



BEING AN EFFECTIVE JUDGE



1. Know thoroughly what you are judging.
2. Know the ideal type of animal.
3. Recognize desirable and undesirable characteristics.
4. Be able to form a mental image of many animals and rank them by comparison.
5. Avoid bias or prejudice.
6. Pay attention at all times when judging.

DEVELOPMENT AND PRESENTATION OF ORAL REASONS

Two qualifications necessary before a set of reasons can be delivered effectively:

- 1) Possess a vivid mental picture of the class.
- 2) Develop a complete vocabulary of livestock terms.

An excellent set of reasons originates from an excellent set of notes. Some tips on note-taking include:

- A) Use the method you are most comfortable with.
- B) Do not write out your reasons.
- C) Be brief, use abbreviations
- D) Most importantly, BE ACCURATE!

22 Guidelines to Follow in Presenting Oral Reasons

- 1) Do not use your notes, If your placing card is offered, take it and place it behind your back and leave it there.
- 2) Tell the truth.
- 3) Do not begin until the judge indicates he/she is ready.
- 4) Do not Shout. Speak in a pleasant tone of voice. Be enthusiastic and confident.
- 5) Always start your reasons by giving your placing.
- 6) Maintain eye contact with the judge. Maintain good posture. Stand 4-5 steps from the judge. Control your hands. Put them together and place them behind or in front of you.
- 7) Learn to visualize the class. Do not memorize your reason.

- 8) Good organization of your reasons is important.
- 9) Pause briefly and collect your thoughts between each pair.
- 10) Discuss the most important differences first.
- 11) Compare, do not describe.
- 12) Use comparative terms, words that end in -er (longer, thicker, trimmer, etc.) Words ending in -est can be used on top and bottom (longest, thickest, shortest, lightest, etc.).
- 13) Always talk in the past tense (was, had, combined, showed, etc.).
- 14) Never use indefinite words (poor, better, good, etc.).
- 15) Be sure your reasons are complete.
- 16) Length does not equal quality, 1.5 to 2 minutes is ideal.
- 17) Do not learn and apply one set of reasons to every class of livestock. Canned reasons are not acceptable.
- 18) Use solid livestock terminology. Big works don't always mean high scores.
- 19) Do not search for grants if none exist.
- 20) Always be prepared to answer questions concerning the class.
- 21) Methods to train yourself to become more competent in giving reasons:
 - A) Record your practice on video and then play it back.
 - b) Practice in front of a mirror while talking into a tape recorder.
 - c) Practice giving reasons to other people.
 - d) Practice writing your reasons.
- 22) Self-confidence is needed in:
 - a) Yourself.
 - b) Your placing.

A LIST OF OBJECTIONABLE WORDS AND PHRASES

- 1) Numbers: Refrain from saying the "number". If the animal's number is 4, then call him "4" just as if that were his name.
- 2) Avoid excessive use of "he" or "She". The official may not know which animal you are referring to.
- 3) Never use the neuter pronoun, "it". Every animal has a sex.
- 4) "Better": This word is not specific enough.
- 5) "Animal" or "individual": Instead, say steer, bull, barrow, ewe, etc.
- 6) "Is a steer that is": For example: "4 is a steer that is thicker and heavier muscled." This is too wordy. Instead, say: "4 is thicker, heavier muscled steer."
- 7) Use the words, "lacks" and "lacking", sparingly: For example, "I fault 2 because he lacks muscling." It would be more effective to take the direct route and say, "I fault 2 because he is light muscled".
- 8) "For being": Instead of saying, "I fault 2 for being light muscled," say "I fault 2 because he is light muscled."
- 9) "I would like to see": This is too wordy and informal. It sounds too much like an editorial.
- 10) "Placing": Instead say "I placed..."
- 11) "Faulting" or "critizing": Instead say "I fault" or "I criticize".

12) Beware of words ending in "ing", such as those just mentioned above.

13) "Kind of": Instead of saying "a stretchier kind of bull," say "a stretchier bull".

SELECTION AND EVALUATION

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When evaluating animals for breeding traits and determining which are to be selected and which are to be eliminated we utilize several criteria to make these determinations. The first and most often used is visual appraisal and it is generally used most effectively in combination with performance data and pedigree information. When using visual appraisal to select animals to keep in a breeding flock we must use a somewhat different set of standards than that utilized by the judge in the show ring. That certainly doesn't mean that we abandon the standards of excellence set forth by the American Boer Goat Assn. It does, however, mean that we may tend to place a different emphasis on some traits than the judge would in the show ring. It might even mean that we may ignore a cull fault and keep an animal in the flock if we choose to chance what the genetic influence might mean to the production operation from the trait sought after by using this animal. We will therefore be discussing selection and evaluation and noting instances where the association standards may or may not be utilized in culling or keeping a particular animal.

Live animal evaluation is done on a daily basis by everyone who works with animals. Good animal husbandry demands that we do more than just place feed in front of the animals and hope that all is well. Each day the caretaker evaluates the health of that animal against some standard. Whether we realize it or not we also evaluate the disposition of animals daily. Some are nice and some are downright mean. We may even select animals based on a standard of performance for the trait-disposition. Therefore, every person involved in the production of those animals irregardless of their formal training is an animal evaluator. For each trait we evaluate there must be a standard and that may be set by the person or come from an association such as the American Boer Goat Assn.

For any kind of goat production enterprise there are four general areas which must be covered in the evaluation and selection process. These are: 1) Structural Soundness, 2) Skeletal Dimension, 3) Muscularity and 4) Eye Appeal. It does not matter whether the goal is purebred seed stock production, show wether goat production or commercial production, these attributes must be considered for every animal as we determine its breeding value.

STRUCTURAL SOUNDNESS

Structural Soundness is listed first for a very good reason. Structure is the foundation of the animal and everything which we add must be built upon a sound structural foundation. Beginning with the head there are certain structural items that must be sound. The eye must be sound. A blind goat will not perform very well. The ears should be sound and functional. Notice that the shape or size of the ear is not mentioned. That will come later.

Structural soundness is the issue being covered now and the size of the ear or its shape has little to do with its functional soundness. The jaws should be evenly opposed so that the teeth touch the dental pad when the goat's mouth is closed. There are all kinds of variations of this in the anatomical makeup of goats. The ABGA even accepts in their standard of excellence a ¼ inch under bite once the goat is 24 months of age. For breeding merit that standard may be too relaxed and each individual producer must determine where he will draw the line. Sound mouths would certainly not include those which have a serious overbite or under bite. An overbite or an undershot jaw is commonly referred to as a parrot mouth. An under bite or overshot jaw is sometimes referred to as a monkey mouth. Either of these structural abnormalities should result in the animal being culled and removed from the herd because these traits are heritable and the breeding value of that animal is certainly in question.

This is a good place to address the issue of single trait culling of an animal. In most instances "single traiting" an animal out is not a good practice either on the farm or for the judge in the show ring. However, every trait must have an independent culling level assigned to it and for mouths evenly opposed jaws are to be preferred and gross exaggerations away from that standard merit culling.

The next part of the head to consider with respect to structural soundness is the horns. Obviously dehorned goats do not have horns and that trait is eliminated. For others the horns need to be strong and wide apart at the base so as not to catch other goat's legs between them or be hard on human hands when handling the goats. Horns should not come to the head too quickly as they may irritate the skin or cause a problem as the goat matures by growing into the eye. Otherwise there is little else to consider with respect to the structural soundness of horns.

Progressing from the head to the neck and shoulder the animal must have a strong neck balanced in length to the body of the goat and blending well into the shoulder. The neck should come off of the top of the shoulder and not be set low. A high neck set will allow the animal to naturally keep its head up and be alert. This may sound trivial but animals which are alert and up headed are almost always more healthy and thrifty.

From the neck we must progress to the top of the shoulder and topline of the goat. The animal should be strong topped and not have a dip behind the shoulder which is a serious fault. A weak topped animal will only get worse with age and can sometimes become totally unsound and unable to move about and perform at a productive level. The hip should be nominally level and not too steep. Steep rumps are generally the starting place for unsound hind legs.

Legs should be on the corners of the body and strong. Pasterns should be strong and yet have enough flex too allow the goat to move freely. Pasterns can be either too straight or too weak to maintain structural soundness. Very young and growing animals may have more flex in their pastern joint and older heavy animals should certainly be allowed the same flexibility. If the dew claw touches the ground as the animal travels then the animal is obviously too weak in the pastern. Other variations are subject to the individual interpretation of the person evaluating the goat. It perhaps should be remembered that there are some very productive does in commercial flocks which would no doubt be culled in

the show ring and yet they have never had a truly unsound or crippled day in their life and have been very profitable producers. Cow hocks or goats with hind legs that hock in should certainly be avoided. Again this is more a matter of real structural soundness and even cow-hocked goats perform with little real hindrance in large commercial operations.

Post legs or legs with no flex in the hock joint are an even more serious problem than cow-hocks or goats which are sickle-hocked or slightly camped under. Post legged goats will almost certainly break down with age and weight rendering them unsound to move and perform at an acceptable level. Post legged bucks can actually stifle themselves while serving a doe or may simply become sore and lethargic during the breeding season when they need to be at their best.

The hooves of animals should point straight forward as the animal sets its foot on the ground. Hooves which turn in or out, splay toes and any other abnormalities of the hoof should be selected against according to the ABGA standard just as knock knees, buck knees, hollow legs and bandy legs.

The base of the animal's tail must be centered and straight. The remainder of the tail can curve upward or to one side. A wry tail or tail that curls should be strongly selected against. This is another good standard set by the ABGA.

Although less injurious to the udder than cow hocks, bowlegs strain the hock and pastern joints.

Sickle-hocked legs can shorten a goat's useful life. A posty leg has no give in the stifle and hock joints jarring the body with each step. Very painful the condition often swells these joints and cripples the goat.

The reproductive organs of the goat should certainly be sound. The ABGA defines the correct structure for the buck as possessing two large well-formed equal sized testes in a single scrotum with no more than a 2" split in the apex of the scrotum. While there is no research to show that the split in the scrotum diminishes fertility or is definitely tied to future anatomical problems related to poor shaped udders in female offspring or to cryptorchidism in male offspring, there are definite sound reasons to avoid a split scrotum. If goats are grazed in pastures with cacti or sandburs then a split in the scrotum allows the potential for a thorn or bur to lodge between the testes causing serious problems and potential sterility.

The external genitalia of the female should be well developed and properly structured. While there is no standard set by the ABGA for this female reproductive organ it is essential that it develop naturally. Infantile vulvas are to be considered as potential indicators of poor breeders. Vulvas which turn up on the end can cause a problem when the buck is serving the doe and can result in poor doe fertility. This type of structure in the vulva of the doe could be an indication of a hermaphrodite (an animal with both sexual organs present to some degree) and this is obviously not an animal of breeding merit. The ABGS also stressed the importance of the doe having been bred by no later than 24 months of age. Goats are prolific animals which will quite naturally reach puberty and be fertile at 6-7 months of age. While some may not choose to breed does at that young age there is certainly no excuse for

any doe not to have kidded by the time she is two years of age.

The udder of the doe and structure of the teats is obviously of critical importance when assessing the breeding value of the animal. Again the ABGA has set a good standard stressing that does should have well-formed udders with good attachment with the number of functional teats not to exceed two per side. A split teat with two distinctly separated teats and openings with at least 50% of the body of the teat separated is permissible but teats without a split are preferred. It is most important that the udder is constructed so that the offspring are able to nurse unassisted. Cluster teats and fishtail teats are a cull fault as an independent culling level in assessing the breeding value of a doe. Oversized or bulbous teats and pendulous udders are a very serious problem and if accepted into a breeding program can result in real headaches for the future.

Teat structure on bucks should also be evaluated. Though there is no standard set by the ABGA for teat structure on bucks it is critical that the good breeder place as much importance on the buck side of the equation as for the doe side. After all the doe will contribute to only a few offspring in the flock over her breeding lifetime unless she is flushed in an embryo transfer program. The buck, on the other hand, will impact perhaps the total kid crop for however long he is used. Do not allow a buck with bad teat structure to pass that trait on to a high percentage of does in the flock.

SKELETAL DIMENSION

Skeletal Dimension is the next important attribute to consider in determining the breeding value of any goat. As before the discussion can begin with the head. The ABGA has again set a good standard and starting place by stating the animal should have a prominent, strong head with brown eyes and a gentle appearance. The nose should have a gentle curve with wide nostrils and a well formed mouth with evenly opposed jaws. Teeth should erupt in proper sequential positions. The forehead should be prominent and form an even curve linking the nose and horns. The horns should be dark, round, strong, of moderate length, positioned well apart and have a gradual backward curve before turning outward symmetrically. The size of the skull is a good indicator of overall skeletal dimension. Good width between the eyes and horns indicates a stoutness of the skeleton which will be seen in other skeletal areas. Good length of the head is the first indicator of growth and is always very proportional to the length of the rump and other skeletal areas. Small frail heads and horns are generally indicative of frailness throughout the skeletal makeup of the animal. Good skeletal dimension in the head while being feminine or masculine and balanced to the remainder of skeletal development in the animal is very positive. Too much emphasis on heavily curved Roman noses can result in improper jaw alignment which is a serious structural fault. As noted by the ABGA standard a concave forehead, a weak jaw, a jaw which is light and too pointed or shallow are indications of poor skeletal dimension.

Progressing to the neck in considering skeletal dimension, the ABGA calls for a neck of moderate length which is well balanced and proportional to the remainder of the body. Balance is always important and yet the length of the neck is a good growth indicator. Long clean necks are frequently found on animals which are thrifty, alert and high performing. Long necks usually go with other skeletal length. The overall dimension of any animal is three dimensional – length, width and depth. Length of neck and body are important

influences on the overall dimension of the animal.

Length of body is importantly balanced with width and depth of the body. An open rib which is well sprung off of the topline of the animal allows for plenty of internal capacity. Depth of body in the chest and especially into the rear flank of the animal again increases the internal capacity of the animal. The ABGA calls for a broad long rump with a gentle slope. A long rump will not be found on an animal with a short body. Everything is generally proportional if the animal is properly balanced.

The ABGA does not address the length of leg in its standard of excellence. Balance again should be the key and the depth of body of the animal should make up at least 60% of the total height of the animal. Legs which are too long offer no real merit since the animal is a meat animal and the consumer utilizes almost none of the animal below the underline. Legs which are too short, however, may indicate poor overall growth. In rough terrain or in large pastures animals with legs which are very short may be stressed to travel and make a living. Balance is the key thought in determining the correct length of leg.

Length and depth must again be balanced with width. When seen from the front the animal should be wide in the floor of the chest and yet balanced and not course or open fronted. From the rear the animal should again show width in the rib and middle portion of the body and width between the hind legs on a sound structure.

The bone in the leg of a goat should be large and flat. Small round bones in the body of any animal are instant signs of frailness of skeleton. The foot of the animal should be large and sound. Dark colored hooves are almost always sounder than light colored hooves.

MUSCLE

Structural soundness and skeletal dimension are the essential foundation on which the goat must carry the all-important reason for its existence to the consuming public. That reason for being is the production of an edible product called red meat and that red meat comes from muscle.

Muscling in an animal is apparent everywhere on the skeleton. There are, however, certain areas and indicators which every good evaluator of livestock uses to assess the amount of muscle present in every animal. We have started with the head and neck as a place to begin evaluating the first two attributes of the animal's breeding value. However these two anatomical features are not principle sites for consideration of the muscularity of an animal. While the neck should certainly show evidence of muscularity the first real spot to look for muscling is along the topline of the animal over the rack, back and loin. The longissimus dorsi muscle extends the length of the topline of the animal and yields one of the best carcass cuts of the animal.

The shoulder should also be expressively muscled and yet not be course or out of proportion with the rest of the body. The top of the hip and the upper, middle and lower portion of the hind leg as viewed from the rear should give the appearance of good muscularity. One of the thickest portions of the goat's body when viewed from the rear should be just above the area from stifle to stifle. From the rear view the goat should also show good muscular development on the inside and outside portion of the leg as the muscle carries down to the

hock.

Body condition certainly influences thickness in an animal since fat is interspersed between muscles and overlays the muscle in some regions of the goat's body. It is easy for the inexperienced eye to be fooled by fat. A good indicator of true muscle in the body is the goat's forearm which is directly proportional to the longissimus dorsi muscle which extends the length of the topline. The forearm lies against the bone in the leg and is basically covered only by skin. In animals which are not dehydrated the forearm is a very good indicator of true muscling.

More muscle in an animal means more saleable product. The meat from a lean properly conditioned goat is one of the most wholesome red meats available to man. Therefore the goal of every goat breeder should be to maximize the production of muscle while maintaining balance and symmetry in the animal.

EYE APPEAL

Eye appeal is the third attribute of the animal which must be considered and its importance must never be underestimated even in commercial production. Balance and symmetry in the way all of the animal's parts fit together is the most important factor in eye appeal.

Females should be feminine with clean feminine fronts and heads which show them to be females. Their bodies should show feminine angularity such that the animal appears up fronted and the depth of the body should increase into the region of the rear flank.

Bucks on the other hand should be masculine in appearance with strong heads and a rugged bold spring to the ribs to carry the respiratory system essential for them to survive the stress on their body during the peak of the rut and breeding season. This does not, however, diminish their necessity to carry plenty of muscle as they will be passing on this very important trait to all of their offspring. Balance again is the key factor for consideration when viewing the animal.

Eye appeal again starts with the head. There is perhaps no other single anatomical feature in the animal which immediately impresses or depressed the animal evaluator more than the head. Shape of the head and horn is extremely important. The strength of the jaw and the curvature of the nose speak volumes for the ennoblement characteristic of the Boer goat. Again balance to the rest of the animal must be present. The ABGA states that the ears should be smooth, of medium length and hang downward. While ears which are folded lengthwise represent a cull fault in the show ring the trait may not be serious enough to cull a really good animal from the breeding flock. This again must be left to the judgment of the animal breeder.

Coloration of the animal is a fancy point and may not have serious economic significance except in the sale of show stock. The ABGA states that the preferred goat is an animal with red hair on the head and ears and white on the remainder of the body. However there is now a significant demand for red goats and an ennoblement program has even been developed for goats which are non-traditional in color. If the clientele to which a breeder sells the majority of his goats demand a certain color then color certainly takes on an economic significance. Otherwise there are very good goats in a broad array of color patterns.

Pigmentation on the hairless areas of the goat's body should, according to the ABGA, be at

least 75% pigmented with 100% the desired. While this may also seem economically insignificant and while skin cancer may not be as prevalent in North America as it is in the goats' native to South Africa this is certainly a characteristic which has been bred into the Boer goat and one which is worth placing positive selection influence upon.

The skin of the Boer goat is to be loose and supple. Many desire pleating on bucks but bucks which show this characteristic very early in life are frequently very early in their maturity pattern and do not attain sufficient size at maturity. The hair coat is to be short and glossy with a limited amount of winter down or under-coat during the winter months, especially in colder environments.

Do you now have all of the information necessary to be a real success at selection and evaluation of animals for their breeding merit? Not hardly! We have just touched on the visual selection traits. Animal evaluation and the design of mating schemes involves much more. We must now look at records and genetic makeup of the animals. This will help yield much more predictability to the desired outcome of producing superior animals.

RECORDS and RECORDKEEPING

At kidding time there are several pieces of information that need to be recorded. The number of the doe along with the date of birth of the kid born, number of kids born and sex of each kid needs to be recorded. With this information you will be able to make decisions on two important traits, time of kidding and frequency of kidding. Other data that needs to be recorded is the number of kids weaned as well as pre-weaning and post-weaning growth weight.

Time of kidding refers to the heat cycle in which the doe was bred. Ideally we would like every doe to breed in the first heat cycle (21 days). Bucks are generally left with the does for at least two and sometimes three or more heat cycles. Replacement doe kids from does that kidded early in the breeding season will be more productive over their lifetime than doe kids from does that do not breed until the third or fourth heat cycle.

Frequency of kidding tells you if the doe bred every year. If a doe does not breed every year she should be culled. There are some does that only breed every other year. There is no excuse for this in a conventional breeding program of once a year kidding. One might make exception in an accelerated kidding program where the does kid every 8 months, however, for this type of program to work properly exceptions should not be made.

The number of kids born is extremely important, but the number of kids weaned is even more important in determining profitability. One must have many kids born and then keep them alive and wean as many as possible to offer profit potential. This is a reflection of mothering ability and flock management. Traits related to reproductive performance are generally low in heritability; therefore, more improvement can generally be made in the management program than through the selection program. Some management strategies that can improve reproductive performance are barn kidding, use of ultrasound to determine pregnancy and the number of kids in the uterus coupled with appropriate nutritional programs, use of marking harnesses and teaser bucks, breeding at night, breeding soundness exams for bucks, etc.

Pre-weaning growth rate is how the kids grow from birth to weaning and is primarily a function of milk production in the dam. Kids should be weighed at weaning which generally occurs any time after they are 60 days of age. It must be remembered that total pounds of kids weaned is important. You should not expect twin and triple kids to be as heavy as singles, however, the sum of the weights for kids raised as twins or triplets should exceed that of a single. Does with twin or triplet kids produce more total milk than does with a single kid but each of the kids in a multiple birth situation gets less milk than a single raise on a good dam.

Once the kids are weaned they no longer have mother's milk to make them grow. They are now depending on their own genetic potential for growth assuming proper nutrition. This is known as post-weaning growth rate. It is common for purebred producers and other good breeders to place especially buck kids on some type of gain test for 60-90 days to determine post-weaning growth rate.

To make the best assessment of the value of an animal for breeding merit these types of records should be used. To make the best selection of animals to retain in the flock to be used for breeding you should use a combination of record and visual appraisal. Remember that every good breeder has an old doe at home that looks terrible and yet you keep her because of the progeny which she consistently produces annually. Without records she might be the first doe culled. What a mistake!

PEDIGREES

Visual appraisal and records should be used by all goat breeders and especially in commercial operations to maximize progress through selection. Another important selection criteria which is utilized by purebred stud breeders is pedigrees. Many purebred producers have identified certain family lines (bloodlines) that they want to pursue in their breeding program and consequently select their goats or purchase outside breeding stock based on the merit of their ancestors. Pedigrees are most useful if they are used regarding the most recent individuals and used as the basis for selection of young animals before their performance or that of their progeny is known.

SELECTION OF BREEDING MEAT GOATS

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Visual Appraisal

Soundness- mouths, testicles, udders

Frame Size – Growth Potential

Structural Correctness

Volume and Capacity

Muscling

Breed and Sex Character

Records

Time and Frequency of Kidding

Number of Offspring

Born

Weaned

Growth Rate of Offspring

Pre-weaning

Post-weaning