Rendezvous, 2010

‘And a good time was had by all!’

And it undoubtedly was, however this year’s Rendy was certainly not up to the excitement standards of past events.

We were unfortunately faced with an uncooperative and nearly openly hostile agency in regards to the land managers, who failed to provide us with a ‘project’ similar to those we have done in the past. And had to fend for ourselves simply in order to find a place to ‘camp out’.

Also, I only realized in retrospect, the only person involved in the planning of the Rendy with any real ‘Rendy experience’ was Carolyn E., and the rest of us were not completely knowledgeable of what it took to make this all work.

The up side is that we met a lot of new people, and had a great time socializing with folks that we had not previously met, or were from parts of the country that had not attended a Rendy before.

Certainly a high point was the tribute to Jan Huffaker which we conducted on Saturday night. Jan contributed so much, and it is still painful to realize that she will not hike again on planet earth.

Larry Robinson

Editor/Presidential Rant!

NAPgA Membership

One of an organization’s primary concerns is membership. The reason for this is manifold. It has to do with cash flow, for the member’s dues are the lifeblood of an organization’s ability to exist, and equally important also is the fact that an organization’s ability to have an effect on those entities that they are interested in influencing, has to do with numbers. A small organization has a small voice, and a large group speaks with a much-amplified voice.

So what does it take to cause folks to want to join and build up an organization’s membership? The primary factor that will cause an individual to plunk down his or her hard-earned money for dues, is the perception that the organization is, or can be, influential in helping each person with his or her particular avocation, that the organization will make it easier, or more advantageous as a result of his/her participation.

Therefore, the primary motivation for an individual’s participation in an organization is the perception on his or her part that the particular organization is active, involved & actually creating a better environment for whatever its mission states.

The only way an individual can perceive that his or her organization is actually accomplishing these things, is through its (the organization’s) communications with its membership, primarily its newsletter.

Regarding NAPgA in particular, regardless of the fact that we have and continue to have an influence in the goatpacking world, we have not communicated it well to our membership as we have done a very poor job of letting our folks know what we have been doing vis a vis the newsletter. Sadly there have been very few newsletters this year, and although as the ‘editor’, I share in the blame for that lack, I am not solely responsible as no newsletter is really informative without the input of its members. I certainly could do a newsletter more often, and although I am NEVER short of an ‘opinion’ on a variety of subjects, if I am the only one you hear from, it would be a very one-sided view of just about any subject I might write on.

Therefore, if we are to have a good newsletter, we must have the input of a number of folks. Not only from the NAPgA board, which is essential, but from our membership as well.

Therefore, it will only happen when we all take an interest in it... and not before.
Promoting NAPgA

Last year the NAPgA board voted to advertise in a National magazine in hopes of increasing our membership.

Dairy Goat Journal was chosen because it is an attractive magazine, reasonably priced and has a large readership. Each issue of Dairy Goat Journal provides timely articles about raising, breeding, and marketing dairy goats as well as health issues and recent news of interest to goat owners and the dairy goat industry. Topics covered include breed updates, grazing techniques, nutrition, housing, veterinary questions, and marketing information. Also featured are various articles on industry trends, livestock showing techniques and a listing of upcoming events of interest from across the nation. The publication also features seasonal subjects of interest, provides information on the various associations available to the growers, and human interest stories about real life goat raising experiences.

The staff at DGJ helped develop a nice ad and they agreed to run an article about packgoats and the North American Packgoat Association in the same issue as our first ad. Even though my name is on the article I did not write it. It must have been written by one of the staff writers and they did a good job. The article is titled “Tread Lightly on the Land, Pack With Man’s Other Best Friend”. The article contains a lot of the information from the brochure NAPgA provided along with 5 photo’s provided by Rex Summerfield of Northwest Packgoat Supply. Our ad has been published in the July/August issue and the September/October issue will be published soon.

You can view the July/August issue at www.dairygoatjournal.com. I don’t think you can read the packgoat article online but I opened “Drafting, A Good Occupation For Wethers and Retired Dairy Does”.

Evergreen PG Club Campout

The Evergreen Packgoat Club enjoyed a fun filled weekend on August 20-22, 2010. We camped at the Buck Creek/Ranger Creek Camping area - outside of Greenwater, WA. This is a no fee group camping area with close proximity to a number of stock trails, some easy, some more challenging. The campground is adjacent to the White River and to an emergency airfield (used in fire-fighting situations) and we did see several small aircraft land and take off. There were 19 people and 22 well behaved goats in attendance. The weather was nice with comfortable temperatures and no rain. There was great food, goat stories and information sharing. Among some of the hot topics were Urinary Calculi, “Leave no trace” and Bigfoot stories. The hiking was great, rock hounding was OK and several goats had their first river crossings. It was a great weekend.

Rachel Suomela
Pacific Pack Goats . com

What Breed of Goats to Pack

By Dori Green

The American Muttley is my pick.

Part Alpine: smart enough to splint and bandage your sprained ankle.

Part Nubian: to nag the Alpine part into wanting to help.

Part Boer: to be strong enough to drag you off the mountain.

Part Saanen: to keep murmuring “poor baby”.

Part Toggenburg: to keep the other parts moving “Manch schnell, meine bruderenundschwesteren!”

Part Spanish: to gallop up to the trailhead to lead the rescue team back to you.

...and part Pygmy to be just too dang cute to eat.

Only Ewes Can Prevent Wildfire

In the fire-prone West, a growing number of small ruminant producers use their animals to create fire breaks between suburbs and the flammable wildlands. In the “Only Ewes Can Prevent Wildfire” program near Carson City, Nevada, sheep grazed a fenced corridor around the city, removing 71 to 83% of easily ignitable vegetation. A survey of nearby homeowners revealed that more than 90% supported the project and preferred the sheep to traditional chemical or mechanical methods of creating fire breaks. To learn more about managing animals to reduce fire danger, see the CD Goats! For Firesafe Homes in Wildland Areas.
Corey Freeman looks at two stranded goats that wandered onto the thin ledge of a railroad bridge and spent two days above a highway near Roundup, MT.

The two young goats were hungry but safe when they were plucked to safety with a towering crane. Authorities were called Tuesday, when the goats were first spotted. But confusion about the location delayed the rescue until another caller alerted the humane society on Wednesday.

Reducing Parasite Problems in Small Ruminants

Internal parasites are a major health concern for sheep and goats. The problem is compounded by the fact that the parasites are rapidly becoming resistant to de-worming medications. Therefore, management must be the primary method for sustainable control of internal parasites. You can reduce parasite problems by having a low stock density and rotating your animals to different pastures.

All parasite infestations occur when the animal ingests the infective larval stage in contaminated pasture, hay, or living quarters. The larvae develop from eggs that were passed from an animal through its feces. Because the larvae do not climb up very high on grass blades, removing animals from pastures before the plants are grazed shorter than four inches will help prevent infestations. Letting animals browse on vines, shrubs, and woody plants will also help. Including cattle and poultry in your rotation is a good idea, since they ingest the parasites of sheep and goats without harm, removing larvae from the pasture.

Symptoms of a parasite problem include weight loss, rough coat, depression, and anemia (evidenced by pale mucous membranes, especially in the lower eyelid or gums). It is important to realize that heavily infected animals are “seeding” the pastures with parasite larvae. Culling severely affected animals will decrease the herd’s problems by reducing pasture contamination and by selecting for parasite-resistant animals.

A clinical on-farm system called FAMACHA© was developed in South Africa to classify animals based upon level of anemia. This is done by comparing the color of the lower eyelid to a special colored card. The system recommends de-worming or culling the most susceptible animals. FAMACHA© is only useful in detecting animals infected with barber-pole worms (Haemonchus contortus), the primary problem in goats and sheep. To learn about FAMACHA©, visit the Web site of the Southern Consortium on Small Ruminant Parasite Control, www.scrrpc.org, and then enlist the help of your veterinarian.

Court of Last Resort -- Tipping a Goat

by Rex Summerfield

Stand in the middle of the goat and reach under its belly and grab the two legs on the opposite side. Turn your face toward the rear of the goat for safety reasons in case a horned goat should jerk its head back. Once you have the two off side legs in hand, push into the goat with your shoulder while gently pulling the legs toward you. The goat will tip over away from you. As soon as it hits the ground, release the “back leg only” and step over it so you are now standing behind the goats neck and shoulder area. The goat is going to flail around in the beginning so stepping over it keeps you from getting kicked. Continue to hold onto the front leg and put your hand on its neck to hold it down so it can’t get its legs under it. If the goat is larger, then gently use your knee on its neck to help hold it down. As long as you keep the goat laying flat and hold its neck down it can’t get up. The directions sound long but in actuality it all happens at once.

Since you aren’t picking up any weight with this method you are only limited by your tenacity. “Lightfoot Packgoats” who is on this forum, weighs next to nothing (if that) and God help the goat that looks at her sideways, no matter how big it is. LOL

The most important thing to remember is to hold it down until it completely submits and relaxes. Most goats will take a rest break, but that isn’t submission. Patting gently on the goats side and neck while you talk to it will help speed the process along. I generally have to hold them for 5-10 minutes. I believe “sweetgoatmama” said they held one for 20 minutes before it finally gave up. Failure to hold...
them until they completely submit will require you to do it over and over while one good one may be all it’ll ever need. Depends on how stubborn your goat is.

Rex Summerfield
Northwest Packgoats
http://www.northwestpackgoats.com

Goat Rescue Conserves Rare Breed of Spanish Goats
June 11, 2010, Courtesy the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy

A rare and isolated population of Spanish goats is at the forefront of conservation efforts by the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy.

The American Livestock Breeds Conservancy has completed the first phase of rescuing an isolated population of Spanish goats on an island in South Carolina. This population is one of only two known strains of Spanish goats to exist in the Southeast. Their genetics are extremely valuable to the Spanish goat population as a whole, which currently numbers less than 7,500 animals in the entire United States.

This specific population has adapted to the challenges of the hot, humid, swampy environment of the Southeast for 500 years. These adaptations are unique among Spanish goats and are worth conserving.

According to Dr. Phil Sponenberg, professor of pathology and genetics at Virginia Tech University in Blacksburg, “Spanish goats are important as one of the main landrace representatives in the US for the goat species. As is true of landrace livestock, they tend to be adapted and productive in compromising environments. The southeastern representatives of the landrace are extremely important, because these are the very ones expected to have the most inherent resistance to parasites and other environmental challenges. These few remaining herds are extremely important to save as an intact genetic resource.”

Due to inbreeding and predation, the South Carolina Spanish goat population is threatened with extinction. Just 30 years ago, there were over 100 goats on the island. Today, fewer than 30 remain. These animals possess valuable genetics that need to be maintained for future generations. Removing selected animals from the population and placing them into a conservation breeding program will ensure the survival of this unique strain.

On May 15, ALBC staff members Jeannette Beranger and Marjorie Bender traveled to South Carolina to complete the initial phase of the removal process. Previous trips ensured the herd was documented and photographed. Photographs were then evaluated by Sponenberg, ALBC’s technical advisor, to determine Spanish phenotype and to identify target conservation animals prior to beginning removal.

ALBC staff members worked closely with the local community to ensure they were educated about the breed and the process for removing the animals. They were supportive of the efforts and a local Native American group, Keepers of the Word, assisted with the rescue. The group consisted of teens and their leaders from the Keepers of the Word “Venture Crew,” which is a scout group for teens with a focus on Native American principles.

Goat kids rest peacefully in a volunteer’s arms.

By Staff reports, Hannibal Courrier-Post, Posted Aug 27, 2010, Mexico, MO —

The Mexico goat appears on a security camera outside Sound Solutions on South Jefferson Street. A goat that’s been wandering around Mexico has gained so much attention that it’s gotten a Facebook page. KXEO Radio reported the animal first was spotted by a motorist last weekend near an underpass on the east side of town.

“He’s been all over,” said KXEO’s Chris Newbrough. “He’s gone ballistic.”

The city’s animal control officer, Joe Horton, says his department had received more than a dozen reports about the adult goat.

The animal, nicknamed Billy Goat Gruff, visited Taco Bell, Dairy Queen, the hospital, the school and even got picked up by a security cam outside an electronics store. No one seems to know how the goat got loose, and no reports of missing animals had been made.

The wayward billy was spotted again Friday around noon at Dairy Queen. Horton said that when he approached, the goat took off. A search proved fruitless.

As of 4 p.m. Friday, the goat had more than 600 followers on Facebook.

Authorities ask that people who spot it, to not try to capture it but to call animal control.

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Pete is almost the perfect hiking companion. He'll carry my gear, walk for miles without complaining and keep me company on the trail. And when I’m not looking, he’ll eat my lunch.

And my lunch bag.

And my map.