

# GOATS ON PASTURE

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# *CHARACTERISTICS*

- Rumen is large in relation to size of animal
- Digestive tract is short
- Very selective in grazing situations
- Diet preference differs from other kinds of livestock
  - Dual species grazing is a good option
- Small hooves
- Very agile



# *DIET*

- Preference is for browse – 70%
- Forbs are also desired
- Will adapt to what is provided
- Opportunity:
  - Control of brush and weeds using goats for a fee
- Avoid grass if possible



# *BROWSE BASED SYSTEM*

- Most of the pasture must be wooded with browse understory
- Rotational
  - 6 paddocks each with 14 day grazing period
  - 60 day rest period
- Long term rotational
  - 6 paddocks each with 30 day grazing period
  - 365 day rest period



# *GRASS/LEGUME BASED SYSTEM*

- Plan on 5% of herd weight per day as forage allocation
- Plan on no more than a 6 day grazing period for doe/kid system
- Plan on 2-3 day grazing period for finishing meat goats



# *DUAL SPECIES GRAZING*

- Works well with beef production
- Cattle prefer what goats do not
- Goats prefer what cattle do not
- Pasture improvement can be done if managed well
- Add 1-2 goats per cow, run them together



# *PADDOCK SIZE- GOATS ONLY*

- Daily forage allocation is 5% of the total herd weight.
- A good pasture stand at 10-12 inches tall has about 1200 pounds of forage/ac (DM)



# *FENCES*

- Perimeter:
  - 48 inch woven with barbed wire or high tensile on top. Also electrified high tensile on inside at 6 inch height
  - 6-8 strand high tensile permanently powered fence
  - Use a very good energizer – minimum of 4500 volts to the far end of the fence.



# *FENCES*

- Interior:
  - 1-3 strand temporary electrified fence
  - Electronet
  - Training to the fence is important
  - Water bodies 3 feet wide are effective barriers



# *LIVESTOCK CONCENTRATION AREAS*

- Goats will seriously compact soils
  - Especially in wet conditions



# *SHIELTER*

- Use during periods of wet, cold weather
- Provide in pasture or move them to farmstead during those times
- Natural shelter (trees, windbreaks) may be adequate



# *WATER*

- Greatly affects feed intake.
  - Adequate supply increases intake
- 15 gallons/day/1000 pounds of herd weight



# *PASTURE MANAGEMENT*

- Leave 3-4 inch residual stubble height
- Provide adequate rest period – 30 days average
- Keep grazing periods short
  - for meat goats: 1 to 3 days
  - For doe/kid operations: 3 to 6 days

