Notes from the President
by Jan Huffaker

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2006! Your board recently finished a marathon meeting where several things were discussed. First of all, welcome to new board members Mike Smith and Jim Bennett. Here is a list of the current board members:

- **President** -- Jan Huffaker (Colorado) [huffaker@mi.net]
- **Vice President** -- Rodney York (California) [jspanky@cvp.net]
- **Secretary** -- Jo Christensen (Montana) [timpanoqa@hotmail.com]
- **Treasurer** -- Larry Robinson (Idaho) [larryr@hisurfer.net]
- **Board member** -- Mike Smith (California) [michael.d.smith@lmco.com]
- **Board member** -- Jim Bennett (Washington) [wethersfieldpackgoats@comcast.net]

Membership -- We have sent out renewal notices and are currently soliciting new members. Please remember to renew and tell your friends as well. The more members we have, the bigger our influence on issues that affect goat packing. Membership forms are available on our website at www.napga.org, and now you can pay online via PayPal. Just send your money to napga@hisurfer.net. We also have patches, caps, and T-shirts for sale. Contact Larry Robinson for information and prices. The T-shirts are from last year's rendezvous and are on sale right now for $5.00 each plus $3.00 per order towards shipping, while supplies last. We also need your talents! If you are interested in helping with any ongoing projects, let us know.

Website -- Larry Robinson is chairing this committee. We are currently working on revamping and expanding our website to make it much more informative and useful. Some things we want to add include a comprehensive section on public lands and packgoat use, information on bighorn vs. packgoat issues, basic information on goat care and choosing a packgoat, links to all kinds of useful places, lots of pictures, and plenty of other stuff. I'm excited about this project!

Land Use -- Jim Bennett has taken over as chair here and is working on several things. The National Park Service is updating its guidelines and has included packgoats on the list of allowable packstock. Whether packgoats are allowed or not is up to the individual park management, but it's a first step to at least be included on the list. Right now goats are prohibited from national parks, but we are glad to see this first step has been taken. The letter which we will be sending to the Park Service officials is included in this newsletter. This committee is also continuing to work with members who are contacting various land agencies at the state level and working on local issues.

The Alaska Dall Sheep study is another issue; the board is still looking at the 139-page study to see what kind of response we want to make. For a copy of the study, contact Jim or Jan.

Rendezvous -- It looks like the 2006 Rendezvous will bin in Oregon. We will be notifying people as soon as we have a date and details. I have volunteered Colorado for a 2007 rendezvous, so you Coloradoans start scoping out your favorite sites.

Research -- Currently we are working on getting information and input for the National ID program. See the accompanying article for more information.

2005 Rendezvous T-Shirts -- A Blowout!

Every store I am aware of is always having BLOWOUT sales! So NAPgA is going to get in on the act. We have some leftover T-Shirts from the 2005 Rendezv that we are going to sell below cost. How's that for a deal? These are really good quality T-Shirts and will wear well even if you didn't make it to the Rendy. Besides, if you have one of these shirts, folks just might think you were there even if you weren't! :-)

The shirts will be sold for $5 each plus $3 for postage, and we have the following colors/sizes/quantities:
- **Beige**: Large, 7; XLarge, 9.
- **Grey**: XLarge, 8; Large, 5; Children's Lg 5; Medium, 1

Subject: Missouri Anti-NAIS Protest/Rally

From: "animalwaitress" [animalwaitress@yahoo.com] 16 Feb 2006

A few dedicated people (myself included) desperately opposed to NAIS have decided that we absolutely MUST get more extensive media coverage of the subject and have determined that the best way to do this is to have a demonstration in Jefferson City. We are looking at the end of March or early April. We must get this thing turned around before July of 2006 and we cannot wait on existent organizations to figure out how to stand against it. While organizations are wonderful they tend to move slowly and we do NOT have the time to wait any longer.

Our idea is to have people bring animals with them and peacefully assemble at the Capitol building and deliver a statement to the head of the Senate regarding our opposition to the NAIS, and have a small explanation of the program for the general public.

We will help to coordinate pick up points for people and arrange for all particulars necessary for this demonstration. Our goal is get Missouri to be the first state to take a stance of opposition to this program based on Constitutional problems. If you are interested in this please email your contact info to nomonais@excite.com and we will keep you apprised of particulars as they progress.
Please help get this information to your friends who do not have Internet access or computer skills. These people are being left in the dust on this issue and they need to be helped out by those of us with the available tools to keep them informed. If they are interested please send us an email with their phone number and we will call them ourselves as necessary.

Thank you!!!!
Doreen Hannes

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NAIS Update
by Jan Huffaker, February 6, 2006

NAPgA has been trying to keep its members informed about the National Animal Identification System (NAIS). Some quick background -- the federal government is establishing a standardized national ID program for livestock (cattle, sheep, goats), horses, poultry, domesticated deer and elk, llamas and alpacas. The goal of this program is to have all livestock identified and tracked in a national database, so that in the event of a disease outbreak the animal's origin and movements can be traced back in 48 hours. Every animal will have either an individual ID or a lot number (for critters like poultry which move in groups and not as individuals). This ID will stay with the animal all its life. Each premises will have it's own premises number, and every time an animal moves from one premises to another, that movement will be recorded in a national database. The definition of what premises that animal is located on. The premises ID is assigned to a location, and stays with that location permanently. The animal ID is also permanent and stays with the animal all its life. Each premises will have it's own premises number, and every time an animal moves from one premises to another, the movement is supposed to be reported to a national database. The definition of `premises' is still a bit fluid and may be up to each state to decide. Justin stated that he considered a premises as any place where animals from different locations will congregate and disease transmission can occur, or any place where animals live, such as my farm. So the sale barn is a premises, as is a show. Hiking with your goats would NOT be considered a change of premises, but he said our annual rendezvous would. When I asked who would

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Anti-NAIS letter examples are on Page 10

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July 2009 -- Reporting of defined animal movements required; entire program mandatory.

July 2008 -- Premises registration and animal identification required.

January 2008 -- Premises registration and animal identification alerts.

April 2007 -- Premises registration and animal identification operational.

July 2005 -- All States capable of premises registration.

July 2005 -- Animal Identification Number system operational.

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So although the program is voluntary for now, it will become mandatory by 2009. There has been a lot of discussion on this on various e-mail lists as to how this program will affect packgoats. There has been some controversy and questions about the program, and some mis-information passed around. In an effort to get knowledgeable answers, I set up a meeting with a local state vet technician to get some answers. His name is Justin, and he made every effort to answer all the questions which had been submitted to me by various people. Here are some of the things we discussed.

Who wants NAIS? -- The big producers do, as well as the public health agencies. Europe, Canada, and other countries currently have a similar system and we don't. NAIS will help American agriculture sell its products overseas, and will also help domestic sales by boosting consumer confidence (according to Justin). The public health agencies would like to have a fast, automated system of finding animals and controlling disease outbreaks. For such a system to be effective there has to be 100% compliance, which means that there is no exceptions for small operations like packgoat farms. Packgoats are a small group of a minor species and have no clout against larger group like the Cattleman's Association, which is in favor of NAIS. The overall plan of NAIS is already law and isn't going to go away; however, being a minor group has its advantages in that we might be able to influence the details of NAIS and tailor it to our needs without affecting the larger livestock groups. Although it's a standardized, national program some of the details will be up to the states and individual species groups are still making recommendations. Many goat owners who already deal with the scrapie program would like to have a fast, automated system of finding animals and controlling disease outbreaks. For such a system to be effective there has to be 100% compliance, which means that there is no exceptions for small operations like packgoat farms. Packgoats are a small group of a minor species and have no clout against larger group like the Cattleman's Association, which is in favor of NAIS. The overall plan of NAIS is already law and isn't going to go away; however, being a minor group has its advantages in that we might be able to influence the details of NAIS and tailor it to our needs without affecting the larger livestock groups. Although it’s a standardized, national program some of the details will be up to the states and individual species groups are still making recommendations. Many goat owners who already deal with the scrapie program are in favor of NAIS, because it will help standardize ID for interstate travel.

NAIS doesn't track ownership -- it tracks the animal ID and what premises that animal is located on. The premises ID is assigned to a location, and stays with that location permanently. The animal ID is also permanent and stays with the animal all its life. Each time an animal leaves one premises and goes to another, the movement is supposed to be reported to a national database. The definition of `premises' is still a bit fluid and may be up to each state to decide. Justin stated that he considered a premises as any place where animals from different locations will congregate and disease transmission can occur, or any place where animals live, such as my farm. So the sale barn is a premises, as is a show. Hiking with your goats would NOT be considered a change of premises, but he said our annual rendezvous would. When I asked who would
be required to scan in the animals attending the rendy, he said probably the Forest Service, since they granted the permit for the gathering. Some of these details still haven’t been decided and are up to the individual states. My guess is most states will eventually require NAIS ID for interstate travel, even if your goat isn’t commingling with other goats.

What constitutes ID? -- This is a biggie for our goats, and I feel we can have some influence here through local groups and conversations with your state vets. Justin told me (and I confirmed this again later) that the law says two main things about the ID. First of all, the number must be a standard 15 digit number assigned by the government. Second, the ID should be electronic. The whole idea of electronic ID is for people to be able to scan in animals and automatically have data downloaded to the computer, instead of having to physically locate and read tattoos or ear tags and type numbers in manually. How practical this is in a commercial setting remains to be seen, but that’s the goal. Goats don’t need to be ID’d when they are born and raised on your farm UNTIL they go to another premises. Either I can apply the ID when they leave the farm, or it’s possible the sale barn or whoever will apply the ID when they arrive, for a fee. The electronic reader can be either a hand-held wand or a stationary reader attached to a chute. The goal is when an animal arrives at another premises, it walks by a reader and is automatically recorded along with the premises ID. All electronic ID tags or chips will conform to a national standard so they can be read by any standard reader. There are readers which will store the information for later download, or send the information to a nearby laptop. Justin told me the price varies from around $150 to $2000, depending on the bells and whistles. Individual producers (especially small producers) won’t need to buy a reader, but places such as sale barns, fairgrounds, shows, feedlots etc. probably will. Justin wasn’t sure as to who was required to do the reporting; this is something that will probably be up to each state.

Microchips vs. ear tags -- As any goat producer knows, ear tags don’t work well in goats. Their ears are thinner than hogs or cattle, and tend to tear or get infected. And what to do with our LaManchas? Right now the cattle people are using electronic RFID (Radio Frequency ID) ear tags which have the NAIS ID embedded electronically as well as printed on the outside, so they can be either scanned or read visually. But these tags won’t work well for goats, especially our packgoats which lead long lives (my oldest packer Roger is pushing 14 now and still going strong). Breed registries use tattoos for ID, which are more permanent than tags but don’t fill the requirement of being electronic; nor do they conform to the standard 15 digit system. I feel that if we are required to ID our goats, then we should be allowed to use microchips. Justin told me they are researching microchips for use in sheep; the chips are programmed with the standard number and injected into the tail web. They are about the size of a grain of rice and are injected via a 7 gauge needle. There are two downfalls of chips; 1. They can’t be seen visually, and 2. They can migrate to other parts of the body.

I have been told that the Pygmy goat people use chips with good success. Some chips can also be programmed to hold other information such as owner name. Justin told me that the standard chips cost around $5.00 each, so they are more expensive than tags. The chips he showed me came with bar coded stickers that had the number printed on them, so you could attach the sticker to the goat’s papers for reference. I really feel that either the chips or tattoos (if allowed) are the best options for our packgoats, and I think we can have some influence here if we petition our state and national people to allow this. Before you can order the RFID tags or chips you need to get your premises ID. The tag company will record which tags go to which premises, so the database knows that these animals originated on your farm. I’m guessing that the sale barns and such will keep a supply of tags on hand for the occasional untagged animal that comes through. There was also talk of extension offices and such setting up tagging stations for 4-H and the like, so kids won’t have to buy a batch of 25 tags for one or two animals. Some of these details will be ironed out as various systems are tested.

The RFID ear tags and microchips are passive, meaning they have no power source. They do not emit a beacon that can be traced. They are only activated with the outside power source of the reader, which can only read from 3-20 inches away from the chip or tag.

Enforcement -- This was a big question. Currently the program is voluntary, but will eventually become mandatory. Justin told me enforcement will be via market pressure, in that you will be unable to sell animals without the proper ID, and may not be able to show or transport across state lines. There will be no inspectors checking farms for compliance, nor will vets be reporting untagged animals. No one cares whether your goat is tagged or not until it leaves your farm and moves to another premises.

Scrapie -- The goal is to eventually unite the NAIS and Scrapie programs so that only the NAIS number is needed. But until that happens, producers who are currently required to have Scrapie ID will continue using the scrapie numbers and follow the record keeping requirements. This is also something we should advocate, unifying these two programs. It would be ridiculous to have to keep track of two numbers for each animal.

Database -- A third party will maintain the database. There is legislation underway to amend the Freedom of Information Act so that only state and federal officials have access to the database. The information is only to be used for disease tracking and nothing else.

What can we do? -- From all the information I’ve gleaned, the basic program seems like a done deal and I don’t think we can get out of it. But we can still affect the details as they pertain to goats, especially things like what kind of ID is allowed and premises/reporting requirements. Carolyn Eddy has joined the goat working group and will be representing packgoats. Comments can be made to the working group through her and via the NAIS website listed above.
Owyhee Packgoat Supplies Annual Campout
This year's campout will be April 27-30.
It is going to be held at Succor Creek State Park, Oregon.
This park is located about 15 miles over the Oregon state line west of Homedale, Idaho.
Go to the link provided. It will give driving directions from any point: http://www.oregonstateparks.org/park_13.php
There is a stream for the goats, but no fresh drinking water.
It is a place with a lot of area to hike. It's also a great place for rockhounds, with lots of petrified wood, geodes and jasper.
Dr. Drew will be coming to do some more herd testing. He will check some of the goats that were in the first test a couple years ago and then some new tests on goats from other areas.
I have asked Dr. Downs from Caine Veterinarian Training Center to come out and talk about UC stones. How they form, and how long it takes them to form and grow. Also, what can be done to prevent them, the procedures that are used to unblock them, and what, if anything, can be done to dissolve the stones.
George Bogdan will be giving a talk or demonstration on a topic of his choice. George's stories are always very interesting.
As always there will be plenty of Fun, Food and Prizes.
Friday and Saturday’s dinner will be pot luck, Breakfast on Saturday and Sunday will on us. Clay Zimmerman and I will cook and serve Pancakes, eggs, sausage and hashbrowns again this year.
Greg Locati
Owyhee Packgoat Supplies
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Alaska Dall Sheep Issue
First will be the letter from Alaska Fish & Game in response to Tony Nastansky's letter to them, Second, a response from John Mionczynski and Third, an article from Jan Huffaker.

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
October 10, 2005
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
FRANK H. MURKOWSKI, GOVERNOR
1300 College Road
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701-1551
Tony Nastansky
North American Packgoat Association Board member, Secretary and Land Use Committee Chairperson
8335 22nd Ave SE
Olympia, WA 98513

Dear Mr. Nastansky:
It is the responsibility of the Division of Wildlife Conservation (DWC) to promote healthy wildlife resources for the benefit of all Alaskans. This mandates that the DWC prevent the introduction or transmission of domestic and wild animal diseases to un-infected wildlife populations in Alaska. Recently, the increase in ‘promotion’ of use of pack goats on Dali’s sheep hunts has brought to the forefront the threat of domestic animal disease introductions to wildlife with potential devastating and irreversible consequences.

The risk of transmission of infectious diseases and parasites from domestic sheep, goats and llamas to Dali’s sheep are numerous and documented. Many of these can be carried by domestic animals without outward signs of disease and are thus silent to the owners who may erroneously believe their animals are “. . . healthy and obviously not threat to wildlife.” Even pack animals treated as individual pets and under routine veterinary care can be carriers of diseases and parasites that are difficult to detect, not treatable, or for which no routine preventative is given or even available. No malicious intent by the animals’ owners is suggested, however, the risks are real. It is well known to veterinary science that domestic sheep and goats have had thousands of years to adapt and evolve with their own ‘flora and fauna’ but free-ranging sheep that possess a differing immunity and are naïve to domestic pathogens are likely to suffer severe disease and high death rates if exposed to the agents which are ‘exotic pathogens’ to them.

Two weeks after our request to hunters to reconsider the use of pack goats in Dali’s sheep hunts, the agricultural and wildlife management authorities in the Northwest Territories of Canada released a detailed and fully referenced risk assessment involving these species. This 139-page
document entitled “Examining the Risk of Disease Transmission between Wild Dali’s Sheep and Mountain Goats and Introduced Domestic Sheep, Goats and Llama in the Northwest Territories” by Garde, Kutz, Schwantje, Veitch, Jenkins and Elkin has direct application to as the Northwest Territories” by Garde. Kutz, Schwantje, andIntroduced Domestic Sheep, Goats and Llama in mission between Wild Dali’s Sheep and Mountain Goats document entitled “Examining the Risk of Disease Trans forage contaminated with cattle dung, carried the bacte that rodents and rabbits picked up the organism from and soil. Studies conducted in England demonstrated those can be infective for at least 385 days on grass and other carriers who never get sick can shed the bacteria into the environment through feces for 15 to 18 months; those can be infective for at least 385 days on grass and soil. Studies conducted in England demonstrated that rodents and rabbits picked up the organism from forage contaminated with cattle dung, carried the bacteria in their digestive tracts, subsequently contaminated adjacent areas with their droppings and thereby made cattle ill in these previously ‘clean’ areas. Unfortunately, this disease is untreatable and extremely difficult to test for in the live animal. Therefore it is paramount that we prevent contamination of wildlife habitat with this organism. Johne’s disease was diagnosed in two animals with chronic diarrhea in the interior at a facility that bred and sold goats so the concern is heightened all the more. i% lycoplasma bacteria are commonly found in healthy as well as diseased domestic goats but less commonly in llamas and natural transmission to wild sheep and goats is strongly suspected. Although it doesn’t last long in the environment, it can be transmitted by insect vectors and does not require direct contact. Pasteurella and Mannheimia are bacteria that again are found as normal flora in apparently healthy goats and llamas but can be transmitted by aerosolization and remained infective in droplets spread by the wind under winter experimental conditions for up to 18 meters; again, no direct contact is required to cause severe and often fatal pneumonia in wild sheep, especially when other stressors or diseases are present. Vaccination and treatment attempts during die-offs of wild sheep have been wholly unsuccessful. Contagious ecthyma (called Orf when contracted by humans) is shed by scabs and remains infective in the environment for years. The lungworm, Muellerius capillaria is transmitted by larvae shed in the feces that develop inside a snail or slug and can survive in the in the environment for months and inside the snail slug for its lifetime. The nasal bot-fly, Oestrus ovis, which can be present without symptoms in goats and llama is spread by the adultflies; again, no direct contact is required.

The scientific literature relating to the assessment of the 9 high-risk agents has documented them as causing disease in wild sheep and the additional 19 treats of unknown risk are listed among the 277 citations in the report and not repeated here for brevity but that doesn’t mean the risks are unproven. The possibility for disease transmission from domestic goats and llamas to wild sheep is real, documented, and has the potential for serious, irreversible consequences to Dall sheep populations in Alaska. The Division of Wildlife Conservation believes that it is important that the public be fully informed of these risks so that the consequences of allowing domestic pack goats and llamas in proximity to wild sheep are understood.

Sincerely,

Kimberlee B. Beckmen, M.S., D.V.M., Ph.D.
Wildlife Veterinarian
John Mionczynski on the Alaska Dall Sheep issue
From: “Anthony Nastansky” <tonynastansky@earthlink.net>
As I am sure many of you are aware, we are packing with goats thanks to John Mionczynski. John had started an outfitting company called Wind River Pack Goats. Charlie Wilson now owns and operates the company. John M. is still studying Big Horn Sheep, and Charlie’s goats pack John’s equipment into the Big Horn areas.
I sent an inquiry to John to get his opinion on these current issues regarding the Alaska Dall Sheep and the use of packgoats into these areas, as well as Mountain Goat and Big Horn Sheep.
Here is John’s response.

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Dear Tony,
Thanks for asking for my opinion on the Alaska request to restrict pack goats from Dall sheep and Mountain Goat hunting areas.
I do have some feelings on the subject, as you might imagine...but they are not set in stone, since the research sheds new lights on the subject one year to the next.
You may or may not know that goat packing was invented in this country in 1972. I developed this technique for the purpose of assisting bighorn sheep research for the government in the rugged backcountry of the Wind River Mountains of Wyoming. I’ve made no secret about that. At that time there was no knowledge of disease transmission from domestic goat to wild sheep.
The notion of big horn die offs resulting from exposure to domestic sheep was well known (and now firmly established) so even then I was very careful to keep a distance from any wild sheep, not knowing if another closely related species (goats) may harbor a harmful transmissible organism. Since my goats were primarily there to carry books, microscopes, and some camp gear there was no need to bring the pack stock close to the sheep.
I’ve been conducting bighorn sheep studies intermittently between 1972 and the present and have been packing goats also since that time. I tell you this so you’ll understand where I’m coming from. The safety and preservation of bighorn sheep are of prime importance to me. (My current research project involves mineral deficiencies in bighorn resulting from environmental pollutants, so I’m not directly working with contagious diseases.)
In the mid-eighties after three years of lobbying for the first goat packing permit through sometimes contentious battles to allow goats as a new pack animal on public lands and to modify the lead rope regulations for goats, no restrictions were placed on my goats in regard to bighorn sheep other than to not let them fraternize. Knowing that once approved this commercial permit would be the precedent by which future goat packing permits would be modeled nationally, I instituted my own rules. So my goats could not come any closer than 30 feet to any bighorn. At times this meant throwing rocks at the sheep that would follow us too closely and definitely not camping close to sheep grazing areas. (I mentioned some of this in my book “The Pack Goat” but much of the research of Pasturella hemolytica had not yet been done in 1990.) Since 1972 a great deal has been learned (and I’m sure you’re up on much of this). We know that most major die offs of bighorn occur as the result of bacterial pneumonia. These organisms are many and varied but generally belong to the genus Pasturella. Hundreds of types of Pasturella hemolytica can result in contagious die offs of large numbers of sheep. One class of this Pasturella called Trehalosi is thought to be an entophytic native of bighorn sheep nasal passages and only causes disease when a sheep has weakened immunities. There are only a handful of these and are usually associated with minor die offs. The others are not native to bighorn sheep but are introduced from Asia, Africa, and Europe by way of domestic sheep.
These Pasturella are the ones that cause the most serious epizootics in bighorn, even some of the devastating ones from which formerly large herds never recover and eventually become nonexistent such as the Tarryall herd in Colorado. It is these Pasturella that bighorn seem to have virtually no resistance to and is believed to be the primary reason bighorn sheep currently occupy less than 2% of their pre-settlement range.
In recent years it has been determined that domestic goats can harbor some of the Pasturella derived from domestic sheep if exposed to the organisms. Goats are apparently not affected adversely by the organisms (at least the ones tested so far) but they can in theory pass them on to other species such as bighorn. You wouldn’t know if a goat has a resident Pasturella. Most are passed by aerosol (sneezeing) to other susceptible animals, and a die off could occur weeks after you left the mountains.
The subject of vaccinations for goats and wild sheep comes up periodically but these are not practical. There are hundreds of serotypes that each requires their own special vaccine. If there’s one there are probably others also. The process of determination is highly costly and time consuming. Long before all this was known (1990), I introduced goat packing to Alaska in a four month tour of goat clubs, goat dairy farms, outdoor clubs and stores, ADGA Chapters, and reindeer farms (yes I was making reindeer saddles also at that time). Since then goat packing has expanded in Alaska -- albeit very slowly -- but no one knows how Dall sheep in the far north will respond to the possibility of goat transmitted organisms, Pasturella or otherwise. It can be very difficult to determine the exact cause of an epizootic or source of the pathogen. Infection and recovery undoubtedly occurs from many sources over time without any notice being taken. If wild sheep are not regularly monitored a die off could be well underway before anyone notices.
It is assumed that Dall sheep being so closely related to bighorn will respond similarly to the many forms of exotic Pasturella.
Domestic goats are easily treated for lung infections and are generally well protected from adversity by their owners, but wild sheep are exposed to all the threats to health presented by living in the wild, chief among them is the...
Protostrongylus Lung Worm which is thought to reside in virtually every wild sheep north of about 40 degrees North Latitude. Under environmental or man-caused stress these worms can weaken an otherwise healthy wild sheep, making it much more susceptible to Pasturella infection. Extreme cold and/or extreme snow cover (as can occur during hunting season) can possibly exacerbate this condition. This is unknown #1.

Unknown #2 concerns the presence of a transmissible organism in a pack goat. As I said earlier the determination process is vastly too impractical to implement. In addition a goat can be infected by a curious citizen at a gas station on the way to the trailhead who sticks his or her hand in your trailer to pet a smart-looking goat. If that person had been around a sheep pasture that day, that’s all it takes...an unlikely scenario, but nevertheless possible.

Unknown #3 involves the certainty that a pack goat will not make contact with a wild sheep (contact for our purposes can be defined as sneezing range -- with a good alpine breeze blowing perhaps 20 to 30 feet).

We all keep our goats close, but those of us that have packed a lot know that stuff happens. Goats get chased off by bears, mountain lions, coyotes, and other hiker’s dogs. Sure goats will stand their ground in most attacks but after repeated assaults they will run for safety, and where is safety?

High ground of course - right where wild sheep reside. Some people pack with goats which were not raised properly and actually don’t care for people. I’ve seen many of these much to my displeasure. If these run away they are likely to be hard to catch. I know most who take the time to read something like this letter are not likely to have these kinds of animals, but we all know there are people out there packing them, and at the time there is no way to legally restrict them. Add to the runaway goat scenarios, rare as it is, the fact that wild sheep and domestic goats (especially with horns) are attracted to each other and historically have occasionally ended up living together in the wild when the goats were not retrieved by their owners. So this is my point. Is it unlikely that a pack goat will infect wild sheep in the wild? Yes. Is it possible? Yes. Do we want to take the risk?

This is where we can discuss particulars. How much risk are we willing to allow?

Here’s what we know. Historically, a devastating depopulation of a wild sheep herd due to an exotic Pasturella infection is virtually impossible to stop once it is noticed. Wild sheep have decreased their former pre-settlement gene pool distribution by 98% to a point where genetic diversity and herd size is already thought to be at absolute minimums or less for a long-term survival, and the total continental population is on the decline. Many times one contagiously infected wild sheep has resulted in the extermination of the entire herd.

Millions of dollars are being spent by game management agencies within the states and provinces and federally to prevent domestic sheep from getting close enough to accidentally wander into wild sheep traditional range.

Emergency measures such as states buying hundred year old sheep grazing allotments often on federal land to prevent contact have been draining wildlife revenues for years. Private groups such as the Nature Conservancy have also been buying large acreages adjacent to wild sheep range for this purpose.

One contagious infection from one pack goat, unlikely as it may be, can bring an entire gene pool to extinction. Once gone it is gone forever!

This is serious business! I am very resistant to seeing this subject become political. I just love having wild sheep in the wild lands and...I love goat packing. We can protect our goats but in this case the wild sheep are on their own. The subject must be discussed in a sincere and logical manner. As former owner of the largest goat packing company in North America, I can tell you this is a troubling subject, but it must be addressed. Concessions must be made in some locations - there is no doubt! There are too many unknowns for risks to be treated lightly. The wild sheep cannot be moved; goats can. Extremists will appear on both sides. I will stand somewhere in the middle.

I believe pack goats should be allowed on public lands but risks should also be acknowledged and plans negotiated long before the opportunity for a major die off of wild sheep occurs.

I also believe these things are best accomplished on the local level where knowledgeable individuals can hammer out a plan that works based on local situations and reason. But I think we must be prepared to be conciliatory and to make some concessions. But concessions can be made on both sides.

For instance I don’t believe an entire region or even a whole mountain range should be closed to goat packing necessarily when an issue exists in only one localized area. These decisions whatever they may be should not be cast in stone. The research is still being done. Perhaps goat organizations such as NAPgA, ADGA, and weed and shrub control companies can come up with a special fund to support research into this issue at the Washington State University vet lab, Idaho State University vet lab at Caldwell and elsewhere. Research at Texas A & M on the NRAMP gene in wild sheep seems encouraging and could shed much light on this subject.

I would be happy to put the first dollar into the pot to support good unbiased biological research that could ultimately inform us as to exactly how high a risk we are taking when we saddle up our Caprine buddies and take off for the back country.

The Pasturella question is still being determined. Lesser potential threats to wild sheep include Johnnes disease, Chlamydia, Soremouth, etc. All of these are complicated issues and deserve dialogue, and I applaud those who stand up to the challenge; ask the right questions; and bargain for reasonable outcomes with those who must manage the public lands.

Alaska has taken action. Presumably it is based on reasonable biologically sound risk assessments for that region. Not knowing the details I must support it (to err
on the side of the sheep) but in saying that I will be the first to say (having worked for the government in a former life) that we as goat packers should have access to the details.

I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to put in my two cents on this controversial issue.

John Mionczynski

I thank John for his response.

A follow-up comment I want to make is: when we pack with our goats and especially when we teach others to pack with goats in order to get out and enjoy the flora and fauna, we always need to keep ethics in mind.

Tony Nastansky
From the Goat Pen
tonynastansky@earthlink.net

Bighorns’ Plight Prompts Lawsuit
ASSOCIATED PRESS
SACRAMENTO, Calif. -- The government isn’t doing enough to protect the endangered Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep, a population numbering only in the hundreds, an environmental group said in a federal lawsuit filed Thursday.

Among the most pressing concerns is the proximity of domestic sheep to bighorn habitat, a situation biologist fear is spreading diseases between the two populations, the Center for Biological Diversity said in its lawsuit, which was filed in federal court in Sacramento.

The wild sheep live high in the Eastern Sierra, where they are threatened by mountain lions and genetic problems caused by inbreeding because of the small surviving population.

The environmental group wants the court to order the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to complete critical habitat and recovery plans for the sheep. It says the plans are six years overdue.

“We try to put as much of our resources as we can into recovery efforts, rather than into developing critical habitat designations that don’t do a lot for a species,” responded Al Donner, a spokesman for the Fish and Wildlife Service.

He said officials couldn’t comment further because they hadn’t seen the lawsuit.

Before the turn of the century, the number of wild bighorns in the Sierra numbered in the thousands.

Only about 100 survived as recently as 1998, a number that has crept up to around 300 today.

The lawsuit singled out as a particular problem the decision by the U.S. Forest Service to allow ranchers to graze domesticated sheep and goats on public land that the environmental group says is crucial to the survival of the wild sheep.

Tony Nastansky
From the Goat Pen
tonynastansky@earthlink.net

The Bennett Report!
Trying to pick up where Tony left off. I’ll begin with...

1) Alaska Issue... I'M not quite sure where we are at here, but I believe we are still deciding what we want to do in regards to Alaska. We need to figure out and discuss at the next board meeting whether or not to write a response letter.

2) John Mionczynski -- I was glad to see John send us a response in regards to Tony’s correspondence to him asking for input on the bighorn sheep/packgoat issue since he knows both very well. Any discussion on this?

3) The first draft to the NPS letter is done.. I'm waiting on board comment will rewrite and submit for final approval and get this letter out later this week or early next week. I am optimistic that these new rules will become the new management policies. I will send another reminder out to the packgoat list this week to remind anyone who has not commented on this to do so. The last day to comment is Feb. 18.

4) In regards to land use and more so, packgoat use, one of the selling points in our packgoat brochure states “Goats are excellent for use by hunters as they don't scare big game.” I think the board should seriously consider removing this from the brochure as a selling point. Being a hunter myself, in using my goats I have not really found this to be true (saying that other may have different experiences than myself). However, there will be people out there who may take this too far, and there has been discussion in the group that some agencies have taken the stance that using goats may be considered baiting. I think fish and game agencies could use our own words to ban packgoats from certain areas, hunting or not. In my opinion the only advantage to having your goats with you at hunting camp is help packing out your meat. And they do make good companions to have around also. Just my thoughts, but I would like to toss this around to the rest of you.

5) Available reports I have from folks around the country and what’s happening...

1) Missouri -- Ham and Ellie Hampton are busy distribu-
ing NAPgA letters to Land Managers in the “Show me State”, and also working with there goats on volunteer trail maintenance.

II) Charlie Goggin in Nevada can’t get into the Rubies due to the big horn sheep issue. They won’t let goats anywhere no matter what the distance.

III) Carolyn let me know that the only activity in Oregon right now is Mt. Goat reintroduction, and at this point it doesn’t seem to be a situation that will effect packgoat use.

IV) Washington State, what can I say with 27 straight days of rain... nobody’s been outside. Yesterday was the first day in a month that my goats wandered out from under cover. I may be going to a Washington State fish and wildlife meeting this week if I do I will have NAPgA letter in hand. I am coordinating a packgoat booth and exhibit at the Washington Sportsman show, in Puyallup, at the State Fair grounds, for the Evergreen Packgoat club. It will be complete with goats and pack demos. Its a great time to meet and educate a lot of people in regards to all facets of goatpacking. We are only there for one day but come in contact with about 10-15 thousand people during the day, its a great time.

As a matter of fact, it was this show where I first came into contact with packgoats, and you know the rest of the story!!

Jim Bennett
Wethers’ Field Packgoats
Gig Harbor, Wa.

Beginning in Goathood...

It is so often that someone comes up on one of the Packgoat groups and says they want to get into "goating", that I thought it would be nice to put together a comprehensive letter that we can send out instead of having to write a new one every time. So here is the last one that I sent out. Please read it over and let me know what you think should be included in it and what should not be. Since I am of limited experience, pls don't beat me up too bad. :-)

you are right about one thing, you are going to have to put a lot into this before you ever get your first goat. The infrastructure is the most expensive part of getting goats. They need to be able to get out of the wind and out of the weather, especially at night. It doesn’t have to be a completely closed-up shed, but putting them away at nights in a closed up enclosure is a great tension reliever. Once the coyotes here got wind that I had the goats, they wouldn’t leave me alone until I built an enclosed shed. Now they seem to have departed to more fruitful territory.

You also need to read Carolyn Eddy’s book, “The Packgoat.” Carolyn is about as knowledgeable as anyone I know. Also, belonging to the Yahoo! e-Mail groups (Packgoat, Packgoats, and NAPgA [need to be a member of NAPgA to join, but it is very reasonable as dues go]) is extremely helpful, as you can read the interchanges between the members as they discuss any number of relevant topics. There are no absolutes in this business, no matter whether you are talking about horns-no horns, or breeds. So reading the posts allows you to get informed and then form your own opinion. There is no one-and-only best breed. There are good and bad Alpines, and good and bad Obers, and good and bad Sannens. Goats are as individual as people and you will not know if you have a lazy goat until he is full grown. I personally like Alpines & LaManchas, do not like the Ober personality (although I have one), and do not have experience with Sannens, but the folks that use Sannens like George Bogdan who is the local goat guru in my area, swear by them.

I do not think that there is one breed that is better at heat tolerance either. That again is individual. And horns do not make the difference. There is no question that they dissipate some heat through them, but a heat tolerant goat will be heat tolerant with or without the horns.

Another thing. If you are going to be hiking over a period of several days, the common wisdom is that you have enough goats to be able to give each goat a rest every so often. If you have three goats, it will be every third day. Goats on the trail are not able to eat like they do at home, so tend to lose a little weight as time goes on. So giving them a day now and then where they do not have to carry a pack has to be a good thing.

Two things to look out for when you go to purchase a goat besides conformation. Be sure and ask if the goats in this particular herd have had a history of CAE (an early-onset arthritis kind of disease), or of UC (Urinary Calculi). One gentleman that lives near me has gone the course with one of his goats that developed UC and spent tons of money on him, only to find out that the herd he came from has a history of this malady. UC seems to at least in part be genetic in nature, so it is definitely one thing to look out for.

Another thing to consider is that losing a goat is always a possibility. If you lose a goat, it takes 3 years or more to get a new one to the point where it can carry significant weight. I believe that you need some goats "coming up" that can be ready fairly soon in case you do lose one. Speaking of that, DO NOT take goats into the woods/desert until you know what to do should they get into trouble. There is no more helpless feeling than having a goat way out into the brush, having them get sick and knowing that you can’t do a damn thing about it. I have experienced this first hand and I can tell you that was just about one of the worst nights of my life. It goes without saying that there was precious little sleep that night. You can read about it here if you have great stamina (it's long): http://mollymoo.hisurfer.net/goatstory.html

Also, consider carefully before buying adult goats. It is tempting as you would have a capable animal right away.
However, all the stories I have heard where goats got away (as in lost) from people, it was goats that were purchased as adults and therefore not bonded to their new owners. If you buy adult goats, you pretty much have to keep them on a lead for at least a couple of years. With mine, bonded as they are, I never have to wonder where they are. They’re right at my heels.

Speaking of bonding, bonding is everything. It is good to bottle feed your new animals for a couple of weeks, even if they are ready to be weaned. It allows them to look at you as “mom” and they will be better bonded than ones who you don’t have a chance to do this.

And lastly, most folks will say the cheapest way to go when building a fence is cattle panels. However, many folks end up covering the inside of the fence with smaller fencing to keep out the predators. I used what is called locally, “no-climb horse fencing”. It has openings about 3” by 5” or so. It is a little more spendy, but I do not have to worry about predators squeezing through.

That should give you plenty to chew on for the time... Be sure and ask questions if you have any. We’re always ready to share our experiences.

Larry in Boise, ID

http://mollymoo.hisurfer.net/goats.html

BTW: Consider joining NAPgA, (www.napga.org). It is a national organization that is dedicated to furthering and defending the goatpacking experience.

Doe’s Secret Code of Honor

from Kim, So Cal at 4300 ft.

The doe’s secret code of honor is as old as goats themselves and is ultimately the species best kept secret. No doe shall ever kid before its time. (Its time being determined by the following factors):

1- No kid shall be born until total chaos has been reached by all involved. Your owner’s house must be a wreck, their family hungry and desperate for clean clothes, and their social life nonexistent.

2- “Midwives” must reach the babbling fool status before you kid out. Bloodshot eyes, tangled hair and the inability to form a sentence mean the time is getting close.

3- For every bell, beeper, camera or whistle they attach to you, kidding must be delayed by at least one day for each item. If they use an audio monitor, one good yell per hour will keep things interesting.

4- If you hear the words, “She’s nowhere near ready. She’ll be fine while we’re away for the weekend,” Wait until they load the car, then begin pushing!

5- Owner stress must be at an all time high! If you are in the care of someone else, ten to fifteen phone calls a day is a sign you’re getting close.

6- When you hear the words “I can’t take it anymore!” wait at least three more days.

7- You must keep this waiting game interesting. False alarms are mandatory! Little teasers such as looking at your stomach, pushing your food around in the bucket and then walking away from it, and nesting, are always good for a rise. Be creative and find new things to do to keep the adrenaline pumping in those who wait.

8- The honor of all goats is now in your hands. Use this time to avenge all of your barn mates. Think about your friend who had to wear that silly costume in front of those people. Hang onto that baby for another day. OH, they made him do tricks too! Three more days seems fair. Late feedings, the dreaded diet, bad haircuts, those awful wormings can also be avenged at this time.

9- If you have fulfilled all of the above and are still not sure when to have the kids, listen to the weather forecast on the radio that has been so generously provided by those who wait. Severe storm warning is what you’re waiting for. In the heart of the storm jump into action!

The power could go out and you could have the last laugh. You have a good chance of those who wait missing the whole thing while searching for a flashlight that works!

10- Make the most of your interrupted nights. Beg for food each time someone comes into the barn to check you. Your barn mates will love you as the extra goodies fall their way too.

Remember, this code of honor was designed to remind man of how truly special goats are. Do your best to reward those who wait with a beautiful doeling to carry on the Doe Code of Honor for the next generation of those who wait!

Packgoat Anti-NAIS Letter Examples

From, ecpg@peoplepc.com, 2-19-06

Here are three versions of letters written to serve as examples for your anti-NAIS letters to send to Congress to your own congressman. Look him up on the animal ID pages. See the notes on the bottom of the pages to personalize them for your own use.

Carolyn

KEEP WRITING!

Version #1

[PUT THE DATE IN HERE]

The Honorable [PUT SENATOR/REPRESENTATIVE NAME HERE]

United States Senator/Representative

[PUT ADDRESS HERE] Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510

RE: National Animal Identifying System (NAIS)

Dear [SENATOR OR REPRESENTATIVE LAST NAME].

. . . . .

I am contacting you as I recently found out about the National Animal Identifying System (NAIS). The NAIS was the creation of The National Institute of Animal Agriculture
(NIAA), which is a group of businessmen such as the chemical company Monsanto, the National Pork Producers and Cargill Meat, to develop a mandatory “National Animal Identification System” (“NAIS”). All are people who stand to profit from the NAIS.

In essence the NAIS means that every person who owns even one horse, cow, pig, chicken, sheep, pigeon or virtually any livestock animal, even as a pet, will be forced to register their home, including owner’s name, address, and telephone number and keyed Global Positioning System coordinates for satellite monitoring, in a giant federal database under a 7-digit “premises ID number. The animals will be required to have a radio transmitting tag on them at all times. In further ‘phases to be implemented’ in the NAIS program, they may also require each animal’s DNA sample as well as retinal print of the animals eye. The NAIS will have the right to trespass on your private property as they feel the whim. We will have to foot the expenses for NAIS out of our pocket as well as out of our taxes. The only people to profit from this are the people who put this law into being, the rest of us as well as the animals will not.

According to the NAIS, the owner will be required to report every time an animal leaves or enters the property as well as other criteria. Such events must be reported within 24 hours. This will be difficult to those who do not own a computer or have access to one to file the reports. Each time I ride my horse I will have to file 2 forms to the NAIS.

The corporations who came up with the NAIS, such as Monsanto, who historically have sued farmers to gain a monopoly in agriculture, do not have to report the mega-amounts of animals they produce and slaughter each year. The members of the NIAA who came up with the NAIS are corporations who manufacture radio tags for animals, computer companies who made the computerized tracking system and the large Agribiz companies who will be raising the livestock by the hundreds of thousands of animals and have yet another monopoly in agriculture.

The pretense for coming up with the NAIS plan is an economic one and is due to animal disease. However, there are many safeguards in place already and some of the diseases, such as Foot and Mouth Disease, which does not even kill the animal nor is transferable to humans. Foot and Mouth Disease has not been reported in the United States for over 70 years.

From the NAIS law, we will loose many of our rare heritage breeds and it will make many more breeds which are not currently threatened, extinct. The NAIS will destroy poultry and rabbit shows, which is what keeps a lot of our school aged children are involved in. Many times it is programs such as 4-H which keeps our children in school, continue to graduation and becoming productive citizens. The genetic diversity of all our wonderful breeds will cease due to the monopilizing of our heritage. Having biodiversity is what prevents many livestock issues from happening as some are resistant to certain diseases.

The NAIS law will also affect you and your family as well as the rest of Americans due to the increased costs of animal production and it will show on our grocery bills. Many rural people must raise livestock such as chickens and milk goats just to be able to survive.

The NAIS will be taking this away from them. It will affect people like me who raise my own pork and chickens as a quality food for my family’s table.

I am also concerned that this law went through without having even reached those who are supposed to vote on laws concerning our American citizens.

I want to thank you for your valuable time by allowing me the opportunity to communicate with you on these NAIS issues and I hope that you will listen. I also want to thank you for considering that these issues are important to all of us for now and our future.

Sincerely Yours,

____________________

Concerned Citizen

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Version #2

[PUT THE DATE IN HERE]

The Honorable [PUT SENATOR/REPRESENTATIVES NAME HERE]

United States Senator/Representative

[PUT ADDRESS HERE] Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510

RE: National Animal Identifying System (NAIS)

Dear [SENATOR OR REPRESENTATIVE LAST NAME].

I am contacting you as a small farmstead and livestock advocate. I recently found out about the National Animal Identifying System (NAIS) which has been created from the National Institute of Animal Agriculture (NIAA) as a result of the federal funding through several administrative agencies as well as that of major corporations. The National Institute of Animal Agriculture (NIAA) is a group of huge Agribiz businessmen such as the chemical company Monsanto, the National Pork Producers and Cargill Meat, to develop a mandatory “National Animal Identification System” (“NAIS”).

In essence the NAIS means that every person who owns even one horse, cow, pig, chicken, sheep, pigeon or virtually any livestock animal, even as a pet, will be forced to register their home, including owner’s name, address, and telephone number and keyed Global Positioning System coordinates for satellite monitoring, in a giant federal database under a 7-digit “premises ID number. The animals will be required to have a radio transmitting tag on them at all times. In further ‘phases to be implemented’ in
the NAIS program, they may also require each animal’s DNA sample as well as retinal print of the animal’s eye. The NAIS will have the right to trespass on your private property as they feel the whim.

In the past if I would have listened to anyone attempting to tell me what these agencies and groups were attempting, I would have thought these people to be crazy, disgruntled, misinformed or just plain nuts as it sounds so very futuristic and Orwellian.

Since then I have become aware of considerable amount of information and documentation of what the NAIS is planning in various stages.

There is an abundance of displeasure throughout the agriculture community of this dangerous monopoly of our livelihoods of small scale farming. Many breed associations are against it as well as small stock owners and the owners of single animals which they consider pets.

According to the NAIS, the owner will be required to report the birthdate of an animal, the application of every animal’s ID tag, every time an animal leaves or enters the property, every time an animal loses a tag, every time a tag is replaced, the slaughter or death of an animal, or if any animal is missing. Such events must be reported within 24 hours. Everyone must do this other than companies such as Monsanto who wrote themselves a clause which renders them not applicable. According to the NAIS, every time I ride my horse next door, I must fill out and file 2 forms to the NAIS each and every day.

One for going and one for coming back home. This will be difficult to those who do not own a computer or have access to one to file the reports.

The very people who brainstormed the NAIS are the people whom there are loopholes written and therefore they do not have to do the mandatory tracking of these animals. These corporations such as Monsanto, who historically has sued farmers to gain a monopoly in agriculture, who has copyrighted animal genes by putting human DNA into the chickens and swine as of this writing and will make it illegal to own any of their copyrighted animals, do not have to report the mega-amounts of animals they produce and slaughter each year. The only people to profit from this are the people who put this law into being. The members of the NIAA who came up with the NAIS are corporations who manufacture radio tags for animals, computer companies who made the computerized tracking system and the large Agribiz companies who will be raising the livestock by the hundreds of thousands of animals and have yet another monopoly in agriculture.

If you are not familiar with the Monsanto company who is one of the biggest backers of the NAIS, they are the makers of Agent Orange, Round-Up and the “Terminator” crops which kill off their own embryo to render the seed sterile. Unfortunately the “Terminator” crops will cross pollinate into other varieties of wheat, corn and rice and also render them sterile and unable to reproduce. Monsanto’s goal is to kill off all agriculture other than what they produce.

I have found that there is an extreme amount of resistance towards the NAIS in many sectors of the agricultural world. We will loose many of our rare heritage breeds, which we are loosing at the rate of 60 breeds worldwide each year and it will make many more breeds which are not threatened currently, threatened or extinct. The NAIS will literally kill the hobbies/recreation to show poultry and rabbits, which is what of a lot of our school aged children are involved in.

Many times it is programs such as 4-H which keeps our children in school and keeps them on the road to graduating and being productive citizens. Our local fairs, which showcase our agriculture and farms in each country of our Nation will be all but deceased. The genetic diversity of all our wonderful breeds will cease due to the monopolizing of our heritage. Having biodiversity is what prevents many livestock issues from happening as some are resistant to certain diseases. There has never been a case of “Hoof and Mouth” in Mulefooted Hogs for instance in any nation.

Since the individual person will have to foot the expense of the costs of this program, many will be forced to forever leave the agricultural industry. Some of these people have been injured economically over the years and this would be the final straw. The large corporations will be able to use this system as a tax write-off, whereas the ‘little guy’ will not. Too many small dairies will have to be closed down.

The pretense for coming up with the NAIS plan is an economic one and is due to animal disease. However, there are many safeguards in place already and some of the diseases, such as Foot and Mouth Disease, which does not even kill the animal nor is transferable to humans. Foot and Mouth Disease has not been reported in the United States for over 70 years.

The NAIS law will also affect you and your family as well as the rest of Americans due to the costs of animal production will be up and it will show on our grocery bills. Many rural people must raise livestocks such as chickens and goats just to be able to survive. The NAIS will be taking this away from them. It will effect people like me who raise my own stock as quality food for my family’s table.

From time to time the news media does indeed touch upon these issues and it is even more true that since the popularity of the Internet there is an abundance of websites that cover many of these issues surrounding the NAIS that the press appears to “back away from.”

I also highly suspect that one of the main reasons there is not the level of public scrutiny these issues demand is that the majority of the population is ignorant of the NAIS, while it has quietly been pushed through and made into a law WITHOUT having gone through any Local, State or Congressional input to make this a law.
I have been watching, waiting and hoping for the day when those appointed, and elected, individuals who have accepted the public trust realize that there is a need for congressional hearings to highly modify the NAIS and prevent the NAIS from doing whatever they like at whim.

I very strongly believe the issue of the NAIS cannot be ignored any longer and that there must be something done before nothing can be done about it. The NAIS is not going to go away and they will be getting worse as time goes by, as well as the people behind NAIS who are not being subjected to competent oversight and review. The NAIS is eventually going to a downfall of not only our nation, but that of the world.

I want to thank you for your valuable time by allowing me the opportunity to communicate with you on these NAIS issues and I hope that you will listen. I also want to thank you for considering that these issues are important to all of us for now and our future.

Sincerely Yours,

_____________________
Concerned Citizen

Version #3

[PUT THE DATE IN HERE]
The Honorable [PUT SENATOR/REPRESENATIVES NAME HERE]
United States Senator/Representative
[PUT ADDRESS HERE] Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510

RE: National Animal Identifying System (NAIS)
Dear [SENATOR OR REPRESNATIVE LAST NAME].

I am contacting you over concerns of the “National Animal Identifying System” (NAIS). For several years, the USDA has been working with the largest-scale animal industry organizations (for example, the National Pork Producers, Monsanto Company, and Cargill Meat) to develop a mandatory “National Animal Identification System” (“NAIS”). However, most small scale livestock producers, people who raise animals for their own food, and people who keep horses or livestock as companion animals do not know about the USDA’s plans. I just found out about NAIS recently myself.

The NAIS will drive small producers out of the market, will make people abandon raising animals for their own food, and people who keep horses or livestock as companion animals do not know about the USDA's plans. I just found out about NAIS recently myself. The NAIS will drive small producers out of the market, will make people abandon raising animals for their own food, and people who keep horses or livestock as companion animals do not know about the USDA's plans. I just found out about NAIS recently myself. The NAIS will drive small producers out of the market, will make people abandon raising animals for their own food, and people who keep horses or livestock as companion animals do not know about the USDA's plans. I just found out about NAIS recently myself.

the NAIS may also include collecting the DNA of every animal and/or a retinal eye scan of every animal. The owner will be required to report every time an animal leaves or enters the property and must be reported within 24 hours. If you do not comply, the USDA will exercise “enforcement” against you. There are no exceptions – under the USDA plan, you will be forced to register and report even if you raise animals only for your own food or keep horses for draft or for transportation.

Many people who raise their own animals or buy from small, local producers do so because they are very troubled by industrial-scale production of chickens, cattle, and pigs or due to religious beliefs.

These people will be forced either to sacrifice their personal privacy to government surveillance, or to stop raising their own food by humane standards. The NAIS is touted by the USDA and agricorporations as a way to make our food supply “secure” against diseases or terrorism. However, most people instinctively understand that real food security comes from raising food yourself or buying from a local farmer you actually know. The USDA plan will only kill off more local sources of production and further promote the giant industrial methods which cause many food safety and disease problems.

The USDA presently does not plan to finalize its rules for mandatory ID until the summer of 2006. There is still time to oppose this plan and I want you to help those of us who are “We the People” to prevent it from becoming a law. Not only does this effect my family, but your family and our neighbors. Please help us prevent this NAIS program from passing.

Sincerely Yours,

_____________________
Concerned Citizen

NOTES:

Even a handful of letters can have a tremendous impact on your state legislator and their decision on whether to focus on or support treatment law reform. Letters do not have to be long-winded or full of statistics - in fact, short letters with personal stories are the most likely to be read.

* Short letters get read!
* Use your own words if you can
* Give your reasons for opposing NAIS
* Use a personal story, if possible.
* Include a newspaper article/editorial that supports your view
* Personalize the heading and salutation for each legislator to whom you send a letter.

DO TRY TO USE YOUR OWN WORDS!! DO NOT JUST COPY MINE.

Send a picture of your kids and their 4-H poultry project or you on your trail horse. If you have rare livestock, include a picture of them and a short blurb why they are important. Tell the dude/dudette you are writing, how the NAIS IS or WILL effect you!
Carolyn Eddy
ecpg@peoplepc.com

I needed something to fill in the rest of the page so here are a couple of blasts from the past Yahoo! Packgoat postings.
Larry

**Estimating Goats Weight-Formula**
Charlie Goggin, Nevada

I realized today that there is a formula for guessing the weight of a horse. It is supposed to be pretty accurate, within 10%. SO, with tape measure in hand I went out to measure the goats I could actually pick up and stand on a scale with and with these guys this formula was VERY accurate. Problem is we cannot weigh our big boys so I am putting the formula out there and asking those of you who can weigh them to check and see how well it works on mature packers.

**The equation is girth squared X length divided by 241.3**
We measured our lengths three ways because we were not sure. We found out the the length from the front of the wither to the top of the tail head seems to give a smaller weight for the larger goats so we used that, for the babies it worked to measure from the point of shoulder to the point of hip, which is a slightly longer measurement.

I weighed Zulie, who is 8 months old and got 85 pounds on my scale, with this formula she was 84.8 pounds.

Bobbi, a nearly 6 month old doe was 76 pounds on the scale, with the formula she was 79 pounds.

Shami is about 95 pounds on my scale and aching back, with the formula she was 95.1 pounds.

With my big boys I have no scale and with the does it seemed to weigh them heavy but then again I have no proof that they are not that heavy. It said that Gulliver was about 255 pounds, but he is 38.25 inches tall with a girth of 41 inches. This is a huge 1.5 year old boy, long and tall. He is very lean as he is in rut but he has lots of muscle and huge bones so I am thinking he could weigh that much. I have had a tendency to underestimate my boy's weights pretty consistently in the past and when I get them on a scale I am always surprised. It was when I did Pie and Lazlo that I feared the thing was wrong for the adult or near adult goats since it seemed to do my babies pretty darned good. If even a few of you did some adult goats that you could also weigh it would be great. It may be that the depth of body on Arie and Flower made them weigh heavier on this scale, I know Stewie is fat but lordy, he cannot weigh that much!!! (Can he?)
Jan, I hope you can add this data to your charts!
Charlie

**Dogs & Goats!**

A comment about dogs and goats. Around here loose dogs on the trail are a fact of life. I have always encouraged our club members to bring their dogs to outings and if possible to imprint their goats with at least their own dog. Here at home we have 4 dogs of various sizes and colors who are all goat friendly and play with the kids practically from birth.

Why do I do that? Well, I don’t believe that highlining is the only option ( in fact I only use it when I want to keep the goats out of the way when there are lots of people around) and I do believe that goats who have spent time with dogs are less likely to panic and run when they see a loose dog. In fact some of the older goats will be very quick to explain to the dog what those horns are for and if dehorned, will just ram the dog against a wall, tree, or similar object to teach him some manners.

Of course, a dazer is also a great addition to your dog response kit. Neither Alice nor I have ever lost a goat. We can't scrape them off with a stick if they are worried about something on the trail. We've even twice had one offer to take on a bear. Scared the bear into leaving both times. Black bears, not grizzlies. Not so hard to scare.

(YMMV-Your mileage may vary)
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