an emphasis on dairy cows to dairy goats. Goats are superior dairy animals for Alaska in many ways:

- Goats are far less costly to maintain in Alaska than cows.
- Pound for pound of body weight, a goat can give more milk than a cow for much less input.
- Housing costs, feeding costs, breeding costs are all less expensive for goats – in every way, goats are a more efficient and economical animal than cows.
- Many children and adults are allergic to cow milk and can drink only goat milk.
Goat milk is easier to digest than cow milk, and there are numerous other health benefits of goat milk over cow milk.
- Commercial goat milk, shipped from outside Alaska, currently sells at \$14-\$16/gallon.
- Commercial goat milk cheese, also from outside Alaska, sells at \$21/lb.

Most goat owners in Alaska own fewer than 9 milking animals. A good goat can produce between one and two gallons of milk each day – far more than a family can use, but not nearly enough to make the leap to a Grade A dairy economical. Current Grade A dairy regulations require facilities and equipment which are prohibitively expensive. The main obstacle is the **Pasteurized Milk Ordinance** (PMO). Please note that I **do not** advocate the sale of raw milk. There is absolutely no nutritional benefit to drinking the milk raw, and the first time someone gets sick from carelessly handled milk, everyone will pay the price. However, as the laws now stand, pasteurizing the milk is not the only requirement of the Pasteurized Milk Ordinance. The PMO also requires a separate septic system for the barn, lab space, bulk milk holding tanks, a commercial pasteurizer and various other requirements for the design of the barn.

If the State of Alaska were to differentiate between **micro-dairies** (fewer than 9 milking goats) and large scale dairies, the obstacles to a dairy goat industry would be much easier to overcome. The remaining difficulty would be the pasteurization itself.

Currently, the law requires a commercial pasteurizer. The smallest of these pasteurizes a minimum of 10 gallons of milk at a time and, in 2005, cost \$15,400. Most dairy goat owners, even with high quality goats giving 2 gallons/ day, still cannot meet the 10 gallon minimum in one milking. Since the fat in goat milk is very delicate, it is prone to a disagreeable “goaty” flavor if the fat is not stabilized immediately through pasteurization. Many commercial goat dairies in the lower 48 do not pasteurize milk immediately after each milking. The flavor of goat milk available at grocery stores is, consequently, of very poor quality whereas goat milk which is pasteurized immediately can rarely be distinguished from cow milk.

A home pasteurizing machine, which costs \$285 and can handle 2 gallons of milk, uses exactly the same mechanisms for pasteurization as the larger commercial versions. The main difference in the machines (other than cost and volume requirements) is instrumentation. A commercial pasteurizer is able to record milk temperatures. However, this difficulty should not be insurmountable. With the advent of digital technology, it should be possible to customize a home





Rebecca Kahoe with her goat Minerva Louise. Is this goat SUPER????

Papa Meunier (488-7326) or Marjorie Illingworth (488-0446) who are coordinating the event for the Tanana Valley Farmer's Market. If the FNGA puts together a brochure on the benefits of micro-dairies for Alaska, we could include this in every participant's information bag **by sponsoring the event for \$50.**

This is a great opportunity to bring our ideas and the potential of Alaskan dairy goats to the attention of our legislators. Let's not miss our chance!

Editors note: This update was written by Jennifer Ansley. If you have any questions please free to contact Jennifer at 457-3890.

pasteurizing system without the investment in a commercial pasteurizer too large for efficient use.

With these points in mind, we should encourage our legislators to enact legislation providing for the following:

Grant exemption from the Pasteurized Milk Ordinance for farms with fewer than 9 milking goats.

Allow the use of home pasteurizing systems with appropriate instrumentation in place of commercial pasteurizing machines.

Require and provide training in sanitary milk handling practices.

Offer cheese-making classes to those dairy producers who would like to expand their product lines.

So, June 23rd and 24th are the days to get out and talk to the legislators who will be here to learn about agriculture in the Tanana Valley. If you are interested in participating in the event, call