



The Farthest North Goat Association Newsletter

October 2006

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Upland Fog

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October Meeting Notice

The next meeting will be held Saturday, October 14th at 1:30 p.m in room 252 Duckering Building, UAF. This is the time to discuss the future of the club's semen tank and the upcoming breeding season.



September meeting discussion topics:

- 1) Went through introductions as we had a good turn out.
- 2) Discussed options for the club's semen tank and use.
- 3) The awards for the top three photos from the Best Goat Photo contest where presented.
- 4) Discussion about possible ADGA judge's. It was recommended that Pat Henderson or Steve Considine may be good choices based on how they relate to kids.
- 5) Enjoyed a farewell potluck for Paul Finch. That orange goat cheese cheesecake was quite good.

Next meeting:

This will be the meeting to discuss any breeding questions such as buck availability, breeding times, breeding options etc.



Breeding Season

Recommendations for goat breeders in Alaska:

Does

Typical heat cycles for Swiss Dairy breeds (Toggenburgs, Saanens, and Alpines) begin in September. The strongest heat cycles tend to occur in October and November with additional heat cycles occurring from December to February. As the goats approach February the strength of the heat cycles tend to decrease. Goats can cycle later than February, but do not count on this as some may not even cycle in February. Some breeds of goats cycle year round such as Nubians. Typical heat cycles are placed 18-21 days apart. Estrus or standing heat, usually lasts from 24-48 hours. The longer periods of estrus occur in October and November. As you move towards February, estrus may only last 12 hours. Keep track of the estrus periods so you can free up your schedule if you must take your doe to a buck. Realize that you as the owner of the doe must work around the owner of the bucks schedule, so plan accordingly.

Typical signs of Estrus may include tail wagging, vocalization, staring, mounting, loss of appetite, and decreased milk production. Additional signs of estrus may include swelling of the vulva and mucous discharge. Your goat may be very obvious or subtle. The key to estrus detection is to PAY ATTENTION. Observe you goats for 5 minutes, 2 times a day other than at milking time and observe if there may be a change in the goats NORMAL behavior or routine. The key is simple OBSERVATION. Most people just don't do this. Another issue to remember. If you goat is extremely heavy, her heat cycles may not be very strong. For natural breedings, the only critical issue regarding timing is that they are in standing heat. For AI breeding using natural heat cycles, it is very important to know the precise stages of the heat cycle. Artificial insemination is usually performed at the tail end of the heat cycle. The mucous will tend to be milk/cloudy in color with good body. If mucous is clear, it is to early. If mucous is yellowish and custard like in consistency, then it is probably to late.



Things to keep in mind:

- 1) Make sure your doe is in good condition entering the pregnancy. You do not want you doe excessively heavy, however, do not have your goat to thin. Pregnancy is demanding on the body.
- 2) MAKE SURE you doe has access to mineral salts leading up to the breeding period as well during pregnancy. Do your goat a favor and supply them with mineral salt made for goats. This means that the selenium and copper levels will be high enough. Alaskan forage is deficient in selenium and you must supply this mineral to your goats as it is very important for proper muscle and organ function and growth. Copper is also another mineral that is important for reproductive process. Mineral supplements such as Sweetlix 16:8 are a good choice. The best salts are loose mineral and fed free choice.

Breeding Season

Bucks

The rut, which lasts for roughly 4 months, is the most physically demanding for the buck. They must enter this season in good condition. In this case it may be advantageous for the buck to be slightly overweight. Not overweight at this would decrease the vigor of the buck and his ability to breed affectively. You may have to increase your bucks food quantities during this period if necessary. Test your buck for CAE so that you can let potential doe owners the results if it is an issue for them. As with does, it is important for the buck to have free choice access to mineral supplements. The same comments in regards to selenium and copper apply for does, apply to bucks. Selenium helps maintain muscle and organ function as well as helps with the vitality of the sperm. Copper also is important for the reproductive processes. Buck owners should be prepared to supply the doe owners with service memo's if the buck is ADGA registered buck.



Some more things to think about:

- 1) By breeding you does so that they kid in January through March, it is very possible then to breed those kids so that they can kid as yearlings. April and May kids may be too small to breed in order to have them freshen as yearlings.
- 2) If you know your goats faults, you may be able to choose bucks that can help improve on those faults. (I will discuss this more in the next newsletter)
- 3) If you have a doe that is milking well as winter approaches, you may consider taking her through a year without breeding her. This may be a good choice if you do not want to deal with kids and breeding. You have to know you goat here in order to predict how well she may milk through.



If you are tired of making macaroni & cheese and would like to use your goat cheese in something more gourmet, take a look at the book Goat Cheese –Delectable Recipes for All Occasions by Georgeanne and Ethel Brennan. It begins with a history of goats and cheese production, then describes the authors' own experience as goat herders and cheesemakers in Provence. The authors touch briefly on American cheese production and then devote a section to types of cheeses and how to care for them. This introduction is followed by a selection of recipes using various types of goat cheese. The following recipe is adapted from a dessert in the book:

Baked Apples with Goat Cheese

7 baking apples
¾ c finely ground walnuts
¼ c butter, melted
2 tsp cinnamon
3 tsp sugar



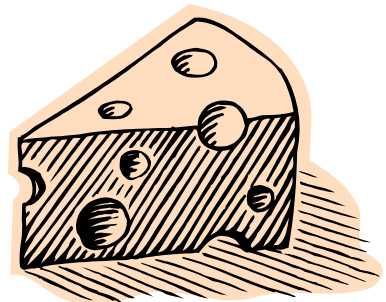
Filling:

10 oz fresh goat cheese (I used a whey ricotta, but unseasoned chevre should also be good)
½ c loosely packed brown sugar
½ c golden raisins

Preheat oven to 375°F. Mix together in a shallow dish (like a pie dish) the ground walnuts, cinnamon and sugar. Peel and core each apple. Do not cut apple all the way to the bottom. Roll each apple in melted butter then roll in the walnut mixture. Set apples upright in cast iron skillet.

Mix together the goat cheese and brown sugar. Stir in raisins. Fill apples with cheese mixture, mounding the cheese so it only just rises above the apple tops.

Bake, uncovered, for 45 minutes. Serve hot.



Recipe contributed by Jennifer Ansley

Saanen, My Love

I look across the pen and see those toggenburg studs.....

I look across the yard and see this mightily good looking young saanen STUD.....

I must choose because my love is growing.....

1 hour, 2 hours, 4 hours, 12 hours, 24 hours.....

My love is waning and it is time to choose!!!

I am let out to milk, but have an alternative motive.

When the milkers are looking away I make my move.....

Out the door I go.....

My mind was made up after much contemplation.....

Right past the toggenburg bucks, without a glance.....

Past the hay feeder I go.....

Oh My, there he is.....

The Saanen buckling of my dreams.....

Much to my distress, the milkers come and take me back to the parlor.....

I get milked.....

HOWEVER....

The milkers never learn and stop paying attention.....

I sneak out and once again I my make way my way to the beautiful

SAANEN BOY!!

(A true love story by an Alaskan Dairy goat)

