

# 2008 Western Maryland Pasture-Based Performance Testing Program for Meat Goats

## Guidelines and Protocol

Location: Western Maryland Research & Education Center, 18330 Keedysville Road, Keedysville, Maryland (located approximately 9 miles south of Hagerstown, MD)

Date: June 7, 2008 - October 4, 2008

### Purpose

1. To have a common environment and unbiased evaluation of economically important traits of young sires and progeny.
2. To feed a diet that is consistent with meat goats and the production systems which they are most commonly raised.
3. To evaluate growth performance on pasture and measure resistance and resilience to internal parasites.

### Eligibility requirements

1. The 2008 test is open to buck and wether kids of any breed or breed cross. They should be between 3 and 5 months of age and weigh between 35 and 70 lbs.
2. The following information should be provided for each goat:
  - a. Sire and dam
  - b. Breed or breed cross
  - c. Age of dam
  - d. Date of birth
  - e. Type of birth (S, Tw, Tr)
  - f. Type of rearing (S, Tw, Tr)
  - g. Weaning weight
  - h. Date weighed
  - i. Diet prior to weaning (pasture only, creep fed)
3. Producers may consign up to five animals. It is recommended that producers consign at least 2 goats. **Each producer may select two goats for collection of slaughter data.**
4. A maximum of 50 goats will be accepted to the test.
5. Preference will be given to Maryland breeders and prior consigners.
6. Consigners will be required to sign a statement releasing the University of Maryland from any liability.
7. There will be a fee of \$75 per goat for the test. This will include pasture maintenance, minerals, veterinary costs, and data collection. \$20 is required to nominate a goat. The balance (\$55) is due when the goats are delivered to the test location. There will be an additional fee of \$25 per head for goats that are slaughtered.

### Health requirements

1. All goats will be inspected by a committee at the time of check-in. Goats showing signs of disease or ill-thrift will not be accepted for the test.
2. Goats must have received two vaccinations for CD-T
3. Goats should be weaned for at least two weeks prior to the test.
4. Goats must have properly trimmed hooves.
5. Goats must arrive with a certificate of veterinary inspection (CVI, health papers) based on the requirements of the state of Maryland and a "Livestock Exhibitor's Self-Certification of Animal Health."
6. Goats must carry USDA scrapie identification.
7. Goats which develop abscesses while on test will be removed from the test. The goat should be picked up by the owner or the abscess can be tested at the owner's expense. Goats testing negative for CL may be returned to the test.

### Test protocol

1. The 2008 test will start on June 7 and last for 112 days. Consigners must agree to leave their goats at WMREC for the duration of the testing period.
2. The goats must be delivered to the test location on June 7, 2008, between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m.
3. There will be a field day and sale on October 4. The top 20 bucks from the test will be eligible to sell. Bucks not sold at auction must be picked up between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. on October 4.
4. Upon arrival, goats will be dewormed, ear-tagged (if necessary) and deloused (if necessary). A fecal sample will be collected. The goats will stand in a foot bath (with zinc sulfate) before being released onto the pasture. They will be treated for coccidiosis for 3 days at the start of the test.
5. Goats will be managed as a single group on pasture. They will have free choice minerals (with Deccox), but no other supplementation unless deemed necessary due to environmental conditions. They will be inspected at least once daily. Observations and pasture movements will be recorded in a notebook.
6. The goats will be rotationally grazed on 10 acres of pasture, which is divided into five 2-acre paddocks. Pastures include Max Q tall fescue, orchardgrass, clover, birdsfoot trefoil, chicory, pearl millet, and various volunteer plants. The field includes a central laneway with Port-a-hut shelters, mineral feeders, water troughs, and a handling system. Pasture movements will be based on forage availability.
7. The goats will be handled every 2 weeks to determine their FAMACHA© eye anemia scores and body condition scores and the need for individual deworming. Goats scoring 1, 2, or 3 on the FAMACHA© will not be dewormed, unless other signs of parasitism are observed (poor body condition, poor hair coats, scouring, bottle jaw). Goats scoring 4 or 5 on the FAMACHA© scale will be dewormed.
8. The goats will be weighed every 2 weeks to determine average daily gain. ADG will be calculated beginning with the June 20<sup>th</sup> weight. The first 13 days of the test will serve as an adjustment period.
9. Fecal samples will be collected from the goats rectally at 0, 14, 28, 42, and 56 days. Fecal egg counts will be determined using the modified McMaster technique by Delaware State University. Larval assays will be performed by the University of

Georgia. Fecal egg counts will not be used to make deworming decisions. They will be used to determine genetic differences in parasite resistance among the goats on test.

10. Progress reports will be provided to consigners (and other interested persons) every 14 days via the blog (<http://mdgoatatest.blogspot.com>) or mail (if requested).
11. The goats will be scanned for back fat thickness and rib eye area towards the end of the test.
12. Scrotal circumference of buck kids will be determined on the first and last work days.
13. Up to 2 goats per consigner will be slaughtered towards the end of the testing period.

For more information, contact Susan Schoenian at (301) 432-2767 x343 or [sschoen@umd.edu](mailto:sschoen@umd.edu).

The meat goat test committee is composed of Susan Schoenian (MCE), Dr. Jeanne Dietz-Band (MCE), Jeff Semler (MCE), Dr. Niki Whitley (UMES), Dr. Dahlia Jackson (DSU), Willie Lantz (MCE), and Mary Beth Bennett (WVU). Dr. Kevin Pelzer (VA Tech) serves as the veterinary advisor.