The goat industry is booming in our area. Extension regularly gets questions about goats, their uses, and their products. If you are considering getting into the goat business, there are several things you should know about the Caprine (that’s another word for goat) species. This article may help you make a decision about the sector of the goat industry that is right for you.

**Meat Goats**
One of the fastest growing parts of the goat industry is the meat goat industry. Lead by the Boer breed, goat meat is eaten regularly by almost everyone on the planet except Americans. With our increasing ethnic populations, our area is becoming more accustomed to those interested in goats for meat. There are certain holidays that some ethnic groups like to eat goat meat, similar to the way Southerners like a good pig pickin’. One can make good money by simply selling these animals on the hoof right out of the field. If you really want to get involved, you can get a meat handler’s license to sell animals you have slaughtered and processed at a NCDA or USDA inspected facility. Processed meats sell for much higher amounts, such as $60 of one leg of goat, as opposed to $100 for a whole, live goat.

**Breeding Stock**
With the popularity of the Boer breed, comes Boer breeders. Breeders focus on good genetics and raising quality stock for others to purchase. One product of a breeding program is whethers, or castrated bucks, that children in 4-H love to purchase for livestock shows. A good quality buck or doe can sell for many thousands of dollars.

**Dairy Goats**
The dairy industry is not growing as fast as the meat industry, simply because there is a lot more investment to start a goat dairy. However the demand for goat cheese and goat milk is tremendous. Some dairy goat breeds include Toggenburg, La Mancha, Saanen, or Nigerian Dwarf. The dairy business is a full time job simply because goats must be milked at least twice a day. Another product of the dairy goat industry is buck kids. These males are no good to a dairy and are usually sold to 4-H children or as pets for a very low price.

**Mohair**
Angora goats are most known for the fiber they produce. The average goat in the U.S. shears approximately 5.3 pounds of mohair per shearing and are usually sheared
twice a year. They produce a fiber with a staple length of between 12 and 15cm. The mohair is very similar to wool in chemical composition but differs from wool in that it is has a much smoother surface and very thin, smooth scale. The market valuation of mohair fluctuates more than does that of wool, but, in general, satisfactory prices are obtained for the clip. Although not very popular in our area, this is one other way to make money from a goat.

“Brush” or “Wood” Goats

Many times calls will come in to the Extension office with someone asking where to get some “brush” or “wood” goats. This is not a breed of goat, of course, but more of a general term referring to what goats are best known for- browsing. Any breed of goat will perpetually munch on leaves, vines, and stems and perform quite well. While Extension recommends you buy animals from a reputable breeder, your certainly do not have to pick the cream of the crop to accomplish the task of cleaning out some woods.

Extension would like to develop a directory for the goat industry. If you are interested in having your farm listed in this directory, please contact your local Extension Agent. Although in the planning stages right now, this directory would be a great aid for Extension to use when the public calls to inquire about goats or goat products for sale.

Helpful websites:


International Mohair Association: http://www.mohair.de/eng/start.html

Virginia Angora Goat and Mohair Association: http://www.angoragoats.com

TIPS FOR IMPROVING HERD HEALTH

Emily M. Adams – Livestock Agent, Onslow County
(Information provided by Dr. Mark Alley, DVM, North Carolina State University)

The key to a profitable cattle operation is having a healthy herd. That’s why it’s extremely important to have a solid health program in place for your herd. The goal of a good herd health program is to keep the level of disease resistance in your herd higher than the disease threat around them. You can increase your herd’s immune resistance through good genetics, good nutrition, and a good vaccination program. Decrease the threat of disease by lowering stress on your herd and practicing biosecurity on your farm. Biosecurity helps protect your herd by decreasing the likelihood that your animals will be exposed to any disease causing agents. To keep new animals from bringing disease into an established herd, isolate them from the rest of the herd for at least 30 days. This allows time for the animals to adapt to the new environment and will also allow time for any clinical signs of illness to appear. Also, try to keep sanitary conditions on the farm and limit the amount of traffic in and out of the farm in order to help keep the spread of disease to a minimum.

There are a few important things to remember when it comes to vaccines. One dose of a vaccine doesn’t always work so it’s always better to plan on giving boosters. Vaccines do not offer immediate protection. It will take the animal a period of time to develop immunity after being vaccinated against a certain disease. Vaccines are also not 100% protective. It is possible for an animal that has been vaccinated against a certain disease to still catch that disease in certain cases. Vaccines should be used as a form of insurance. The goal of your vaccination program should be for it to be safe, to create an immune response in your herd, to prevent diseases that could hurt you economically, and to bring minimal harm to meat quality.

There are several reasons why vaccines can fail. If you are aware of these reasons,
then it might help you avoid becoming a victim of vaccine failure!

- Don’t vaccinate in temperatures greater than 85 °F. This can add to the stress of handling the animals and can cause the vaccine to be less effective.
- Make sure vaccines are properly stored, handled, and injected. Keep the vaccines out of direct sunlight and in a cool place (i.e., don’t leave them on the hood of your truck or on the dashboard!).
- Mix vaccines properly where necessary and use only according to the directions on the label. If the directions say to give the vaccine as an intramuscular injection (in the muscle), don’t give it to the animal as a subcutaneous injection (under the skin).
- Use the proper timing when vaccinating. Don’t wait until just before the animal will be exposed to a disease agent before vaccinating. Give the animal plenty of time to develop immunity before facing the threat of a particular disease.
- If the animal is overly stressed or already sick during the time that you choose to vaccinate, the vaccines might not be as effective.
- Vaccinations against viruses that can cause disease are only effective against certain strains of the virus. If a new strain of the virus emerges and your animal is exposed to it, then the vaccine that you used probably will not protect the animal.

Also, keep in mind that it’s a good idea to limit the number of products you give the animal at one time. Give no more than 2 gram-negative type vaccines at one time. Gram negative bacteria include Hemophilus, Pasturella/Mannheimia, Vibrio, Lepto, Brucella, Salmonella, E. coli, Footrot, and Pinkeye. If an animal is given more than two of these types of vaccines at one time, it may cause the animal to go off feed for several weeks due to a reaction to the vaccines.

Keep in mind that herd health programs require short term and long term planning. One plan won’t fit every herd so do what’s best for your farm. Don’t let the introduction of new animals into your herd compromise all of your past work and use good biosecurity practices to protect existing animals in the herd. Vaccinating is one of the smallest areas of herd health so don’t forget to use sound management practices to help improve the overall quality of your herd. For more information on how to protect your herd, contact your nearest Extension Agent.

LIVESTOCK COMPENSATION PROGRAM – How It Will Help YOU!

By Amy Andrews, Livestock Agent, Craven & Jones Counties

Did you have to buy extra hay or feed to make up for forage or feed losses during the drought? Many of us answering YES to this question will need to pay particular attention to the information below. All livestock owners are encouraged to contact their local Farm Service Agency office to find out if you can receive compensation from this program. Here’s why.

What is it?
The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) Livestock compensation Program 2005-2007 (LCP) provides benefits to livestock and catfish producers who suffered feed losses or incurred additional feed costs directly resulting from natural disasters occurring between Jan. 1, 2005 and Dec. 31, 2007.

Eligible Livestock include:
- Cattle (dairy & beef), buffalo, beefalo, equine, poultry, elk, reindeer, sheep, goats, swine or deer

Livestock must:
- Have been located in an eligible county on the beginning date of the applicable disaster period
- Have been maintained for commercial use as part of the farming operation on
the beginning date of the disaster period
• Have not been produced and maintained for reasons other than commercial use as part of a farming operation. (such as wild free roaming animals or animals used for recreational purposes such as pleasure, hunting, pets, roping or for show.

**Eligible Producers must have:**
• Owned or cash-leased eligible livestock
• Suffered an eligible feed loss from produced or purchased forage or feedstuffs, or incurred additional feed costs as a result of an eligible disaster event(s) during the applicable disaster period (this includes damage from Ophelia)

**Other details:**
Producers will not be penalized if they reduced the average number of livestock they owned for grazing during the production year for which assistance is being provided.

Producers incurring a loss in more than one of the 2005, 2006 or 2007 calendar years must choose only one year for which they want to receive benefits.

**How and When Do I Sign Up?**
Sign up now! Sign-up for the LCP began Sept. 10, 2007. Livestock producers must submit applications in their administrative county FSA office.

Here is a list of the FSA Office phone numbers:
Carteret (252) 637-3567
Craven (252)-637-3567
Greene (252) 747-2968
Jones (252)-448-2731 ext. 3
Lenoir (252) 523-0524 ext 2
Onslow (910) 455-4164 ext 2
Pamlico (252) 745-5064 ext 2
Pender (910) 259-9123 ext 2
Wayne (919) 734-5281 ext 2

**ARE YOU PQA CERTIFIED?**
Eileen A. Coite, Wayne County

Consumer confidence and producing a safe, healthy product has always been an integral part of livestock production, but it seems as though today’s consumer has become more interested in where their food comes from and how it was handled. How often do you hear about new markets for local raised, organic, or antibiotic free foods? I seem to hear more discussion and interest about it lately. We all aren’t in a position to produce organic or antibiotic free hogs, but we are all capable of using pork quality assurance (PQA) techniques and observing drug withdrawal times to ensure a safe, wholesome product. If you are PQA certified or following drug withdrawal and handling guidelines on your farm, none of this will be new to you. Otherwise you might be interested in learning more about how to become PQA certified. Take a moment and review the following ten good production practices (GPPs) recommended in the PQA certification manual, and think about whether or not they are being followed on your farm. If they are not, it may be time to attend PQA training. Your livestock agent and/or a veterinarian that has been trained and certified to teach PQA can certify you.

**GPP 1:** Establish and implement an efficient and effective herd health management plan, which includes a regular evaluation of herd health status by a veterinarian, biosecurity, rodent and pest control, and cleaning and disinfecting procedures.

**GPP 2:** Use an appropriate veterinarian/client/patient relationship (VCPR) as the basis for medication decision-making, where the producer and veterinarian regularly communicate and work together to make and follow medical decisions for the herd.

**GPP 3:** Use antibiotics responsibly for three purposes: treatment of illness, prevention of disease, and improvement of the nutritional efficiency.
GPP 4: Identify and track all treated animals, either individually or in a group, from the time they receive treatment until completing their withdrawal time.

GPP 5: Maintain medication and treatment records for at least 12 months after an animal is marketed. Medicated feed records must be kept for two years. If a drug residue is found at harvest and traced to a farm, these records will be expected for review.

GPP 6: Properly store, label and account for all drug products and medicated feeds. Medications should be considered perishable items and must be protected from damage by environmental conditions and from contamination.

GPP 7: Educate all animal caretakers on proper administration techniques, needle-use procedures, observance of withdrawal times and methods to avoid marketing adulterated products for human food.

GPP 8: Follow appropriate on-farm feed and commercial feed processor procedures. Feed should be manufactured that meets nutritional specifications and desired medication levels if needed, and levels of any contaminants are at tolerable and safe levels if they exist at all.

GPP 9: Develop, implement and document an animal caretaker training program. All employees involved in managing the herd should be properly trained.

GPP 10: Provide proper swine care to improve swine well-being. This includes twelve principles, consisting of: recordkeeping, emergency support, PQA plus site assessment, daily observation, animal evaluation, body condition scoring, body space requirements, euthanasia, facility maintenance, handling and movement, ventilation, and preventing willful acts of abuse.

For more information about PQA or becoming certified, contact your livestock agent or visit www.pork.org.

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### Forage Management Tips

#### May

- Plant warm-season perennial grasses such as common or “Cheyenne” bermudagrass.
- Plant summer annuals such as pearl millet by May 15.
- Fertilize warm-season grasses with nitrogen after each cutting or every four to six weeks on pastures.
- If irrigation is available, hybrid bermudagrass sprigs may be planted, but weed control will be essential.
- Spray pasture weeds while they are small (3 inches or smaller) for most effective control.

#### June

- Take soil samples from fields that will be overseeded or planted during the fall.
- Apply lime as far in advance of planting as possible.
- A late planting of summer annuals may be made to extend forage supply.
- To stimulate yield of warm-season grass such as bermuda, apply nitrogen after each cutting or every four to six weeks.
- Graze bermudagrass close (1 to 2 inch stubble) and harvest any growth that has not been grazed every four to six weeks.
- Control summer pasture weeds before they get too tall and mature.
This site contains the same information found in the guide and has been produced to offer assistance in dealing with natural disasters. If you would like a printed copy of the guide, contact your local North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service Center.

Sincerely,

Emily M. Adams
Agricultural Extension Agent

“HELPING PEOPLE PUT KNOWLEDGE TO WORK”