**Feeders:** All feeders (grain, hay, salt, and mineral) should be built off the ground so the goat cannot get their feet in them or lay in them. Feeding twice a day gives you the opportunity to more closely observe your goat on an individual basis and to control intake so that your goat do not get too fat.

**Water:** Clean water is a key factor for any sheep project. Water troughs should be small so they can be drained and cleaned each day. Water troughs should be located in the shade to keep water cool during the summer. On cold winter days break the ice and allow goat to drink.

**SELECTION:**

When selecting breeding goats you have a choice of fiber goats (Angora, Cashmere), meat goats (Boer, Kiko, Pygmy, Nigerian Dwarf, Tennessee Fainting, Savanna, Spanish), and dairy goats (Alpine, LaMancha, Nubian, Oberhasli, Saanen, and Toggenburg). Many of the major shows have Angora, Boer and dairy goat shows, however, since not all breeds are shown at all shows it is necessary to check the catalogs of all major shows to see which breeds can show. Most breeding goats are shown according to the age on their registration papers. For Angora goats there are three age divisions: kid, yearling, and aged. For Boer goats the kid, yearling, and aged divisions are subdivided into more classes. Dairy goats are divided into junior and senior does with various classes within these two divisions.

Meat Goats (Boer, Kiko, Pygmy, Nigerian Dwarf, Tennessee Fainting, Savanna, Spanish) Breeding meat goats are evaluated on structural correctness, growth, muscling, volume and capacity, and breed and sex character. Several traits that can result in disqualification, especially in the Boer goat, include jaw defects, teat and udder problems, abnormal and excessively split testicles, folded ears, too little pigmentation, blue eyes, and wry tail. It is advisable to consult the breed standards for the various breed associations before purchasing your breeding meat goat.

Dairy Goats (Alpine, LaMancha, Nubian, Oberhasli, Saanen, Toggenburg)

Dairy goats are divided into junior and senior does. Both junior and senior does are evaluated on general appearance, dairy character and body capacity. In addition, senior does are also evaluated on their mammary system. For a more detailed explanation consult the American Dairy Goat Association scorecard.

**Protein**

Protein is the primary constituent of the body, therefore, protein from the diet serves to maintain or replace protein in body tissues, provides for carriers of other nutrients, and is a major component of various products such as meat, milk, and fiber. Protein requirements for breeding goats vary according to size, age, sex, and stage and level of production. Young, fast-growing kids need higher protein diets to allow them to grow and develop. Creep rations containing approximately 18% crude protein are useful during the first 2 or 3 months of life. It is important to remember that only natural protein sources should be used for young, growing kids. Rations containing approximately 15% crude protein can be used during the growing phase.

After weaning or as soon as you buy your prospective show goats, they should be put on a growing ration. A growing ration will be different from a creep ration in that it contains a much higher amount of bulky feed or roughage. However, it needs to be palatable, pelleted, have enough protein, contain ammonium chloride, contain a coccidiostat, and contain a proper mineral balance. A growing ration can be a complete feed containing cottonseed hulls and/or alfalfa pellets as a roughage source or can be a high quality hay with a grain supplement which is often the case with dairy goats. A good growing ration should contain 14 to 16% crude protein.

**Health:**

Healthy goats are important to the success of a breeding goat project. Sick goats and goats which have problems with disease never grow and develop to reach their genetic potential. The key to maintaining a healthy goat is the development of a preventative health program. Agents and exhibitors should utilize a local veterinarian to diagnose and treat diseases and develop a preventative health program. State and federal laws and regulations concerning the use of drugs for livestock are established to protect human and animal health. When administering drugs, always follow label instructions, including withdrawal time before slaughter. The use of a drug in a manner other than stated on its label is regulated by the Food and Drug Administration and may be done only under the control of a licensed veterinarian. Most Texas livestock shows have strict policies against the illegal use of drugs and will disqualify animals if such drugs have been used.

**Observation:** Careful observation of goats on a daily basis is also a good preventative measure for a successful health program. Goats which are not feeling good will generally not eat as quickly and may not clean up their feed. It is a good idea to routinely check the manure. Goats with diarrhea generally have some type of problem. They have either had their feed changed to quickly, have consumed too much high energy feed, or they may have an internal parasite problem. Check goats to see how they walk and to get a good impression of their overall thriftiness. Goats with their heads hanging down, dull appearing eyes, and walking abnormally generally do not feel well. Watch your goats continually and develop a preventative health program which will allow you the confidence of knowing that you have given your goats adequate protection from those things which most often cause disease problems. Goats which appear sick should receive treatment immediately to prevent more severe disease and health problems from occurring.

**Abortion Diseases**

The infectious diseases that cause abortions in goats include: Campylobacter,(Vibriosis);

Chlamydia; Q Fever; Brucellosis; Leptospirosis; Salmonellosis; Toxoplasmosis; Listerosis; and Mycoplasmosis. The abortion diseases that are associated with malformed fetuses include: Bluetongue; Akabane Virus Disease; Cache Valley Virus; and Border Disease. It is not uncommon for goats to abort on occasion, however, if the number of abortions increase dramatically one should submit a fresh fetus along with the placenta to a diagnostic laboratory for positive identification of the disease causing the problem. Once the abortion disease has been identified a vaccination program must be employed to prevent the problem in the future. It must be remembered that many of the abortion diseases are zoonotic which means they can be shared between animals and people, therefore, the utmost care should be taken with the abortion diseases.

**Caprine Arthritis and Encephalitis (CAE)**

Caprine arthritis and encephalitis is an infectious disease that is found primarily in dairy goats. Transmission occurs mostly through the milk and colostrum of infected mothers to nursing kid goats. Contact between infected and non-infected animals can also occur. Intrauterine transmission to the fetus can also occur but is less common. There are two main forms in which CAE can be manifested. The most common form of the disease is arthritis in adult goats. The neurological form occurs in kids 2 to 6 months of age and is characterized by rear leg paralysis. There is no treatment and all infected goats should be culled.

**Caseous Lymphadenitis (CL)**

Caseous lymphadenitis is a chronic contagious disease that is characterized by the formation of abscesses (lumps) in superficial lymph nodes and/or internal organs. If you do not have this disease try to keep from getting it by isolating new goats for 30 days and treating any abscesses before they rupture. If the disease is already present in your flock, continue to treat abscesses, cull infected goats, and vaccinate with a commercial or an autogenous vaccine.

**Coccidiosis**

Young goats that have diarrhea usually have coccidiosis. To prevent this disease make sure your feed contains a coccisiostat and make sure troughs are always clean and kids cannot stand in them. Treatment is usually one of the sulfa drugs or corrid. These drugs can be given orally for three to five days or put in the water and force the kids to drink for three to five days.

**Enterotoxemia (Overeating Disease)**

One of the greatest causes of death in goats is enterotoxemia or overeating disease. The most common symptom or sign of enterotoxemia is sudden death. This disease is caused by a clostridial organism which is normally present in the bowel of most goats. Goats which have their feeding schedule abruptly changed or take on large amounts of grain are the most subject to enterotoxemia. These changes cause the clostridial organism to grow rapidly and produce a powerful toxin which causes death in a few hours. There are two types of enterotoxemia, clostridium perfringens types C and D. Your breeding goats should be vaccinated for enterotoxemia when you get them with a vaccine that is clostridium perfringens type C,D and tetanus toxoid combination. Kids should be vaccinated at 2 to 4 weeks of age. Multiple vaccinations are recommended. A total of two and maybe three vaccinations is preferred, with the booster doses coming three to four weeks following the first vaccination. Using a good vaccination program should result in no losses from enterotoxemia in your breeding goats.

**Entropion**

Entropion is an inversion of the upper, lower, or both eyelids. The lower lid is most commonly affected. This is usually seen as a watery eye in a kid that is just a few days old. Entropion requires immediate attention to prevent permanent damage to the eyeball. The lid may be sutured, stapled, or inverted with a bolus of penicillin. This condition is very hereditary so do not select a herd sire whose eyes were repaired at birth.

**External Parasites (Lice)**

There are many external parasites but lice, both biting and sucking, are usually the major culprit. There are many sprays and pour-ons that are effective in controlling lice, however, resistance can occur to any of them. It is best to treat twice, 10 to 14 days apart, to control lice. Lice are a major problem in Angora goats as they cause the mohair to loose its luster and are very irritable to the goat. Meat and dairy goats can also get lice. Treating for lice can save a lot of money on fences. Goats that are itching can certainly wear a fence out by rubbing on it. Contact your local veterinarian as to what products to use to control lice.

**Floppy Kid Syndrome**

Three to ten day old kids start to show depression, weakness, and paralysis without signs of diarrhea and have normal rectal temperature. These kids have a metabolic acidosis. Treat kids with baking soda at the rate of 3/4 teaspoon for a 10 pound kid. Mix baking soda with water and administer by stomach tube. Rapid recovery can occur as well as rapid relapse.

**Internal Parasites**

Internal parasites are a continual problem in a breeding goat program. When you first get your breeding goats they should immediately be drenched for internal parasites and a second drenching should follow about three weeks later. There are not many approved drenches for internal parasites in goats. You should consult a veterinarian or Extension agent in your area for recommendations on products that are effective and on the time to administer. Internal parasites tend to build up a resistance to a drench if it is used over a long period of time. Rotating drenches may be effective in helping eliminate internal parasite problems. Fecal exams are a must for determining the success or failure of any deworming program.

**Pinkeye**

This contagious disease is characterized by excessive watering of the eye and clouding over of the pupil. Goats are susceptible to pinkeye especially after they have been transported to a new location. Dry, dusty pens and constant exposure to sunlight can be contributing factors. Most goats recover without any treatment so be certain the treatment you choose does not cause any harm.

**Polioencephalomalacia**

This is a nutritional disease that is caused by a thiamine (Vitamin B1) deficiency. Thiamine is produced by the rumen microflora and any alteration of the rumen bugs or ingestion of substances that contain the enzyme thiaminase can quickly produce the disease. Goats appear depressed, star gaze, act blind, and progress to convulsions. The disease is treated with thiamine hydrochloride at a dose of 5 mg/pound of body weight every 6-8 hours until symptoms subside.

**Pregnancy Toxemia**

Pregnancy toxemia is a very common problem in overfat, confined goats that are carrying twins or triplets. The nutritional demand of the kids is so great during the last 2-4 weeks of pregnancy that the doe is forced to use her own fat reserves for energy. As the fat is utilized for energy, ketones are produced which makes the doe sick. First symptoms are swelling of the legs, loss of muscle over the loin, and loss of appetite. Unless early intervention takes place the doe will die. She needs to be separated from the hard and fed all she wants to eat of primarily a high energy, high protein feed that will take up little space in the rumen. If she does not respond begin treating with liquid energy supplements such as propylene glycol. If the doe has a known breeding date and is within 10-14 days of kidding, labor can be induced.

**Ringworm**

Ringworm has become a serious problem in the goat industry. Ringworm is contagious and can be transmitted from goat to goat, from goat to human, and from infected equipment to goat. A good prevention program of treating the premises, brushes, clippers, blankets, blocking tables, trailers, etc. is a must. Ringworm can be treated with topicals, injectables, or oral preparations. None will give instant cures.

**Soremouth (Contagious Ecthyma)**

Soremouth can be a nagging problem for breeding goats. This contagious disease causes the formation of scabs on the lips and around the mouth of goats. This is a virus which can affect humans so gloves should be worn when working with goats with soremouth. Few medicines help in the treatment of soremouth. Iodine can be rubbed into the lesions after the scabs are removed and this will help dry up the area and reduce the infection. The vaccine is a live virus so be certain that you have the disease on your premise prior to vaccination. Almost all lesions will regress in 3 to 4 weeks with or without treatment.

**Tetanus**

Tetanus is a highly fatal disease that occurs when spores of Clostridium tetani enter a wound and set up an infection from which a potent neurotoxin is released. The neurotoxin producer extensor rigidity that begins with signs of stiffness and progresses to recumbency with full tetanic spasms. Tetanus can only be treated in the very early stages of the disease so prevention is very important. It is best to vaccinate for tetanus with a toxoid two weeks prior to any elective surgeries and then give a booster at the time of surgery. If vaccination is not possible, the use of tetanus antitoxin should provide protection for 10 to 20 days. Antitoxin and toxoid can be given at the same time without any interference. Tetanus can result from any of the following wounds: castration (especially with rubber bands), dehorning or disbudding, parturition or obstetrical procedures, tattooing, hoof trimming, puncture wounds, and dog bites.

**Urinary Calculi**

Urinary calculi is a metabolic disease of male goats characterized by the formation of calculi or stones in the urinary tract. The first sign of urinary calculi is a goat’s inability to pass urine. The goat will be restless, kick at its belly, stretch, and attempt to urinate. The common cause of calculi formation in male goats is feed rations with high phosphorus levels and an imbalance of calcium and phosphorus. Because grains are high in phosphorus and low in calcium, high concentrate rations may cause urinary calculi. A successful preventive is to provide a 2:1 calcium:phosphorus ratio in the ration and by adding 10 to 15 pounds of ammonium chloride or ammonium sulfate per ton of feed, Provide plenty of clean, fresh drinking water also.

**Hoof Trimming:** When breeding goats are confined to pens and fed well their hooves grow long and need to betrimmed often. Abnormal hoof growth can lead to problems with feet and leg structure andmovement of goats. Hooves need to be trimmed about every month or two. Always trim hoovesone to two weeks before a show in case you should cut into the quick and temporarily cripple thegoat. This will give the goat time to get well before the show.

**SHOWING:**

Showing is a very important segment of the breeding goat program. It takes a great amount of work, time, and practice at home. Practice is very essential. Practice showing a little every day, especially 30 days prior to your first show. All breeding goats should be worked with until they are gentle and will lead and stand.

The first step in showing is to gentle and be able to control your goat. Often times this is done by halter breaking them. Once the halter is on tie the goat to the fence with his head high and as close as possible. This needs to be done every day for a week to l0 days. Care should be taken not to tie them where they can hurt themselves and you should not go off and leave them tied in case a goat gets tangled or chokes. After they have calmed down the halter should be removed from the Angora goats and they are taught to be handled by hand. By holding and pulling on the hair on the chin and cheeks the goat will learn to respond and lead. Meat and dairy goats are shown with a leather or nylon collar or neck chain.

The next step is to teach your goat to stand, properly place their feet, and get them accustomed to setting up for show. Reach down with one hand and place the back and front feet squarely under the goat. Be sure the goat is standing in a normal position, not too stretched and not too close.

The third and final step is to teach your goat to travel at your side. By pulling on the mohair on the chin of Angora goats or pulling on the collar or chain the goat will step forward. Every time they take a step forward give them some slack. By doing this repeatedly your goat will learn to lead properly.

Keep the goat’s head high and the front and back legs straight at all times. When you enter the show ring always be neat and clean. Stay alert, watch the judge at all times, and keep your goat between you and the judge. You will, from time to time, be caught in tight positions. Always remember that good sportsmanship and courtesy are very important when you are at the show and in the show ring.