

Goat Prints



A publication of the Dakota Goat Association, 2975 Hwy 25, Mandan, ND 58554

Phone: 701-516-0707 Email: goat@harnerfarm.net

www.dakotagoats.org

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YOUTH & OTHER ACTIVITIES



Melody Marshall's goats are eager to meet you at her Barn Talk. Photo by Melody Marshall.

By LeAnn Harner, Editor

The DGA has been working with human kids to build awareness of the goat industry.

First, we submitted material for the spring issue of **North Dakota's Ag Mag**; distributed to third, fourth and fifth graders. This is the first time we've been involved in this project.

Second, I presented a **webinar** for the NDSU Extension series on animal science **careers**. While many **goat ventures were mentioned**, I was asked to concentrate on **direct-to-consumer sales of goat products**. The recorded webinar will be available here: <https://tinyurl.com/cwyh25nw>.

We're looking for people to **host events**. Our **first Barn Talk will be at Timber Lake, SD. Host Melody Marshall will**

show us her operation as we discuss feeding, facilities, vet care and more. **Melody sells inspected goat meat** and will share her experiences.

There are **three sanctioned dairy goat shows** besides the State Fairs this year. (See page 7.) August 16-17, the DGA is helping with the **One Day Milking Competition**, where your does can earn their milk stars. (Page 6) Keep watching our website for details or **sign up for our [contact list](#)** and we'll email updates.

If you're selling goats or goat products? Consider a listing in our [Breeders or our Business Directories](#). If you have trouble with the form, let me know and I'll email it to you.

Finally, the DGA is sad to announce **Dani Stearns** has stepped down from our board. Dani has a new position as **Vice President of the American Goat Federation**. We wish her well and know the AGF will benefit from Dani's expertise just as we have.

Enjoy this issue on rotational grazing.

DGA EVENT CALENDAR

June 22 - Barn Talk, Timber Lake, SD - Hosted by Melody Marshall

September 8 - Back To The Basics Program, Valley City, ND

October 5-6 (tentative) - Producer To Producer Conference, Mandan, ND

More information as it becomes available at www.dakotagoats.org.



Rotational Grazing

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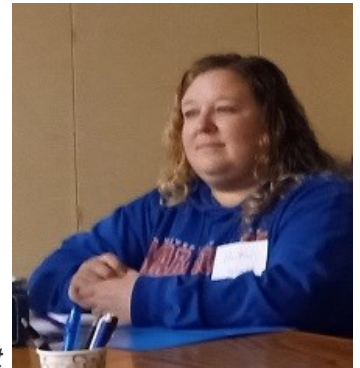
Feel free to share this issue with friends.

Suggestions are welcomed by our Steering Committee. Their contact info is on page 11.

DHIA MILK TESTING CLASS
February 5, 2024
Center, ND
Instructor: LeAnn Harner

Seeing the equipment needed and learning the sampling process is a major part of the class.

Of course, participants also learned how to complete the paperwork.



Participants ranged in age and DHIA knowledge, but all participated in discussion of how to handle milk, milking procedure, and their goals for their herds. Getting to know other producers is an important part of the class as producers can test for each other.



Sampling homestead cheese and lunch were needed breaks from the intense paperwork and records portion of the class.

We spent a little time talking about the differences between cow and goat milk and the laws for selling milk.



ROTATIONAL GRAZING

Photos and story by Crystal Neuharth

Rotational grazing is a very efficient and effective way to manage livestock by moving them from one pasture to another for specific periods of time. While one portion is grazed other pasture areas have a rest period. **The rest period gives the vegetation time to regrow and regenerate new plants.** This type of grazing can be accomplished with rangeland, around a homestead, and even on cropland.

Rotational grazing has many benefits for the livestock and the environment. Here's a few:

1. **Improves soil health**, rotating the livestock regularly can help prevent compaction areas and improve water infiltration.
2. **Provides nutritionally rich forage** for the livestock which can improve their health and production.
3. Rotating through different pastures can **reduce chances of overgrazing** and gives a chance for plants to thrive in their environment as well as increase biodiversity.
4. By disrupting the life cycles of pests, it can **help reduce the need for other pest control methods.**



Neuharth's perimeter fence .



The Neuharths include crop aftermath as well as pasture with both cows and goats (in the background) in their rotational grazing program.



Goats enjoying cornstalks.

You can rotationally graze with any animals and can mix them together creating multispecies grazing.

Multispecies grazing has benefits in addition to rotational grazing for one species.

For example, goats prefer forb type plants first and generally strip the leaves off the plants they eat and cows a lot of times select for more grassy plants first. Together they complement each other. The cows help provide predator protection. One thing to consider is **not all livestock will get along immediately and it may take some time for them to bond.** One way to help ease into this is by putting them into areas next to each other so they can get used to one another.

About the Author:

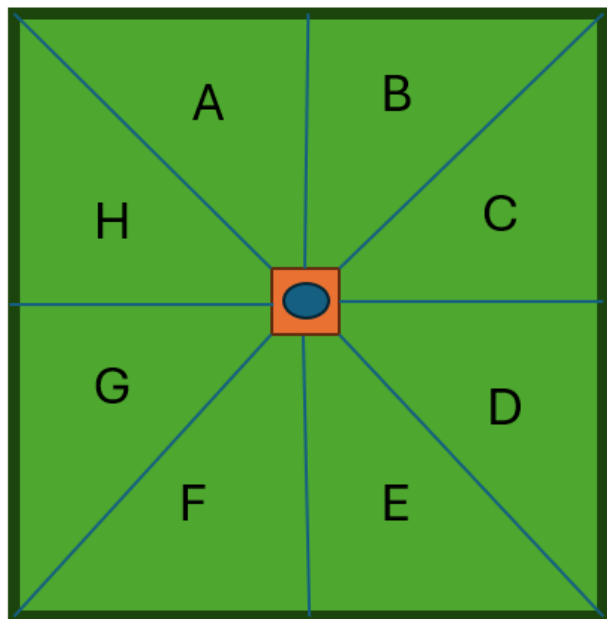
Crystal and her family graze dairy goats in cover crop areas and rangelands near Ft. Pierre, SD. They are accomplished grazing managers and have been recognized with the Leopold Award for overall excellence in resource conservation.

The Neuharths maintain permanent perimeter fencing for their goats. This is divided up using electric fencing. Their perimeter fence is barbed wire on the bottom, then woven wire and finishing with barbed wire. They run other species of animals in their pastures and their land is surrounded by other large livestock herds. This sturdy perimeter fence keeps all animals in the proper enclosure. The electrical fence they use is single strand poly wire using pigtail step in posts. They run 2 strands and electrify it by using a solar charging energizer.

The electric fence divider doesn't always hold kids, but they generally don't wander too far away from their dam. Having a secure perimeter fence ensures they stay in the correct general area.

Here is an *continued next page*

Rotational Grazing - continued



Dividing a pasture:

Each letter signifies a pasture.
Center is water and shelter.

animals depending on how many you plan to graze and the area available, as paddocks may differ in size or forage growth changes with heat and drought.

If you should decide to give rotational grazing a try it is always good to reach out to helpful resources. Your local NRCS office is a good place to start when you want help creating a grazing plan. They can help you understand how many animals you can graze in an area and help project how long you can graze your pastures. **Remember weather can change those numbers. Always be observant not to overgraze.** NRCS has programs available for cost sharing things like pipelines to water tanks, fencing, planting grass or cover crops, etc. though you'll need to plan ahead several months or more in order to meet application deadlines.

Another valuable resource is finding a mentor who has already done rotational grazing and help learn from their experience. Your conservation district, Extension Office or state grazing association may be able to point you to someone with experience.

I'd encourage you to give rotational grazing a try in your operation.



The entire Neuharth family is involved with their grazing program.

example of how you can create your own rotational grazing system.

Not all areas will be a perfect square and you can improvise however you need to create a system that works for you. In this example the outside of the square is your perimeter fence. All the lines that divide it up could be portable electric fencing. You can have as many pastures as you would like. **Remember, the fewer pastures that are available, the more careful you'll need to be to ensure the plants get enough rest and recovery days to regenerate.** The center of the diagram is water and shelter.

The diagram shows a larger scale rotational grazing area. You can manage grazing around your farmstead in the same manner. You'll need to move your

If you are continuous grazing now, experiment by continuing the same management in one area and give rotationally grazing a try in another area.

Observe the difference.

Taking photos in the same locations during the same time of year each year can help you see the changes.

Do your observations match the case study on the next page?

Rotational Grazing - continued

Rotational Grazing Case Study

Photo and story by Heidi Cuny



*Which side was rotationally grazed?
This shows the differences in just three years.*

The picture shown demonstrates the impact rotational grazing can have on pasture in just a few seasons. The 30 acre property is located in western Nebraska; just 15 miles south of the South Dakota state line. Our family lived there for four years until this past fall. **The pasture shown was previously hayed every summer.** Once the hay was cut and baled, thick patches of thistle grew in. In our **first year, we put in permanent fencing** on the west side of the property that consisted of **4' tall woven wire sheep and goat fence with a strand of barbed wire along the top.** With that fencing in place, we **began rotationally grazing the west side of the property, shown on the left-hand side of the picture.**

We utilized our goat pens (also fenced with permanent woven wire) that was located in the southwest corner of the property as "home base." **With our water supply in those pens, we set up four reels with poly wire from that location.** We used fiberglass fence posts with moveable clips that we set at 6", 12", 22", and 32" high (also shown in the picture). **The height of each of these wires kept kids, does, bucks, and everything in between on the right side of the fence line.** This height also worked with our cows; which we added into the mix during our third year. **There were never any problems with escapees unless we grazed a little too long;** which would occasionally happen when we were busy with other projects. At that point, there would be a few fence crawlers and we'd have to make it a priority to set up a new paddock. Usually, one or two of the kids would be curious about the wire at the beginning of the grazing season, get zapped, and jump through the fence out of shock (*No pun intended!*). That would usually happen first thing in the morning, so we just picked them up and put them back on the other side of the fence. They learn quickly!

The picture was taken at the start of our third year rotationally grazing on this property. **We rotationally grazed the pasture on the left.** We continuously grazed the pasture on the right with horses because we had not yet put in the kind of perimeter fence needed for goats. **When we began, both pastures looked like the one on the right.**

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About the Author:

When Heidi Cuny, husband Ethan and their son and daughter moved to Interior, South Dakota, she found the Dakota Goat Association and volunteered to share what she's learned while raising meat and help where ever needed.

They raise their goats using regenerative agriculture practices so they can limit the use of vaccines, antibiotics and wormers. Their operation is strictly non-GMO.



Rotational Grazing - Case Study continued

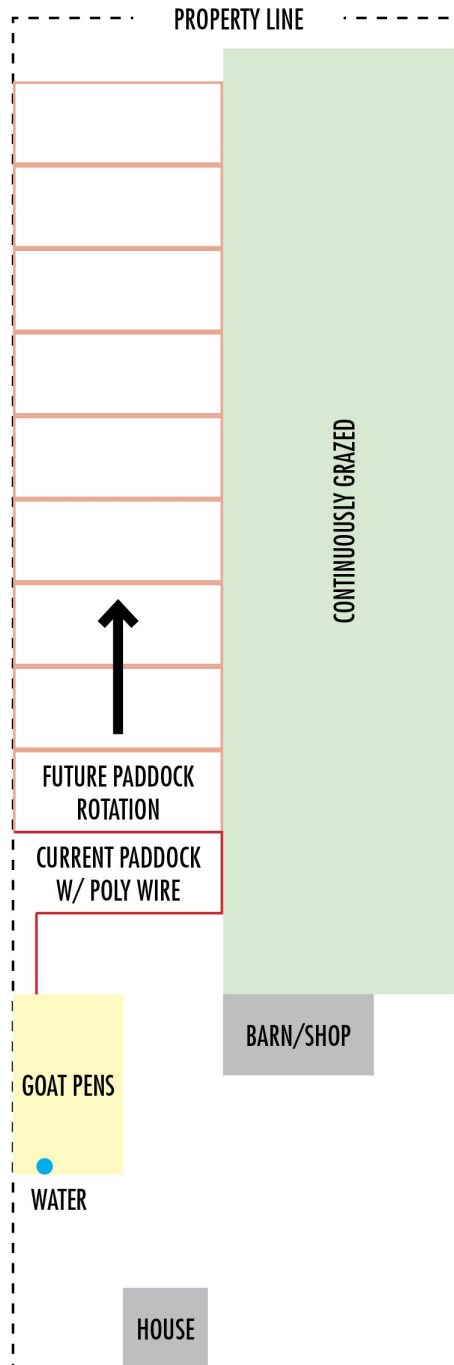
That first year, both pastures were covered in dandelions and curly doc, which are indicative of compacted soil deficient in nutrients. Rotational grazing corrected those deficiencies in our soil as you can see by what is growing on the left side.

Another improvement was a major increase in diversity of the grasses in the rotationally grazed section. When we started, the pasture was pretty much a monoculture of brome grass that would come in after the dandelions. In our third season that had completely changed, and our goats were enjoying timothy, blue stem, alfalfa, and several other varieties. Those grasses were not planted, but with rotational grazing now had the right growing conditions.

Not only did the condition of our goats improve with greater diversity in nutrients, but by our third year we hardly needed to deworm our goats. We have always used FAMACHA scores to determine the worm load in our goats and had typically dewormed every three to six months. Because we were putting our goats on a new paddock every week or so, they were regularly eating taller grasses and not grazing close to the ground where the barber pole worm eggs lived. Moving paddocks on a schedule that was ahead of the barber pole life cycle also helped. We have a handful of goats that were born on our property and have never been dewormed, which pleases us greatly.

With the long, skinny nature of this property (seen in the diagram), we created a lane where our goats could travel from the pen to their grazing paddock each day. Although this is not ideal for rotational grazing as the lane tends to become compacted dirt, this is what we had to work with and made the best of it. The goats would travel along the lane a couple times a day to get water and then go back out to graze. At night, they'd come back home and bed down in the pens, which were also a compacted dirt sacrifice area. Night penning was also part of our predator control strategy as the pens were only about 100 feet from the house.

Although rotational grazing can be a lot of work, we have seen great benefits from this approach. The way I see it, you are going to invest either time or money into your operation. Money will buy you the extra mineral, feed, supplements, and dewormer needed to maintain herd health. Or, you can put time into moving fence and achieve the same results (with some patience). It's a choice for every producer to make for their unique situation.



What's a One Day Milking Competition (ODMC)?

A ODMC is an event sanctioned by a registry for the purpose of independently verifying milk production.

Does meeting certain criteria can earn milk stars, even though they're not on regular DHIA milk test.

While a ODMC can be conducted on home farms, there will be a larger one held in conjunction with the NoDak Dairy Goat Show at Watford City August 16-17.

At this time, only does entered in the ADGA show will be eligible to participate. You'll need to check in Friday afternoon, then do a watched milkout that evening to make sure your does' udders are empty. We'll also check tattoos and other paperwork.

Saturday morning we have another monitored milking, only this time certified testers will weigh each doe's production and sample her milk. The final milking is Saturday evening, when milk is again weighed and sampled.

Samples will be sent to the Washington DHIA lab for analysis. All participants will receive a certificate with their doe's production, butterfat and protein percentages and somatic cell count recorded. Records will be forwarded to ADGA for possible milk stars.

Spectators are encouraged. If you're willing to help with all or a portion of the process (*the best way to learn*), please call or text LeAnn Harner at: 701-516-0707.

You do NOT have to be a certified tester to help with the competition.

HEALTH CORNER - Parasites and Rotational Grazing

By Crystal Neuharth

Rotational grazing can be a key in helping keep parasite issues under control. Some guidelines for success are:

1. **No overgrazing!** Don't let your goats overgraze their area. **Maintain at least four inches of grass height.** If the grass gets shorter than four inches they will have to eat it down lower and could start ingesting parasite larvae.
2. **There isn't a magic number for when you should move your goats or how big of an area to give them.** A rough time slot that has been successful is to provide approximately five days of grazing. **Using five days doesn't let any of the larvae that passed through feces hatch into an infective stage to the goats.** It takes six days for an egg to develop into that stage. A study conducted by Langston University in Oklahoma (*known for its goat research*) indicates that moving goats one day earlier than the parasite hatching date should make your herd be more successful in lessening your infection rate.
3. **If your goats eat the area down faster or are not getting enough eaten you can make adjustments.** After you move the goats to the next area **try not to come back to this same area for at least one month or longer** depending on the weather conditions. **Hot temperatures will kill the larvae off much faster than damp cooler weather.**
4. **Using portable fencing makes it easier to increase or decrease the paddock size to adjust for weather and forage growth conditions.**

A common question people have is: What if I do multispecies grazing? How does that affect parasites? Goats and sheep share the same worms and they can only survive in those species. Horses and cows do not share the same worms.

Want to learn more about importing and exporting requirements for moving goats between states?

We'll cover this topic much more thoroughly in our summer issue.

SANCTIONED DAIRY GOAT SHOWS IN THE DAKOTAS

In addition to sanctioned shows offered during the ND and SD State Fairs, those with registered dairy goats have these three options for earning points towards their championship.

June 7-8 - Hub City Dairy Goat Show, Aberdeen, SD

Two ring ADGA-sanctioned show for Junior Does, Senior Does, and Bucks
Youth educational event Friday with Buck Show following.
Saturday is Youth Showmanship, Senior and Junior Doe shows.
Check with their Facebook page for details here: [Hub-City-Dairy-Goat-Show](#).

July 7 - Red River Valley Fair Show, West Fargo, ND

Two ring ADGA-sanctioned for Junior Does, Senior Does, and Bucks
Check with fair website for details: <https://www.redrivervalleyfair.com/>

August 16-18 - NoDak Dairy Goat Show & Milking Competition, Watford City, ND

Two ring ADGA-sanctioned for Junior Does, Senior Does, and Bucks
One ring MDGA-sanctioned show.
ADGA-certified One Day Milking Competition - Conducted by the DGA
Friday: Check-in and Milking Competition Milk Out
Saturday Morning: First Milking Competition, MDGA Shows, Final Check-in
Saturday Afternoon and Evening: ADGA Junior Doe and Buck Shows,
Final Milking Competition and Adult Showmanship
Sunday: Youth Showmanship, ADGA Senior Does and release of entries.
Check their Facebook page for details: [NoDakShow](#)

Prospective exhibitors need to check the individual shows to see which breeds will meet sanctions and for specific rules and entry information. You must enter in advance.

VENTURES WITH GOATS:

Grazing For Hire - A Learning Experience

Photos and story by Gloria Montero
Originally published in Goat Prints in July, 2018



One of Gloria's does at work.

Have any of you had an idea that grew from a thought to a dream? I went through that very process. I drove to California to buy a goat and while I was there, I met a goat breeder who used her goats for noxious weed control. **Ah yes, the gears in my head started turning. How could I implement this program with my goats in Nevada?** I started thinking and from that dream the thoughts kept coming and a variety of scenarios played out. **Wouldn't it be great to be able to camp everywhere? I really like camping. The thought of taking my goats with me and**

making money on top of that sounded easy and one heck of a bonus! That would be so cool, I thought. I also thought this would be easy; however it was harder than I ever envisioned. **So let me start you on my humbling adventure of learning about goats, fencing, precision grazing and timing. This is an adventure that I will cherish forever.**

I decided I needed to do some experimenting with the goats, to learn by trial and error. I went to see my good friend Norman Frey, owner of Rambling River Ranches in Fallon, Nevada. I asked Norm if it would be possible to use a small plot of his land by the river to put goats out to learn and watch how they worked on noxious weed control. **Norm was so excited he said, "Yes! I have a solar fence charger; I will also buy you some fencing."** I was thrilled by his excitement for my endeavor. I had to make him a promise that the goats would not get out and eat his wife's roses to seal the deal. With good friends by my side we started to construct the electric fence. Once we had the fence up we put the goats in. **Right away one of my big does walked through the fence.** With half of her body on the other side she stopped to chew her cud. **We witnessed the fence snapping and sparking off her udder.** She stood calmly; chewing her cud with no evidence the electricity was affecting her. As we all stood watching in shock; we had to re-evaluate what we were going to do.

We went down to the local ranch supply store to figure out what was going on. I spoke with the staff, and they directed me to the sales person for the electric fencing supplies. I made the call and the gentleman said he would meet me at the river. As he observed what I had put up he said, **"Yep, you're dealing with goats and with that said you must know two important things, one, if water goes through it goats can too. Two, it doesn't matter how hot your fence is or how many strands you have up if the goats don't like where they are, they will get out."** Dumbfounded, I could only look at him. I asked if he could show me how to try to contain them. **He responded that I would need a charger that runs 5 to 7 joules and puts out 9000 volts. I would also have to run my fence with hot and ground, so when goats hit the hot, they hit the ground causing a double whammy.** Goats can take the highest amount of electricity of all animals. Oh yeah, challenges in my dream already! He helped me assemble the fence correctly. We put step in post every 10 to 15 steps apart and 5 lines of hot tape every 8 inches. We tested the fence with a tester to make sure the voltage was correct. **I will not mention how many times I tested it on myself on accident, knocking myself to the ground and screaming in agony.** The fence was ready, we were confident that we knew what we were doing.

About the author:

Gloria Montero owns and operates Montero Goat Farm and Weed Warriors at Fallon, Nevada. She has been in the goat business for over 25 years; raising goats for meat, dairy, pack use and weed control.

She focuses on natural methods of health management, no hormones or steroids are used on her goats. She does not feed or advocate the use of genetically modified feeds. Her goats are grazed on pastures with plenty of fresh air and sunshine.



Gloria is a founding member of the Nevada Goat Producers Association and actively works to educate goat owners of all ages. Her nickname is the Crazy Goat Lady of Nevada.

To learn more, visit Weed Warriors - Nature's solution to weed and brush control: <https://www.facebook.com/WeedWarriorsGoatGrazing>

continued next page

New Goat Adventures - continued

My friend and I put 50 head of goats inside the fence and waited. **We stayed to observe the goats and see who was going to be first to be shocked.** Somehow the goats knew we were feeling very over confident in our fencing job. **None of the goats tried the fence while we were watching.** We felt pretty pleased with our accomplishments and impressed with our fencing job. We talked about camping with the goats, but decided to go home for the night and come back early in the morning. **Really, what kind of trouble could the goats get into over night?** We were only three miles away. I received a call at 5 am in the morning from Norman to tell me the goats were nowhere to be found on the ranch.

I made the phone calls to my friends and headed out. **Goats love going for walkabouts.** We started tracking and discovered they had left a lush green river bank to cross the beautiful alfalfa fields. That wasn't enough, so they crossed a corn field and the highway. **We found them four miles away in a subdivision eating someone's roses.** Boy, this was not turning out how I expected. We loaded them and took them home. **After many trials, errors and humbling experiences we figured it's best to place goats in a new area in the morning, so that way they become accustomed and happy with the surrounding areas before it gets dark.** If you introduce them in the afternoon they fear the unknown and become terrified of the dark.



Livestock guardian on duty.

My goal for this experiment was to learn about the goat's eating habits; **what they really do eat and what they don't eat.** Contrary to popular belief, goats don't eat everything. **Goats are browsers, not grazers, meaning they nibble everything but really prefer forbs and brush over grasses.** I was concentrating on what noxious weeds they would eat. **A noxious weed is described as "an invasive species of a plant that has been designated by county, state or national agricultural authorities as one that is injurious to agriculture and/or horticultural crops natural habitats and/or ecosystems and humans or livestock."** Most noxious weeds are non-native species that have been introduced into an ecosystem by ignorance, mismanagement, or accident.

Studies have shown that grazing with goats is an effective tool used in weed management. When goats graze noxious weeds, they strip the leaves causing the plant to stress. Once the plant stresses, it sends its emergency reserves up from the roots to enable the plant to grow new leaves. This allows the photosynthesis process to work again. When the plant uses its reserves from the roots, the entire plant is unable to defend itself from other attacks. When goats graze and eat the seeds, only 5% viable seed is passed through the goat which means not only do goats stress the plant; they also destroy the seeds. The goats actually make the plant weak and more vulnerable to herbicide, thus requiring less chemical. I watched and observed the goats eat certain plants and leave others alone. **They really like the noxious weeds over other livestock, so this was a great selling point for my company.** Through all of this I learned the eating habits, now to continue on and work on the timing and precision grazing.

From Gloria

The 10 Goat Commandments

1. Thou shalt not be a true goat's man unless you have raised kids in the house.
2. Thou shalt not be a true goat's man until you have gone to extreme measures to help a mama goat kid.
3. Thou shalt only been marked as a true goat's man after many, many hoof trimming and shot scars.
4. Thou shalt call thyself a true goat's man if goats ride in the back seat of your car or truck.
5. Thou shalt not be called true goat's man until you have done goat skiing many times.
6. Thou shalt not be called true goat's man until in depth conversations of udder structure and milk production occur often.
7. Thou shalt not be called true goat's man until you have your wallet, phone and face book full of nothing more then goat photos.
8. Thou shalt not be called a true goat's man until you have texted or called every goat friend far and wide to tell them about your kidding and brag about kids.
9. Thou shalt not be a true goat's man unless you have spent countless hours catching escape goats from a fence that only water can go through.
10. Thou shalt not be a true goat's man unless you have to sit in the goat pen and let the goats lick, chew and jump on you, because this is your way of relaxation, and finding peace.

Goat Venture — Grazing continued



Goats coming home.

As we moved the fencing in one acre lots we discovered how to maneuver the fence to any shape and around areas that didn't need grazing; thus we learned the technique of precision grazing and the timing of when to move the goats. Goats are very smart and soon figured out that we were making pens for them to move from area to area. **If I did not move them on time, they would just proceed to move into the next section.** Somehow they know why they are there and when they are done eating the certain plant they move on. **I took a range management course which helped me know when it is the best time to take the animals off certain vegetation.** Targeted grazing is the application of a specific kind of livestock at a determined season, duration, intensity to accomplish defined vegetation and landscape. **Precision grazing** is livestock being put on certain plants for intense grazing management.

Precision grazing requires targeted areas to be fenced off, and keeping a close eye out to move the livestock when plants are grazed to a certain point. I learned how many goats it took to eat a certain area. One lesson was that you will have **troublemaking goats; those should always be sent home.** The troublemakers always lead the herd in a different direction and make it very difficult to get control of the goats and to finish a job. The herd will always be led off on walkabout.

After almost two years of trial and error, I felt I had the knowledge to tackle a real grazing job. I had my brochure done and named my company Weed Warriors. I had **information to be able to tell prospective customers** what my goats could do. I had **every aspect of fencing down pat.** I thought I was the master of tearing down and putting up fence. I also knew how to make sure it all worked to its highest ability. I had general goat personalities and goat behavior down, **I could recognize the look and talk when they are feeling antsy and wanting to escape.** I knew how hard it could be to handle 100 does in raging heat. I learned to understand the goats. **I also learned the most important stuff: what they can and will eat.** Goats are picky eaters. Some plants you have to force them to eat while others are like candy. I felt I was ready to apply my knowledge to my first paying job.

In every goat job I have had since, I have used the knowledge I learned from the first experiments. I have also learned new techniques with every job. The little idea that grew into a thought and then a dream became real. I was the first person in Nevada to bring goat grazing into play; however it doesn't involved kicking back, camping and drinking mint juleps, and watching goats frolic in the meadow, as I originally thought.

It's hard work but well worth the dream.

WHEN STARTING YOUR GRAZING BUSINESS, CONSIDER:

- ◆ **YOU are the expert.** The person hiring you may know nothing about goats and their habits. You need to know what plants your goats will consume and the stage of plant life when control by goats is most effective.
- ◆ Both you and the person hiring you need to have a **clear understanding of what's expected and the likely final outcome.** The person isn't going to end up with a manicured lawn.
- ◆ **Walk the proposed area to check for poisonous plants** or other hazards.
- ◆ **Consider water sources** available. Decide in advance how to handle a situation.
- ◆ **Predator control** is your responsibility. Don't forget than curious humans can also spook goats or even get shocked by electric fence.
- ◆ You may be asked to graze close to walking paths, riparian areas or housing developments. **Be aware of potential hazards.**
- ◆ Using even a few **mature goats to lead the herd** may make the entire group more manageable and less prone to running through fencing.
- ◆ **Understand your liability if things go wrong.** Consulting with a mentor and your insurance agent may help you better understand what this project entails.

PROJECT: Fencing

By Crystal Neuharth

Fencing can be challenging when it comes to goats. Finding the perfect solution for you may take some planning and time as there is always that one goat who will try and “outsmart” you. **Things to consider** when creating your plan may be: **Do I have any specific goals in mind** with the fence? What is the **layout of the land/area** you plan to fence? **Could weather be a factor** on the decision (**Does it have access to shelter?**)? **What goats do I plan** to put in my fenced area?

It has been recommended that **the height of your fence will need to be at least 4 feet tall, however some breeds will need the height increased.** Also remember for those small breeds and kids that there will need to be a low side to your fence as well.

Having **gaps in your fence** will be another thing to think about. Goats are very curious and **will try and stick their heads through** areas they can fit their heads in. Some will be able to remove their heads on their own, but others won't be able to figure it out or even possibly get stuck. Goat heads are all different sizes depending on the breed, if they have horns, as well as their age. Consider which goats will be fenced in the area. **Bucks will likely need a strong solid fence** especially during rut season when they can get aggressive and anxious to breed. **Kids will also require a more solid fence** as they are more curious and smaller when they are younger. You may have **more flexibility with grown does** as they are often mellow and satisfied provided they have plenty of food and water.



Even a young goat owner can help install electric fence.

A few **fencing choices** you may consider are **portable electric fencing, woven wire fencing, panel fences,** and combinations of fence..

Portable electric fences are affordable and easy to set up. You can install everything by yourself without large equipment. Step-in posts are installed by stepping them in with your foot. Electric wire comes on a reel you can unroll or roll up. **These are great for rotational grazing areas around your farmstead or splitting up your pasture to graze it more efficiently.** There are a few choices within electric fencing including multi-single strands and netting. **Some challenges to consider are that the wire can short out with weeds and tall grasses. The goats will have to learn how electric fences work.** This could take some time to manage but is a good option depending on your plans for your grazing area. You'll need to check that you have a good ground for the electricity to work properly. Dry soil conditions can lessen the effectiveness of the ground.

Woven wire fencing is a more permanent option. There are several sizes of holes available. Choose according to the size and type of goats you are keeping in. This can work for a great perimeter fence, but you need to **remember goats like to climb** and can add extra weight to the fence and **create sags between posts if not kept tight when installing.**

Fencing with panels can be about as solid as you can make. There shouldn't be any bending or sagging between posts and can come in different sizes. These can also be expensive depending on the quality you buy and the size of the area you plan to fence.

A very important habit to work into your routine (*no matter what type of fencing you choose*) is to **walk your fencelines** to make sure of any problem areas or issues you may need to deal with. This will help you decide if you made the right decision for your area or if you need modifications.

Be vigilant. Once a goat learns how to escape, they can teach others. It's easier to build and maintain a good fence than to constantly be chasing wayward goats. Good fences make neighbor relations better, too.



Steering Committee Members

Contact any of these members if you'd like more information or to volunteer.

LeAnn Harner, Mandan, ND
Chairperson
Phone: 701-516-0707
goat@harnerfarm.net

Codi Kuss, Woodworth, ND
Treasurer
Phone: 701-752-4354
bckuss@daktel.com

Michael Clark
Hartford, SD
Phone: 605-212-5913
clarkmic@goldenwest.net

Suzanne England,
Midland, SD
Phone: 605-454-0142
suzieq@gwtc.net

Crystal Neuharth,
Fort Pierre, SD
Phone: 605-685-5860
clneuharth8680@gmail.com

April Waldner
Huntley, MT
Phone: 605-281-8952
aprilwaldner@gmail.com

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