



The Farthest North Goat Association Newsletter

November 2006

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FNGA officers:

President: Annette Bray 488-0872

Vice-president: Paul Finch 488-4768

Secretary: Lynn Pomeroy 488-1263

Treasurer: Mary Nebert 457-1670

Mailing address:

c/o Mary Nebert
862 Redpoll Lane
Fairbanks, AK 99712

November Meeting Notice

The next meeting will be held Saturday, November 11th at 1:30 p.m in room 252 Duckering Building, UAF.



Meeting discussion topics:

- 1) Gave a judge search update. We have contacted Pat Hendrickson and Steve Conside, but both are unavailable due to county fair restraints.
 - 2) Discussed a few breeding issues.
 - 3) Priscilla brought up the idea for the club to participate in the Tanana Valley Agricultural tour again next year as means to promote the goat industry.
 - 4) The idea to approach Bernie Karl and Chena Hot Springs Resort for donations to help with the installation and creation of a new goat mountain at the Tanana Valley Fair was brought up. A committee was formed to explore this option.
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Contest for next meeting

Come up with a list of adjectives and descriptions describing your thoughts and feelings towards your goats.

Bring this list to the next meeting on Nov. 11 and the best list will win bragging rights and maybe, even, a little prize.

**This contest idea was developed by Annette Bray,
So please bring your list and don't disappoint the goat lady!!!**

Examples:

Stinky

Joy

Tranquility of the Cud Chewing

Too much work

Breeding Evaluations: Does and Bucks

By Matt Bray

As dairy goat breeders, it should be our goal to improve on the goats that we breed. Depending on your interests, this may be breeding for increased milk production or to improve the structural aspects of your animals. My two purposes in this article are 1) to go over a critical review of two of my does to help people evaluate their does so that you may be able to identify your goats good characteristics and faults (note: the evaluation will only be my opinion. I am not a judge) and 2) provide information that can help you in the potential selection of bucks to improve on any traits that you may have identified that are important to you.

Be honest when evaluating your does and try to critically evaluate them. Most goats have some good traits and almost all goats have something that needs to be improved on. It is our job to figure out what these are. Shows are one way to aid this process as a judge's job is to evaluate your goats. Most judges are available after the show if you have further questions for them. However, realize that judges also have biases and as an owner you must breed goats that you LIKE. Also, evaluate the offspring of your does, if possible, as this will indicate what traits the doe is possibly passing on. If offspring are available for more than one buck, better yet, as you will get an even better idea about what traits you doe is passing on.

Doe Evaluations



Side view: I would like to level the rump and increase her rear leg angulation. She blends well through the shoulders and into the neck. We would also like to see more of a front udder extension.



Front view: We would like to straighten her front toe strike and have her legs track straight towards us. In terms of breed character, we would like to have full facial stripes.



Rear view: Recognize that she does not have a full udder in this picture. Her teats are placed to the outside. Ideally we would like to see those teats placed straight downwards.

Doe Evaluations

Toggenburg Doe Evaluation continued:

So in summary, Georgie has a good front end assembly with good blending of the neck into the shoulders. She has an adequate rear udder. We would like to improve her teat placement which can be done by either improving the medial suspensory ligament (which will pull the teats inwards) or by finding a buck that throws plumb teats. In addition, we would like to improve the tracking in the front legs, find her a front udder, and improve the white facial stripes.



Side View: Flurry is level over the top line with a relatively level rump with it being wide from hooks to pins. She is a little posty in the rear legs. She also is a little coarse across the withers and front end assembly. We would also like to give her a front udder attachment.

Front View: We see that her feet track more straight or true than the toggenburg. She is a little coarse through the front end. She does have a lot of width and power to her chest.

Rear View: Note that she does not have a full udder in this photo. We would like to improve her teat placement so that they are more true downwards and centered on each half. She does have a lot of width through her escutcheon.

So in general, we would like to increase her dairyness and blending through her front end assembly. I would also like to increase her height and stature along with her rear leg angulation. We like her levelness over the topline and her width through her rear udder.

When selecting a buck for the Toggenburg doe I would focus on a buck that throws a good front udder as well as correct teat placement and strong medial suspensory ligament. For the white grade doe, we want to find a buck with good height, front end assembly, good rear leg angulation, and front udder extension and attachment.

Buck Selection

There are two ways to improve your goat herd: 1) Buy or obtain better does and 2) improve through breeding to the boys. Buck selection will usually define the way your herd progresses in terms of quality. The American Dairy Goat Association has developed a genetic evaluation database using USDA based programs similar to the one used for Holstein cattle genetics, for the evaluation of the breeding merit of dairy goats registered in ADGA. However, this genetic evaluation requires data input in the form of linear appraisals and production (milk) evaluations. Those herds that participate in these programs have genetic potentials for many of the animals. For results, you can go to the ADGA website at www.adga.org and look under the Genetics menu. There are numerous options under the Genetics menu. A listing of bucks can be found under two criteria: 1) milk production and 2) type (physical attributes). If you are interested in finding a buck that can help increase milk production, fat content, or protein content you can do a search and find a list bucks. If you are interested in type or interested in improving a specific trait, you can look into the data base and find the bucks that have the greatest genetic potential to pass on the traits that you may want to improve on. I wanted to just draw attention that there are resources that can help you in the selection of potential bucks. With that being said, this approach is best suited for AI (artificial insemination) techniques where some of these genetically proven bucks may be available to the Alaskan goat owner. If you find a buck that you may like and semen is available, you can go into the Pedigree search in the Genetics portion of the ADGA website and do a search and find the pedigree of the buck in question. If genetic evaluation data is listed, it can be found on their pedigree page. On the next page of this discussion, I have shown a genetic evaluation for a Toggenburg buck and briefly discuss how to go about understanding the information provided. The information I provide is not meant to provide a comprehensive outline, it is just designed to bring recognition and to encourage interested people to investigate the information in more detail.

Keep in mind that genetic evaluation may not tell the whole story. Usually goats with high linear appraisals (FS) are good overall dairy goats. Do some research on a buck you may be interested in and find out the type of goats that are in the goats past, looking on both the dam and sire side. Also note that if goats have a lot of line-breeding, the bucks will have a tendency to throw those traits as the line-breeding usually is done to concentrate those genes that throw a specific trait. Realize that there are genotypes and phenotypes. Phenotypes are traits that are expressed and may not always indicate that those genes will be passed on. If a goat has a uniform genotype, the probability of those traits being expressed are much higher. In other words, outcrosses may not necessarily pass on a specific trait unless that trait is firmly entrenched in the goat's genotype.

So what do you do if genetic information is not available for your buck. If you are breeding to local bucks (which more than likely have no genetic information available as most local breeders do not participate in the DHIR and linear appraisal programs), you should research what bucks are available and see if they may help improve your lines. The breeders will probably have an idea about the type of qualities that an individual buck may throw. Or take a look at the buck's offspring and determine if they have traits that you may like. If you are not interested in AI, then you may be limited to what local breeders will let you breed to. Just make the best choice possible with what you have, just realize that your selection of bucks can have a large impact on the resulting nature of your herd for the future years.

Buck Selection

Shown below is the breeding information or pedigree information shown for a Toggenburg buck, Stonybrook Cavalier, as found from the American Dairy Goat Association under the genetic pedigree search (www.adga.org). My goal here is to just to give you a brief introduction on how to look and interpret the information. PTI is the production type index. The higher the number, the greater the breeding potential for the individual animal. PTI 2:1 emphasizes production over type and PTI 1:2 emphasized type (i.e. body style) over production. The yield data is in regards to ADGA's DHIR (i.e. milk production testing) testing programs and supplies information in regards to average daughter test results. The greater the number of daughters, herds, and appraisals will give you a better idea on how this buck is actually transmitting his characteristics (note: if only a few daughters are listed and one herd, then the does may be transmitting the characteristics rather than the buck—this applies to both the yield and type data). The values under milk, fat, and protein are PTA values for the separate traits. Generally speaking, the higher the values, the more likely the buck will pass on better production (milk) traits. The type data is based on ADGA's linear appraisal program which aims to rate the individual goat based on the ideal goat. The PTA is the predicted transmitting ability of an individual trait to be transferred. REL is the reliability of that PTA estimate. The greater the number of daughters, usually the greater the REL. Let us say you have a doe and have identified her faults and good traits. It is then possible to select a buck that may improve on your does faults. When looking at the data, look at the PTA's as they are the judge on how likely the buck is going to transmit that certain trait, but also look at the AVG FS scores to see how the daughters are actually being rated in relation to the ideal. Total AVG FS are the overall linear appraisal scores. As a reference, FS scores above 90 are excellent and scores 87-90 are very good. Also note that the PTI's, PTA's, and FS values are breed specific and should not be compared across breeds.

CALCULATED INDEXES			
PTI 2:1	PTI 1:2	ETA 2:1	ETA 1:2
130	129		

YIELD										
Breed	Herds	Daus	Lacts	Rel	Milk	Fat	Fat%	Prot	Prot%	Pctile
T	24	41	96	87	139	4.2	-0.04	0.5	-0.16	69

TYPE							
Born	States	Herds	Daus	Appraisals	Avg FS	PTA%	Rel
2/26/1980	7	20	25	47	85.1	0.6	79

TYPE DETAILS									
Trait	AVG FS	Ideal		Visual PTA			PTA	REL	
Stature	23.5		Short				Tall	-1.7	87
Strength	27.6	27-33	Weak				Powerful	-0.6	81
Dairyness	33.2	33-38	Coarse				Dairy	0.9	78
Rear Legs, Side	24.7	25-30	Posty				Angled	-0.4	77
Rump Angle	28.7	30-35	Steep				Level	-0.5	82
Rump Width	29.9	30-35	Narrow				Wide	0.9	81
Fore Udder Attachment	32	35-42	Loose				Tight	1.0	79
Rear Udder Height	36.3	40-45	Low				High	1.9	79
Rear Udder Arch	28.5	32-40	Narrow				Wide	1.9	75
Udder Depth	26.5	22-27	Deep				Shallow	-0.8	79
Suspensory Ligament	28.1	28-32	Weak				Strong	0.5	82
Teat Placement, Rear	18	25-30	Wide				Close	-0.9	83
Teat Diameter	25.3	18-28	Narrow				Wide	0.3	84

Judge This Class



(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)

In the spirit of the previous discussion, look at this class of Junior Grades (i.e. cross-breeds) and judge them based on type. I have not included rear or front photos. I will supply a judging and reasons for their placement in the next newsletter. Please attempt to critically analyze these does. You must be able to identify the good and bad characteristics if you want to improve. Realize that photos (a) and (b) are taken from a slightly higher angle.