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**1. Victorian Branch News**

The calendar will be updated on the Victorian branch website shortly to include events and show dates for 2012. Check out the site in the New year:

<http://www.bgbaavictoria.com.au>

Click on calendar from the main menu.

We are currently planning a Show Preparation workshop (contact Ian Turpin 03 5482 1827) and an Information/Husbandry day (Contact Chris Lawrance 03 57973232) early in the year (Jan or Feb). There will also be a Northern Goat Growers meeting of interested stud and commercial breeders on January 15, 2012. Contact Ian Turpin.

A highlight of this years planning will be a "Goat Fest" to be held in conjunction with the Bendigo Goat and Produce fair run by the Chrysanthemum Association on April 28/29 2012.

We are planning a Show with a prominent international judge, demonstrations of foot trimming and condition scoring, husbandry and nutrition talks, cooking demonstrations, information displays and more. The focus will be on stud and commercial activities to inform, educate and encourage newcomers into the industry.

To spread the workload we are seeking assistance from members so if you can

help with stewarding, manning the Information stand, administrative duties or assist in any other way please contact Judith D'Aloisio 03 57973232 or email:

[judithdaloisio@yahoo.com](mailto:judithdaloisio@yahoo.com)

The Victorian Committee wishes everyone a Happy Christmas with two and four legged family members, and a safe and healthy New Year!! Next Newsletter in February! Check out <http://giggleswiththegoats.com/> for some Jingle Bells "goat humour"!



**2. Dark Cutting Meat.....**

The presentation of high quality goat meat to the public depends on the care taken by the producer to ensure their goats are well fed and well managed. Dark cutting meat is an indication of tough, dry meat and it is visually unappealing. Some of the comments below are taken from the Spring 2011 Pro-graze publication produced by MLA.

### The cause of dark cutting meat.

“The colour of meat in a retail display is determined by factors such as pH, temperature, amount of oxygen and the age of the animal. Dark cutting is caused by low muscle glycogen (a starch like energy store) at the time of slaughter”.

The natural store of energy in the goat is used according to the way the animal is fed, handled, transported, and the time the animal is off feed before being slaughtered. If we want to present our product as a prime eating experience and therefore ask high prices for our elite goat meat we need to take care of our goats in preparation for slaughter.

Here are the key ways to produce a high quality product in the final stages of preparation for slaughter.

Goats must be on a high plane of nutrition for the weeks prior to slaughter. This means they have high levels of glycogen in their muscles. While it is built up rather slowly, glycogen can be used up very quickly (e.g. a matter of minutes or hours) if animals are stressed while being handled, transported, or starved of nutrition during transport or holding.

### Here are some areas to be considered in preparation for slaughter.

- Keep goats in their social groups prior to slaughter. This reduces fighting and dominance disturbances.
- Try to select for breeding animals on temperament. Quiet animals are less stressed and therefore produce better meat.
- Muster and assemble goats quietly. Use rattles rather than dogs if the goats are not used to dogs. Design facilities to work with goats instead of forcing goats through the system. Be patient and “think like a goat” to get them where you want them to go. Use a superior brain to manage goats rather than superior force
- Familiarise animals to yards and avoid excessive force and noise to decrease stress.
- Provide access to water and feed at all times prior to consignment.
- Ensure goats are transported in suitable covered vehicles so they are not exposed to visual stressors, poor environment conditions, bullying by other goats, overcrowding and dirty conditions.

For our industry to be successful, each goat meat-eating experience by the consumer must be a positive one. However that experience is largely in the hands of us as producer, so we need to be professional in our management of our goats and produce an outstanding product.

Carole Axton

### 3. Xmas humour.....

### *A Car For Christmas*

Danny had recently passed his driving test and decided to ask his clergyman father if there was any chance of him getting a car for Christmas, which was yet some months away. 'Okay.' said his father 'I tell you what I'll do. If you can get your 'A' level grades up to 'A's and 'B's, study your bible and get your hair cut, I'll consider the matter very seriously.'

A couple of months later Danny went back to his father who said 'I'm really impressed by your commitment to your studies. Your grades are excellent and the work you have put into your bible studies is very encouraging. However, I have to say I'm very disappointed that you haven't had your hair cut yet. Danny was a smart young man who was never lost for an answer. 'Look dad. In the course of my bible studies I've noticed in the illustrations that Moses, John the Baptist, Samson and even Jesus had long hair.' 'Yes. I'm aware of that...' replied his father '... but did you also notice they walked wherever they went?'

#### 4. Do You Really Know Your Goats??????????

The old saying “It costs as much to feed a good horse as a bad one” applies to all animals including goats. The basis of any stud/commercial undertaking being financially viable is improved performance of its live-stock and this includes understanding the influence of genetics, husbandry, nutrition and environment.

We should all be trying to breed better animals, aiming for faster growth rates and more meat carrying capacity. How many animals are you carrying that are non-performers???? It is easy for the years to slip past without making any effort to critically review progress, or perhaps it is easier to simply look out the window with rose coloured glasses?

Whether running 10 goats or 10,000, have a commercial or stud focus or both, run animals on dry land pasture or intensive farming, the importance of record keeping is critical as a tool to evaluate performance. At its simplest level, we should all be keeping records to weed out the non- performing does. Essential to this is weighing animals at birth and weaning.

#### WEIGHING METHODS

Weighing at birth can be simple: a set of scales used for weighing fish and a supermarket bag are all that is needed (see Right).



For weighing animals at weaning, and to determine their live weights to meet market criteria, you will need a crate and set of electronic scales. Although the initial investment may seem a lot, these items are always saleable. (see Left)

#### RECORDING WEIGHTS

Weighing kids on a regular basis will determine the milking ability of the does through daily weight gains of the kids. The information can be documented in a spreadsheet which can perform the calculations for you after entering simple formula. Or you can enter the data into a Word document or on paper and perform the calculations manually.

One example of entering data and calculating weight gain is given next page:

## KID WEIGHTS 2011

KID NO	SEX	DOE	BUCK	DOB	Bweight	WT 3/8/11	gain	Status	COMMENT
1000	Buck	7216	504	20/04/2011	6.00	31.50	0.245	2	milked well
1001	Doe	7216	504	20/04/2011	5.00	30.50	0.245	2	milked well
1002	Doe	9216	7061	1/05/2011	5.50	18.00	0.133	2	maiden
1003	Doe	9216	7061	1/05/2011	4.50	19.00	0.154	2	maiden
1004	Buck	507	504	5/05/2011	4.00	29.60	0.288	2	one dead at birth, raised 1
1005	Buck	8062	504	7/05/2011	4.50	19.00	0.167	2	
1006	Doe	8062	504	7/05/2011	4.70	20.00	0.176	2	
1007	Doe	633	8071	10/05/2011	4.00	14.00	0.119	3	one dead at birth raised 2

The average daily gain (gpd) is simply the weight at first weighing (or weaned weight) less birth weight divided by the number of days from birth to weighing (or weaning).  $GPD = \frac{\text{weaned weight} - \text{birthweight}}{\text{weaning age}}$

In a spreadsheet you can enter this formula into the cell highlighted, in this case it is

=SUM( G5-F5)/104 (see below)

H5										
fx =SUM(G5-F5)/104										
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	KID WEIGHTS 2011									
2										
3	KID NO	SEX	DOE	BUCK	DOB	Bweight	WT 3/8/11	gain	Status	COMMENT
4										
5	1000	Buck	7216	504	20/04/2011	6.00	31.50	0.245	2	milked well
6	1001	Doe	7216	504	20/04/2011	5.00	30.50	0.245	2	milked well
7	1002	Doe	9216	7061	1/05/2011	5.50	18.00	0.133	2	maiden
8	1003	Doe	9216	7061	1/05/2011	4.50	19.00	0.154	2	maiden
9	1004	Buck	507	504	5/05/2011	4.00	29.60	0.288	2	one dead at birth, raised 1
10	1005	Buck	8062	504	7/05/2011	4.50	19.00	0.167	2	
11	1006	Doe	8062	504	7/05/2011	4.70	20.00	0.176	2	
12	1007	Doe	633	8071	10/05/2011	4.00	14.00	0.119	3	one dead at birth raised 2
13										

Dragging down the corner of this cell will automatically “fill” the other cells with this calculation. However since the animals were not all born on the same day, the formula must be changed to reflect the different number of days from birth to weighing date. See next page. There are 94 days between DOB and weighing for animals 1002 and 1003.

H7 $f_x$ =SUM(G7-F7)/94										
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	KID WEIGHTS 2011									
2										
3	KID NO	SEX	DOE	BUCK	DOB	Bweight	WT 3/8/11	gain	Status	COMMENT
4										
5	1000	Buck	7216	504	20/04/2011	6.00	31.50	0.245	2	milked well
6	1001	Doe	7216	504	20/04/2011	5.00	30.50	0.245	2	milked well
7	1002	Doe	9216	7061	1/05/2011	5.50	18.00	0.133	2	maiden
8	1003	Doe	9216	7061	1/05/2011	4.50	19.00	0.154	2	maiden

The formula must therefore be changed each time when dates are different.

The advantage of a spreadsheet is that you can “sort” the animals based on the gain to get a ranked order. You can also sort the data based on sex or alternatively, if you have a lot of animals, weigh the males and enter them in a separate sheet to determine progress to reaching slaughter weights and enter the doe weights only at weaning, say four months.

It is essential to compare “apples” with “apples”, that is only compare gains of animals in mobs that have had the same environment, feed and husbandry routines.

### INTERPRETING WEIGHT GAINS

In the above instance the weight gains are grams per day (gpd). This can be multiplied over seven days to get a weight gain per week, providing essential information as to when animals will be ready for markets.

A gain of 200+ is what we should be aiming at. A mature doe (plus 3 years) recording under 130 grams over a two year period (in a mob where all animals are recorded equally, and provided she is in good health), would suggest her milking performance is not adequate by comparison to the others.

It will be expected that maiden does may not perform as well in the first year, their kids are usually smaller. It is therefore important not to join does too early, from fourteen months is suitable provided they are well grown. Allow up to three years for a maiden doe to reach milking maturity.

### MORE ADVANCED INTERPRETATION

A number of more advanced options are explained in an article by Richard Browning “On-Farm Performance Testing For Meat Goat Doe Herds” (Tennessee State University) (attached)

<http://faculty.tnstate.edu/rbrowning/TSU%20Performance%20Fact%20Sheet%20col.pdf>

In the first instance, since all animals were not born on the same day, you may want to standardise the weights by calculating weights at 90 days for all animals (assuming they deviate by no more than 28 days). “A 79-day-old kid cannot be expected to weigh as much as a 112- day-old kid”

Once the average daily gain is calculated the following formula is used:

$$90 \text{ Day Weight} = (\text{GPD} \times 90) + \text{birth wt}$$

The table on the previous page then looks like this:

I5      fx      =SUM(H5*90)+F5											
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
1	KID WEIGHTS 2011										
2											
3	KID NO	SEX	DOE	BUCK	DOB	Bweight	WT 3/8/11	gain	90 days	Status	COMMENT
4											
5	1000	Buck	7216	504	20/04/2011	6.00	31.50	0.245	28.07	2	milked well
6	1001	Doe	7216	504	20/04/2011	5.00	30.50	0.245	27.07	2	milked well
7	1002	Doe	9216	7061	1/05/2011	5.50	18.00	0.133	17.47	2	maiden
8	1003	Doe	9216	7061	1/05/2011	4.50	19.00	0.154	18.38	2	maiden
9	1004	Buck	507	504	5/05/2011	4.00	29.60	0.288	29.89	2	one dead at birth, raised 1
10	1005	Buck	8062	504	7/05/2011	4.50	19.00	0.167	19.50	2	
11	1006	Doe	8062	504	7/05/2011	4.70	20.00	0.176	20.53	2	
12	1007	Doe	633	8071	10/05/2011	4.00	14.00	0.119	14.71	3	one dead at birth raised 2
13											

“Adjustments are made to 90-day weights because litter size and age of dam can affect weaning weight. On average, weaning weights decrease as litter size increases and young does wean lighter kids than mature does”

Further adjustments can be made to take into account the number of kids (“litter size” in this article) and the age of the doe. These adjustments are shown in the following table:

Effect	Group	Value
Litter Size <i>born &amp; weaned</i>	1 & 1	1.00
	1 & 2	1.14
	2 & 1	1.04
	2 & 2	1.18
	3 & 1	1.08
	3 & 2	1.23
	3 & 3	1.27
Age of Dam <i>years</i>	1	1.10
	2	1.09
	3+	1.00
Sex of Kid	Buck	1.00
	Doe	1.11
	Wether	1.08

Values courtesy of David R. Notter, Ph.D., Virginia Tech

“An additional step is generating weaning weight ratios. Within each sex group, individual kid weights are compared to the group average to produce ratios for relative evaluations. Ratios show the deviations of kid weaning weights from the contemporary group average. A ratio is calculated with the following equation:

$$\text{WWT Ratio} = \left( \frac{\text{90 day kid wt}}{\text{90 day herd wt average}} \right) \times 100$$

A ratio of 100 is equal to the group average. A kid with a weight ratio of 122 is 22% heavier than the group average. Conversely, a kid with a ratio of 91 is 9% lighter than the group average.”

## RECORDING OTHER TRAITS

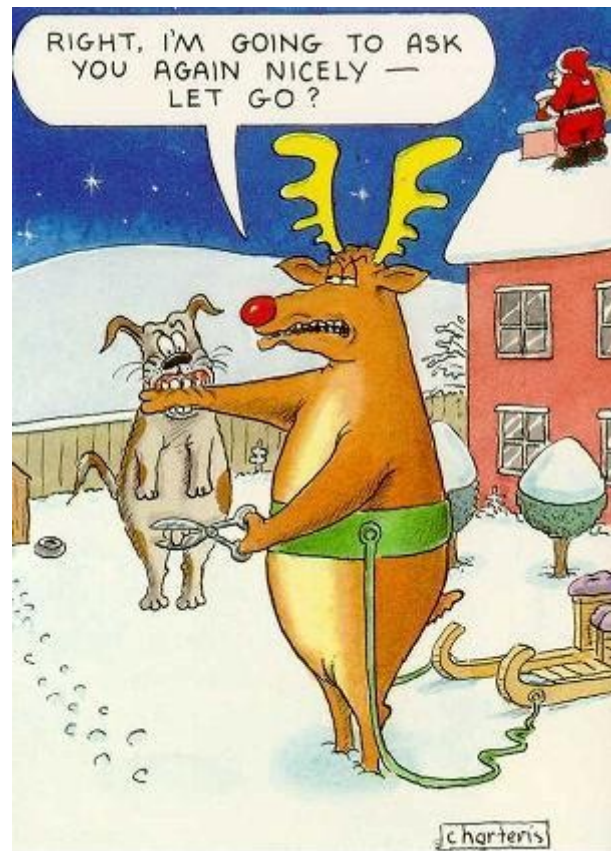
As well as weight gains of kids, recording traits such as mothering, recurrent lameness, abortions, failure to get into kid or health issues such as mastitis all help to determine which of your animals are performing and those not performing.

## CONCLUSION

Record keeping can be as simple or sophisticated as you like but it should be done for economic viability. The goat industry is years behind the sheep and cattle industry as they have been using performance recording and EBV's as a marketing tool and for commercial productivity.

The first step to better farm management should be recording weight gains of kids, both to determine which of your does are not performing and as a tool to meet market specifications. By constantly striving to improve growth rates and not becoming complacent the Boer goat industry as a whole will prosper.

### 5. More xmas humour.....



### 6. Stud Matters ...

#### Registrations.

There is a concerted effort for members to update their animal inventory. The Board proposal is that members will be able to update their inventory electronically, or manually for those without Internet. At present there are many thousands of animals on the data base as active whereas these animals have been slaughtered, sold overseas or died, or sold somewhere without papers.

## National Judges Committee

There has been a National Judges committee established consisting of the level three judges. Victoria has Vicki Mitchell, and Peter Mitchell on this committee so we have considerable input into National Stud matters.

## Coming events and activities.

The BGBAA National show will be at Stanthorpe QLD next year and will be organized by the Board.

## Breed Standard

The review of our BGBAA Breed Standards is due in 2012 and activities are already in motion to consider changes. There is an official process to deal with this review and I have been nominated to represent Victoria in the discussions. Currently we follow the South African 2006 edition of the Breed Standards, however South Africa has moved to a new standard and we must decide whether we want to move with South Africa on this matter or take a different approach and use or modify a different version, or develop a unique standard of our own.

If you would like to have a say please let one of us know your thoughts so we can prepare for the discussions. Two of the major issues are, what the standard should be for teats and whether bucks teats should also be assessed. Colour is another issue for consideration.

The Board has proposed a Judges Conference early in 2012 involving level 2 and level 3 judges. More information as it comes to hand.

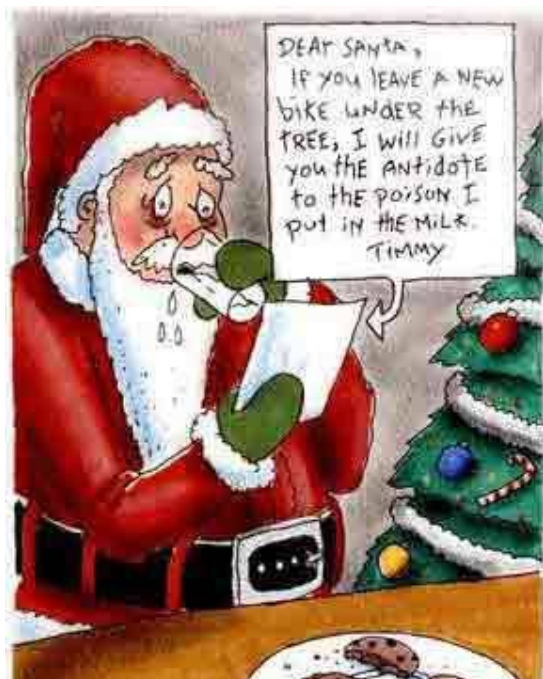
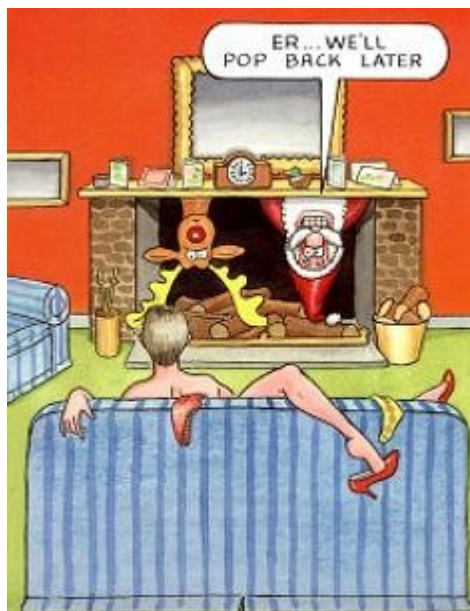
## Quality Assurance Program

The Victorian Committee is currently working on a system of training and assessment that will provide support to both commercial and stud breeders in their breeding programs. More to come next year.

Celia Burnett-Smith will be in the Gippsland area from January 16 – 20<sup>th</sup>. If you would like her to visit your property for training, advice or assessment of your animals please contact me (03) 5145 6259 or mobile 0429661369.

Hope all is well with your goats and the kids are growing fast. We look forward to a new year with beautiful goats and great promise.

Carole Axton



## 7. Update on NLIS Tags...

Attached to this Newsletter is a PDF File on approved NLIS Tags for Sheep and Goats dated September 2011. Breeders should follow the guidelines in this document to make sure they have the correct tags when animals go off their property for sale or slaughter. It is recommended that breeder tags be used according to the colour of the year system which is documented in this article.

Fourteen Tags have full NLIS accreditation and the suppliers are listed on the last page of this article.

For stud breeders the electronic button is still the preferred method of tagging as it has NLIS traceability as well as being an alternative to tattooing, provided it has the stud prefix of the breeder on it and animal number matches the registration paper. However it is important that the flat side of the button be uppermost with the chip underneath as the reverse can cause the button to snag and be ripped from the ear.

Photos of Acceptable tags as an alternative to tattooing are on the national website at the following link:

<http://www.australianboergoat.com.au/images/shows/photosofacceptable%20tags2.pdf>

(Main menu, Shows/Showing Information)

This article needs to be read in conjunction with the file on "Changes to Permanent ID" at

[http://www.australianboergoat.com.au/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=955&Itemid=146](http://www.australianboergoat.com.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=955&Itemid=146)

(Main menu, Shows/Showing information)

Victorian breeders are reminded that they can get electronic tags at a discounted price by ordering them online through the Victorian DPI.

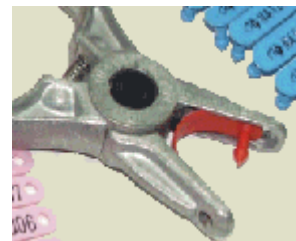
You must have a PIC (Property Identification code) in order to order online. The following link has the application form for a PIC code and the link to ordering tags online:

<http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/agriculture/farming-management/nlis/pic>

This link is a step by step guide to ordering tags online if you need assistance. Print it out before you start!

<http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/agriculture/farming-management/nlis/sheep-and-goats/order-tags/ordering-electronic-nlis-sheep-tags-online-guide>

A REMINDER... All hyperlinks in this Document will connect you directly to the relevant site provided your computer is connected to the Internet.



**7. Goats wanted:** These are the meat goat buyers that we know of. Please contact them direct.

**Landmark. Sale.** Older goats, lots of 10 or more.  
Transporting to Melbourne every Wednesday. Ring  
Rodney Perkins 0409660176

**Jim Kyriakou.** (03) 9807 4621

**Pat Cuffe.** 0427488959

**Leonard Livestock** 0408327227

**Ian Turpin.** Looking for wethers 40-60kg. [camboer@westnet.com.au](mailto:camboer@westnet.com.au)

**APGM.** Animals to 12 months.

Andrea Butterfield (03) 57542200

**Southern Goat Breeders, Tasmania.**

All goat types wanted, prefer over 35kg live weight, will buy all year round. Phone Kellie.

**Seven Hills.** All types.  
Glenn Martin 1300744557

**Heather Osborn.** Prime kids.

K & J McChesney

0416 207 544

[kellie.kelliescatering@gmail.com](mailto:kellie.kelliescatering@gmail.com)

Weekly. (03) 51468234

#### BGBAA COMMITTEE CONTACT DETAILS:

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**MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!**

