

Western Maryland Pasture-Based Meat Goat Test 2010 Guidelines and Protocol

Location:

Western Maryland Research & Education Center
18330 Keedysville Road, Keedysville, Maryland 21756
(located approximately 9 miles south of Hagerstown, MD)



Date:

June 4, 2010 - October 2, 2010

Purpose

1. To have a common environment and unbiased evaluation of economically-important traits of potential meat goat sires and their progeny.
2. To offer an alternative to traditional feed and pen-based performance tests.
3. To evaluate growth performance on pasture and measure resistance and resilience to internal parasites, primarily *Haemonchus contortus*.

Eligibility requirements

1. The 2010 test is open to weanling buck and wether kids of any breed or breed cross, with or without registration papers or registration eligibility.
2. Goats must be born between December 15, 2009, and March 20, 2010, and weigh between 35 and 70 lbs. on the date of delivery to the test site on June 4.
3. A buck information sheet (available for download from <http://mdgoatstest.blogspot.com>) must be filled out for each goat and is due upon delivery to the test site on June 4.
4. Breeders may consign up to five animals. A minimum of two bucks is recommended. Half-sibs (same sire) are recommended. Each breeder may select two goats for collection of slaughter data.
5. A maximum of 70 goats will be accepted to the 2010 test.
6. Preference will be given to Maryland breeders and previous consigners.
7. Consigners will be required to sign a statement releasing the University of Maryland from any liability.
8. There will be a fee of \$100 per goat for the test. This fee will be used to pay for pasture maintenance and renovation, fencing repairs, minerals, veterinary costs, fecal testing, and ultrasound scanning. \$20 is required to nominate a goat. The balance (\$65) is due when the goats are delivered to the test location. There may be an additional fee for goats that are slaughtered.

Health requirements

1. All goats will be inspected by a committee at the time of check-in. Goats showing any signs of disease or ill-thrift will not be accepted for the test.
2. Goats must have received two vaccinations for *clostridium perfringens* type C and D and tetanus (CD-T or 7 or 8 way clostridial vaccine).

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.” These forms are available for download at <http://mdgoatstest.blogspot.com>. Out-of-state consigners will require interstate health papers.
6. Goats must carry official 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 return to the test. Goats testing positive for CL must be picked up or transported to a sale barn.
8. Consigners will be asked to pick up goats which fail to adapt to the pasture-only diet.

Test protocol

1. The 2010 test will start on June 4 and conclude on October 2. 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 4 between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. Special permission is required to deliver the goats to the test site prior to June 4.
3. There will be a field day and sale on October 2. Bucks meeting Gold, Silver, or Bronze performance standards and meeting minimum standards for structural and reproductive soundness will be eligible to sell via public auction. Consigners to the test will be eligible to nominate does for the sale.
4. Bucks not sold at auction may be nominated for slaughter to collect carcass data or picked up by the consigner on October 2.

Performance standards from 2009 test

| | Gold | Silver | Bronze | All goats |
|----------------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|
| ADG, lbs./day | 0.25 | 0.20 | 0.18 | -0.03 - 0.28 |
| Avg. FEC, epg | 500 | 750 | 1,000 | 58 - 1626 |
| High FEC, epg | 1,000 | 1,500 | 2,000 | 75 – 3,225 |
| High FAM, 1-5 | < 2 | < 2.5 | < 3 | 1-5 |
| # anthel. Tx | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 - 2 |

5. Upon arrival, goats will be dewormed with anthelmintics from two different chemistries (usually moxidectin + levamisole) and deloused (if necessary). They will be ear-tagged with WMREC Premier 2x tags. A fecal sample will be collected from each goat. The goats will stand in a foot bath (with zinc sulfate) before being released onto the pasture. They will be treated (in the water) for coccidiosis for 3 days at the start of the test.
6. Goats will be managed as a single group on pasture. They will have free choice minerals (with a coccidiostat), 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.
7. The goats will be rotationally grazed on 10 acres of pasture, which is divided into five 2-acre paddocks. In 2010, pasture plants included 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, a shade structure, mineral feeders, water troughs, and a handling system. Pasture movements will be based on forage availability.
8. The goats will be handled every 2 weeks to determine their FAMACHA© eye anemia scores, body condition, and coat condition scores and the need for individual deworming. Goats scoring 1 or 2 on the FAMACHA© scale will not be dewormed. Goats scoring 4 or 5 on the FAMACHA© scale will be dewormed. Goats scoring 3 on the FAMACHA© scale may or may not be dewormed, depending upon other criteria (body condition, ADG, prior scores, fecal egg counts, scores of other goats, etc).
 9. The goats will be weighed every 2 weeks to determine average daily gain. ADG will be calculated beginning with the June 17th weight. The first 13 days of the test will serve as an adjustment period.
 10. Fecal samples will be collected from the goats every two weeks. Fecal egg counts will be determined using the modified McMaster technique by Dr. Dahlia O'Brien's lab at Delaware State University. Larval cultures will be done by Dr. Ray Kaplan's lab at the University of Georgia.
 11. Progress reports will be provided to consigners (and other interested persons) every 14 days via the blog (<http://mdgoatstest.blogspot.com>) or mail (if requested).
 12. The goats will be scanned for back fat thickness and rib eye area towards the end of the test.
 13. Scrotal circumference of bucks will be measured and the bucks will be evaluated for structural and reproductive soundness.
 14. Up to 2 goats per consigner will be slaughtered towards the end of the testing period.

The meat goat test committee includes Susan Schoenian (UME-WMREC), Dr. Jeanne Dietz-Band (UME-Washington County), Jeff Semler (UME- Washington County), David Gordon (UME-Montgomery County), Dr. Dahlia O'Brien (DSU), Willie Lantz (UME-Garrett County), Dr. E. Nelson Escobar (UMES), Dr. Scott Updike (UMCP), Shannon Uzelac (UME-Washington County), and Dr. Mary Beth Bennett (WVU-Berkeley County). Dr. Kevin Pelzer (VA Tech) serves as the veterinary advisor.

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

<http://mdgoatstest.blogspot.com>