

Traces

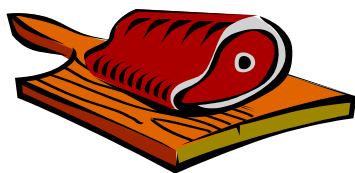


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If you are reading this letter, chances are you're a goat breeder. So are we and we believe the Australian goat industry has a really bright future. Descriptions of our industry are often laced with words like "dynamic", "volatile" and "fragmented". Roughly translated, this seems to mean that prices are never the same two days running and the people who want to buy and the people who want to sell are rarely in the same place at the same time!

We believe that it doesn't have to be like that and we have been working steadily in a number of areas to bring some sort of stability to our district. We believe that the key to the problem is communication. We're talking to anyone we know who owns goats, buys goats, sells goats, eats goats or thinks that maybe one day they might! We've decided to send out "Traces" on a regular basis just to let as many goat people as possible know what we're up to. We'd be pleased to hear back from anyone who's interested and don't mind printing what you have to say in future issues (as long as it's positive type stuff - we won't print anything malicious or depressing!) We will also include ads of our own and anyone else's too in exchange for a donation towards postage. If you would rather not receive Traces, send it back and we will cross your name off the mailing list.

An old man once told me, and I have no reason to believe he lied, that whether you say you can do something, or whether you say you can't, you're right! I reckon the goat breeders of Queensland can pull together for the good of the industry. You may not like the bloke in the next district. You may not agree with what he's doing. However, you've got to get on with him because we all need to market together. We all have at least one thing in common, we all like goats. We must, because let's face it; there's much easier ways to make money!



By all accounts the greatest restriction on the marketing of goats and goat products is the fragmented supply. If I can quote statistics from the BGBAA, approximately 90% of breeders own less than 100 registered animals; over 55% own less than 20. My experience is that this pattern is

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similar for farmed meat goats as well as stud animals. Some breeders have managed to carve out successful niche markets for themselves but many others feel that they are at the whim of processors who are handling thousands of goats per week and are disinclined to negotiate better prices for someone with 5 or 6 goats to sell. Not much bargaining power there! We recently began acting as an area coordinator and by considering the needs of both the breeders and the processors; we feel we have made a real contribution to market stability in our area. The benefits include lower transport costs, better prices across the board (i.e. no penalty for having grown a good heavy goat), less likelihood of the animals being held over for days and perhaps most importantly, confirmation of price **before** the animal has been processed. Prices do fluctuate, but the last load shipped was quoted at \$2.40/kg dressed weight for all carcasses over 10kg (no upper limit). This market also takes cull does (dry) and bucks. If this is better than what you can get locally, give us a call. We are also having a tilt at the domestic market. More about this later.



It has been an exciting year for stud sales. After a couple of slow months while everyone contemplated the future of Chinese exports, other nations with protocols much better suited to Queensland producers have been active including Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Japan and South America. Australian buyers are becoming much more discerning but domestic sales have also been strong with deliveries being made as far a field as Adelaide in the south and Mossman in the north. So don't despair of getting good money for quality animals when you see registered breeding stock being advertised at ridiculously low prices. We have been gratified by the number of buyers in recent weeks who have told us that if a breeding age animal is not worth more than meat money, it obviously does not have the characteristics they wish to impart to their herd. Poor quality, registered stock is unfortunately a by product of the initial rarity of the breed - anything with papers was worth money and many animals that should have been culled weren't. Now that our industry has "come of age", these poorer quality animals will eventually find their way into the food chain and we will hopefully be left with animals with consistently reproducible, superior meat qualities.



Advertisement

Update on our Boer Briefs ad! The 160 does are selling fast, from the 2003 drop we now have only 2 bucks left at \$1,500 each and 14 stud does at \$1,000 each We also have 12 commercial does from this drop (by commercial does we mean does with less than perfect colour, perhaps flat heads or similar *minor* faults that keep them out of the show ring.) On Chevretdor, a commercial male is a wether! We do sell some stud bucks to meat breeders without papers at a much reduced price. The first 2004 drop kids are now 5 months old and starting to sell. We have 65 does and 22 bucks left in this category selling from \$500-\$1500. As breeding and selling goats is our full time occupation, our stock are always available for viewing. Appointments are not necessary but as we are often absent doing deliveries give us a ring first to make sure we are home. We enjoy our visitors and talk and coffee are free, goats cost extra!

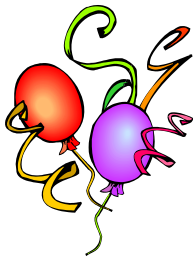


We receive a great number of phone calls from breeders, usually new to the industry, who are having problems with goat health and or management. The problems arise in two major areas:

1. lack of information specific to goats
2. finding a cost effective way of doing what needs to be done.

Because goats are a relatively small and friendly animal, many people who have made the switch to living on the land will decide to run goats. They usually find that it is very difficult to get information on management and nutrition. By the time they find someone who can help they have does aborting and/or kids dying in spite of all their efforts. Most of their problems could have been solved quite easily with a bit of information delivered at the right time.

Those that have been running goats for a considerable time have usually amassed a fair bit of information on general health and management and are usually more concerned with how to prevent the problems that arise without spending a fortune. Our first aid kit for goats contains lots of “around the house” stuff like bicarb soda, cooking oil, salt, sugar, coffee & eggs! These basic products can and have saved lives on our property. Of the more technical products, injectable B1 (Thiamine), is probably the most spectacular and is at the top of our “must have” list. One of our ET vets told us once that possibly the major cause of death in goats is B1 deficiency. Brought about by many and varied diseases and conditions it is apparently the final stage (recognized by convulsions) that precedes death. What he said, led us to believe that when faced with an unknown and imminently fatal condition, a shot of B1 can often give you a bit more time to figure out what else to do. In our district it is also invaluable in treating a condition known as “star gazing” caused by eating bracken fern, rock fern or nardoo fern. To greatly simplify a complex process, the result of eating these plants destroys vit B1 leading to difficulty with muscle control (walking stiff legged and/or trembling all over), severe headache (pushing head up against trees etc), blindness (walking into fences), head and neck arched backward, convulsions and death. The condition proceeds very rapidly. Having practiced with the vets in our ET programs, Laurie has become pretty adept at injections into the jugular vein and has been able to save goats even in rather advanced stages of this condition. With IV injections the goat can return to normal in just a few hours, with intra muscular injections you have to catch the condition earlier and total recovery can take longer (up to 5 days).



Special Events

GOAT INFORMATION DAY

Chevredor, Ryalls Road, Miles

Saturday 16th October, 2004

Starting at 9:30am the morning will include an on-farm inspection of weed control using goats, goat selection and hoof trimming demonstrations. This will be followed by lunch and a series of short lectures. Topics will include: goats for weed control, goat fencing, basic husbandry for goats, goat nutrition and the goat meat market – current and trends.

Entry, morning tea and lunch are free.

Or more information phone 07 466 58130

Laurie and Rosemary Bere-Streeter