



Grazing Management

In a pasture situation, goats are “top down” grazers. They start to eat seedheads or the top of the canopy and progressively take the forage down. This behavior results in uniform grazing. Goats do not like to graze close to the ground. Grazing goats have been observed to

1. Select grass over clover
2. Prefer browse over herbaceous plants
3. Graze along fence lines before grazing the center of a pasture
4. Refuse to graze forage that has been trampled and soiled.

These observations have been put to use in the grazing management of goats: it is preferable to give them a daily allowance of forage and to move the fence accordingly rather than to let them roam freely in a large pasture. This type of management, called control grazing, was developed in Europe and is implemented very successfully in New Zealand and numerous other parts of the world. Control grazing results in better animal performance, higher stocking rates, and increased pasture productivity.

Author:

JM Luginbuhl Extension Specialist (Goats & Forage Systems) Crop Science

There is an alternate Spanish language version of this document here: [Caprinos: aspectos básicos](#)

North Carolina State University and North Carolina A&T State University commit themselves to positive action to secure equal opportunity regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status or disability. In addition, the two Universities welcome all persons without regard to sexual orientation.

Publication date: Sept. 21, 2015

<http://content.ces.ncsu.edu/basic-meat-goat-facts/>