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SO, YOU WANT TO DO MEAT GOATS?

REALLY BASIC CONSIDERATIONS



PSYCHOLOGICAL PROFILING

Is your mental status otherwise, okay? Are you & your S.O. in near perfect harmony? Are you and he/she gainfully employed? Can you make changes in your lifestyle gracefully and cheerfully tolerate adversity?

Can you readily admit ignorance and diligently pursue knowledge?

lf so, proceed, again ever so carefully

COMMON EARLY ERRORS

Being insufficiently 'educated' about the goat business (opportunities, constraints, returns to be realized); read, visit, look and talk

Improperly matching type of goat enterprise

desired with available, or required, resources

3. Over-estimating proper stocking rates and facilities capacity

4. Underestimating feed needs and costs

MORE COMMON EARLY ERRORS

Starting too large or expanding too rapidly Starting prematurelynot really ready Poor decisionmaking regarding procurement of foundation stock (who, what, when, where, prices paid)

Poor estimation of weaning rates (numbers, weights, and grades) and doe longevity

PROCUREMENT OF BREEDING STOCK

First, choose a breed of meat goat from:

Boer, Kiko, Savannah, Spanish, Myotonic or crosses

There is no single best breed for meat production; all have pluses and minuses

There are larger differences in performance WITHIN each breed than there are BETWEEN the breeds (average performance)

SELECTION OF INDIVIDUALS

Selection of individuals within a given breed is an imprecise undertaking and fraught The price of individuals may/may not be closely related to their worth as breeding stock

Few goats are performancetested, but some folks may have 'informal' information Buyers are reduced to visually assessing worthiness of individuals... bummer

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS IN VISUAL APPRAISAL OF INDIVIDUALS



That there is a reasonably close and positive relationship between physical appearance (phenotypic traits) and productivity traits (genotype)



That the prospective buyer 'knows' what a good animal looks like



The perceived or actual relationship between phenotype and genotype is neither close nor reliable; do not think it otherwise

WHAT YOU CAN, AND CANNOT, SEE

A person can see structural components and conformation/muscularity, body condition, as also masculinity or femininity and breed characteristics, but

A person CANNOT see fertility, mothering ability, milk production, feed conversion efficiency, rates of gain, or longevity

(If so, there would be no need for testing)

RATIONAL PRICING OF GOATS

The 'correct' price for a given goat is that sum agreed to by buyer and seller at time and place; all else is irrelevant

In a rational, economically equitable world, buyers would expect to pay prices fairly closely related to prices to be received in the near term

Unfortunately, this does not always occur

SOURCING FOUNDATION STOCK

First, decide the type of enterprise and its scope and scale (what and how many)

Then decide breed (purebred or crossbred) and ages and sexes needed to start

Alert your neighbors to the new enterprise and allay their fears of transmissible diseases, fence-crawling, water pollution, noise, odor and overt sex

WHERE SHOULD I BUY GOATS?

NOT AT THE AUCTION, FOR SURE From local or area producers From reputable and reliable producers

From order buyers or consultants; careful here For doelings, pay no more than twice the slaughter market price; for bucks, perhaps 3 or 4 times the slaughter price

WHEN SHOULD I BUY GOATS



FINAL WARNING

Go for it, but know that there is a learning curve in your future; you WILL learn (or crash) Do not have inflated expectations for the performance of your initial goats

Contact your extension specialists or me or other producers I know to be reliably informed

Proceed cautiously; not all neighborly advice is reliably correct

THANK YOU FOR WATCHING



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