

Goat Tracks



Journal of the Working Goat - Summer 2021

Until You Have Loved an Animal, Part of Your Soul Remains Unawakened. --Anatole France

The indoor life is the next best thing to premature burial. --Edward Abbey



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Goat Tracks

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On Track with Goat Tracks

by Larry Robinson



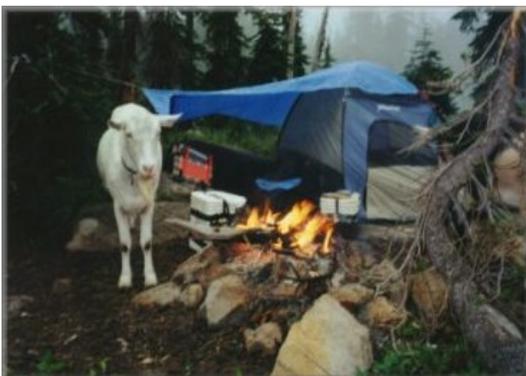
I suppose it is just my advanced state of decomposition (age) that makes it seem like I just did the **Spring issue** last week, but here we are with deadlines looming for the **Summer** effort. Here in New Mexico the temps are slowly rising. Couple that with an almost complete lack of available water in the hills, and you find that the entire hiking dynamic is a lot different; for both the goats and the dog. My dog has already had foot troubles on two of our recent hikes. Just a week or so ago, in the San Francisco river drainage (BTW: Just because it is called a 'river drainage' here does NOT mean that there is necessarily any water in it... frequently there

is not) I noticed the dog sort of dancing around on the sand, and I was wondering what in the world he was doing? It finally occurred to me that the sand was hot enough that it was quite uncomfortable on his paws. We made it back to the truck by dashing from shady spot to shady spot all the way up the drainage.

What is obvious here is that when transitioning from my Idaho environment to here, it was not initially obvious to me that there would be so many considerations that I had not experienced previously. For example, on a hike on the Gold Dust trail a couple or three weeks ago, the dog ended up with two paws that were bloody and either cut or just rubbed raw. That has just *never* happened before. Granted, the Gold Dust ends up being 6.5 miles back and forth, with a lot of altitude to recapture on the way back out, but I just had never previously experienced the kind of injuries that the dog suffered on this one.

Looking at the bigger picture, anyone who thinks that the threats to goatpacking have been put to bed are sadly mistaken. Case in point, as you can read in this issue, the Santa Fe and Carson National Forests have just out-of-the-blue pushed out an order banning all types of goats from their forests. The available locations to take our boys are falling, one by one, throughout the western half of the United States. The only organization that stands a chance of bringing any sanity to these continuing threats is the North American Packgoat Association (NAPgA). If you are not currently a member PLEASE consider joining. It takes lots of work and Legal assistance to have any chance of keeping our foot in the door and that takes money... sometimes a lot of it. NAPgA has had a lot of successes in our previous battles, but it has only been through the efforts of an exceptionally good legal representative, and the gifts of our members that keep this representative 'pack train' moving forward.

I am always looking for folks to describe their goat-travels here in Goat Tracks. I have a lot of my stories on backlog, but you are going to get real tired of just reading about me! Please consider sending me a narrative of your adventures. I can edit like mad, but can't describe your travels!



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A PNW Sadness

Just learned that an acquaintance of mine in the Pacific NW has lost a goat to a habituated cougar. Having faced a cougar off a couple or three years ago, I am at least familiar with the threat, but it is very disheartening to have one of the boys that we have invested so much time and love into, summarily extinguished by a predator simply looking for a free and easy meal.

In another sadness, a goat lost to religious silliness...

Goat sacrificed to get rid of COVID-19

Khabarhub, May 16, 2021

<https://english.khabarhub.com/2021/16/184234/>

JAJARKOT: A goat was sacrificed to the goddess at Halchaur in Nalgad municipality-8, praying for prevention and control of coronavirus.

Villagers gathered at the Kalika Mai temple and offered a he-goat, said local resident Hari Bahadur Khatri.

A people's representative in Nalgad died of coronavirus while the neighboring Athbiskot municipality in Rukum west has been gripped by the virus.

Hence, the offering was made to stop it, he said.

"As there is no way to save ourselves from the virus which has no cure, we have come to submit ourselves before the goddess," Khatri said.

Local shaman Harka Bahadur Khatri also claimed that nobody other than Masta god and Kalikali goddess can control such diseases.

People have been seeking the help of the god and goddess at times of such great crisis.

The locals collected cash to purchase the goat that was sacrificed at the temple, to be offer in the name of the goddess.

Got Your Goat — Karen and Dale Kopf

@rodger, Posted on [March 16, 2019](#)

<https://farmtotabletalk.com/got-your-goat-karen-and-dale-kopf/>

Today's journeys that are taking people from farm to city and back to farm are many and varied. One way or the other there are thousands who have invested in education, careers and commutes who have found there was still something missing—open space, outdoors, family time and the satisfaction of growing crops or livestock. Karen and Dale Kopf are



on that journey. They grew up on a farm and ranch, respectively, then pursued education and subsequent careers. They have found the best of both worlds when they moved to their Kopf Canyon Ranch in Idaho where they are proud to call themselves "herdsmen". They believe that care of animals and land is a stewardship, a trust. Today they enjoy "goating" together, raising Kiko goats in northern Idaho and helping others become

herdsmen. To equip and educate new herdsmen they founded the Palouse Goat Guild and host an annual Goat Academy in Moscow, Idaho. The Food Animal Concerns Trust's Humane Farming Project awarded them a grant to cross fence a canyon for goats, laying hens and guardian animals. These herdsmen of goats and trainers of aspiring herdsmen, Karen and Dale Kopf, join Farm to Table to share their journey and to remind others who should consider goat, to consume or raise. www.kikogoats.org

Driver pulled over by NDHP troopers for baaad speeding

By [Julie Martin](#) Published: May. 25, 2021

<https://www.kfyrtv.com/2021/05/26/driver-pulled-over-by-ndhp-troopers-for-baaad-speeding/>

BISMARCK, N.D. (KFYR) - You have goat to be kidding me! North Dakota Highway Patrol troopers snapped this picture after pulling over a driver who was traveling with two goats in the back of her vehicle.

According to Capt. Brain Niewind, the Washington driver was stopped twice Sunday morning for speeding on Interstate-94.

The driver was pulled over near Cleveland, N.D., around 9:10 a.m. and cited for going 90 mph in a 75 mph zone, said Niewind.

Another trooper pulled the woman over a second time near Casselton around 10:20 a.m. for speeding. She was given a warning.

The woman told troopers she was heading to New York from Washington with the two goats.

Niewind said the woman told the first Trooper the goats were driving her nuts.



Land Use Issues

I found the article below interesting because in their enthusiasm for ‘good news’ they conveniently overlook the collateral damage that can occur with these high-minded Bighorn Sheep (BHS) re-establishment programs. For instance, when they got enthused about putting a group of BHS into the Coronados in AZ, first they pulled the permit, and subsequently shutting down the livelihood, of one goatpacker who was guiding trips with his goats in the Coronados. Then they discovered that the one entity that enthusiastically welcomed the recently planted BHS was the mountain lions. They were overjoyed to see this prey table set before them, and were cleaning house. So the land managers went in and killed a bunch of the lions as an attempt to bring balance into this equation. I just cannot get my arms around killing one animal to benefit another, I don’t care how high-minded the goal appears.

The Bighorn Sheep

The Bighorn sheep population in the Santa Catalina mountains north of Tucson began to decline in the 1920s until the herd disappeared in the 1990s. A reintroduction effort began in 2013 and now the herd consists of about 80 sheep. They have survived urban growth, habitat loss, and even a fire that shares its name, The Bighorn.

Bighorn herd rebounds from disease to reach record numbers

By Doug Barrett, Apr 13, 2021

<https://knoxradio.com/2021/04/13/bighorn-herd-rebounds-from-disease-to-reach-record-numbers/>

A new survey of the bighorns herd in western North Dakota shows it has rebounded from an outbreak of bacterial pneumonia seven years ago to reach record numbers. The state Game and Fish Department’s survey says the herd south of Interstate 94, however, continues to struggle and is at its smallest size in about two decades, the survey showed. The count shows 322 bighorns, up 11% from 2019 and 13% above the five-year average. About 40 bighorns in the North Unit of Theodore Roosevelt National Park and sheep recently introduced to the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation aren’t included in the count.



At least in this one they are not killing the lions

CALIFORNIA RELOCATES MOUNTAIN LIONS TO SAVE BIGHORN SHEEP

<https://www.gohunt.com/read/news/california-relocates-mountain-lions-to-save-bighorn-sheep#gs.z0s6bw>

In [California's](#) Sierra Nevada mountains, there’s an ongoing battle between [mountain lions](#) and [bighorn sheep](#) and the bighorn sheep aren’t winning. In an effort to help the dwindling herds recover from repeat depredation, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has been relocating mountain lions from the Sierras to another location over 100 miles away, [The Guardian](#) reports.

“There’s no expectation that any of the lions we move are going to stay where we put it, regardless of age or sex,” said [Danny Gammons](#), a CDFW predator biologist. “The goal is to get it away from bighorn sheep.”

While bighorn sheep now number about 600 animals – up from the 125 back in 1999 when they were first listed as endangered – they are divided between 14 small herds. One mountain lion can decimate a single herd, according to [The Guardian](#). Initially, CDFW used lethal removal to curb the number of mountain lions within the bighorn sheep range, but the current regulations have been revised and require the use of non-lethal methods first, hence the current [relocation](#) efforts.

So far, most of the mountain lions have either settled into new territory or returned, traveling the 100+ miles back to where they initially roamed. Mountain lion biologists say this is because of “the animals’ keen sense of direction and ability to travel hundreds of miles in search of a territory or mates,” according to [The Guardian](#).



The saddest part of this for the goatpacker that has been summarily ejected from these forests, is that we know that without exception we are not, nor ever will be a threat to Bighorn Sheep. There is absolutely no science whatsoever in this. Only the suspicion that quite possibly, maybe, we think, undoubtedly, we might transmit pneumonia to the BHS and they'll all die. Hasn't ever happened, nor will it ever. A core issue is that if you can prove that your boys are 'test negative', then there is bloody well NOTHING that you could transmit to BHS should you ever get close to them, which is remotely likely as well. Frustrating and demoralizing it is for us all.

Santa Fe, Carson forests closed to goats, sheep to protect bighorn sheep

By Scott Wyland swyland@sfnewmexican.com May 24, 2021
https://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/local_news/santa-fe-carson-forests-closed-to-goats-sheep-to-protect-bighorn-sheep/article_f8f9ae9a-bc8a-11eb-96f5-0749ba42f184.html

Domestic goats and sheep will be forbidden in wilderness areas within the Santa Fe and Carson national forests because they can spread deadly diseases to bighorn sheep.



The U.S. Forest Service's order will run from Friday to Dec. 31, 2025, and includes banning domestic goats and sheep as pack animals.

It will cover the Pecos and Dome wilderness areas in the Santa Fe National Forest. In the Carson National Forest, the order will apply to the Latir Peaks and Columbine Hondo wilderness areas as well the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River Corridor.

These areas contain key habitat for the species or migration corridors.

Sheep and goats grazing illegally in wilderness areas is not a frequent problem and the order is intended to keep it that way, Forest Service spokeswoman Julie Anne Overton wrote in an email.

"Just need to get it on the books so that in case anyone violates the order, we have legal standing to cite them," Overton wrote.

Bighorn sheep were nearly eradicated from New Mexico in the 1960s.

Since then, collaborative efforts by federal agencies and the state Department of Game and Fish have reestablished bighorn sheep in their historic habitat.

Exposure to diseases carried by domestic animals can decimate a bighorn sheep.

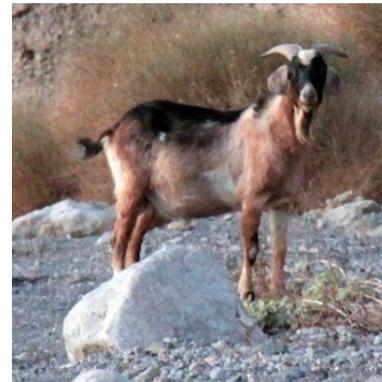
Federal, state and local law enforcement, firefighters, organized rescue teams or anyone else authorized by permit are exempt from the order.

Violating the prohibition is punishable by up to six months in jail and a maximum fine of \$5,000 for individuals and \$10,000 for organizations.

Goat appearance in Death Valley is a mystery, and a big concern

By [David Strege](#), April 15, 2021 12:01 pm

<https://ftw.usatoday.com/2021/04/goat-appearance-in-death-valley-is-a-mystery-and-a-big-concern>



Where did it come from? That is the mystery surrounding the appearance of a feral goat in Death Valley National Park, a place where it doesn't belong.

A tourist photographed the animal and notified rangers of its existence in a canyon near

Stovepipe Wells, park officials reported Wednesday on [Facebook](#).

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I have chosen not to publish the details on this one. If you would like to read the rest of this article, the URL above is hyperlinked to the source.

Securing the Herds

Eric Barker, Lewiston Tribune, Idaho, Fri, May 21, 2021
[URL to this Article](#)

May 21—ASOTIN — Bud Scott calls out the name of each of his 30 or so Boer goats as they get tested for a bacteria that causes pneumonia.

"That's Gumby; he's a bottle baby," he says. "That's Nutmeg. That's Wiggles."

Lauren Christensen, a large animal veterinarian, and wildlife biologist Paul Wik methodically swab the nostrils of each animal and then write its name on the sample.

It's all part of a relatively new and voluntary outreach program designed to educate the owners of domestic sheep and goats in the greater Hells Canyon area about the dangers the livestock can pose to wild bighorn sheep herds and steps that can be taken to mitigate the risk.

"Because most of our bighorn sheep herds in northern

Hells Canyon are free of the disease, as far as we can tell, and some of them are growing pretty well, we want to keep from going backwards,” said Wik, district biologist for Washington Fish and Wildlife at Clarkston.

The bighorn populations haven’t always been so healthy. In 1995 and 1996, pneumonia swept through the herds, killing hundreds of animals. In subsequent years, the die-offs were less dramatic, but the illness continued to be present and often picked off a large percentage of each year’s lamb crop.

The persistent illness kept the herds from recovering. But over the past four or five years, researchers and wildlife managers landed on a test-and-remove strategy that has paid off. Wild sheep were methodically captured and tested, and adult carriers of the illness were removed. Lamb survival soared and, as Wik said, the herds appear to be free from the illness.

“Right now the risk isn’t transmission between herds; the risk of getting new disease contact is from domestics on the landscape,” Wik said.

That is what wildlife officials believe happened in the mid-1990s. They think a domestic goat escaped from its pasture and made contact with the 10-Mile herd of bighorn sheep that at the time numbered about 300 animals. Wik said the herd eventually shrank into the 20s before it started to climb again.

Bighorn sheep and disease research and management are managed cooperatively by state wildlife agencies in Washington, Oregon and Idaho. Last year, the three agencies pooled their money and partnered with the Washington and Oregon chapters of the Wild Sheep Foundation to hire Christensen.

Her job is to work with willing livestock owners and potential livestock owners. Sometimes that means testing their herds to learn if *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae*, the bacteria that causes the illness, is present. Other times it might mean something as simple as talking about ways to keep their animals away from wandering wild sheep.

“We are nonregulatory. This is all free. It’s voluntary,” Christensen said. “It’s something we are working with each individual landowner to come up with the best solution for them.”

Scott was an early participant in the program. He and his wife, Mary, started their herd to control yellow starthistle on their 111 acres along the lower end of Asotin Creek. They expanded the herd to include more than 140 animals and contracted with other landowners.

“We used to do the weed and brush control,” he said.

The size of his herd caught the eye of wildlife officials who talked with him. Scott was sympathetic and wanted to learn more.

“I’m a hunter, and we’ve seen bighorn sheep right across the creek here,” he said.

His goats have been free of the disease for more than a year. Christensen said about 13.5 percent of the domestic sheep and goats tested since the program began have been positive, and about 30 percent of the herds have had at least one animal with the illness. The animals are almost always asymptomatic, she said.

When they test positive, it’s up to the owners to decide what, if anything, to do about it. Christensen said some choose to remove the positive animals; others don’t.

“Sometimes you have situations where they are pets, so we are talking about mitigating the risks as best we can,” she said.

Most of the testing thus far has involved goats, which have become a popular animal of late.

“Nobody really has pet sheep around here,” Christensen said. “Everyone saw goats on Instagram, and they all got goats.”

Wik said they are also interested in providing education to the general public and specifically to people who may be considering buying livestock. He said they can help them assess the risk of spreading disease to wild sheep based on where the animals will be kept.

“Not every area is a risk to bighorn sheep, but bighorn sheep make some really strange movements at times,” he said.

Christensen said moving animals is one way the bacteria can spread among domestic herds.

“We spend a lot of time talking about biosecurity, so trying to limit animal movement,” she said.

That can also involve testing animals before people acquire them.

Wik said about two to three bighorn sheep are removed from the Asotin Creek herd annually after they wander into town.

“If (bighorn) sheep get into what we consider a really high-risk area we will do our best to capture them, and then we can test them, keep them overnight in a horse trailer, get the results the next day and let them go back to the herd,” he said.

People interested in the program may contact Christensen at (509) 552-8117 or info@asotincd.org.

Barker may be contacted at ebarker@lmtribune.com or at (208) 848-2273. Follow him on Twitter @ezebarker.



Managing Worms in Goat Herds

By Dr. Ken McMillan, Contributing Columnist, 5/24/2021

<https://www.dtnpf.com/agriculture/web/ag/livestock/article/2021/05/24/managing-worms-goat-herds>



Parasites can be managed in goat herds, but there is no one, simple dewormer solution. (DTN/Progressive Farmer file photo by Karl Wolfshohl)

Question:

I live in Oklahoma, where I keep a few head of goats to help with weed control. I'm having problems with worms in these goats. I've used Cydectin, Ivomec and copper boluses, but it is an ongoing issue. What are your thoughts?

Answer:

The old saying goes that goats have two enemies: parasites and predators. My friend David Pugh, who wrote "Sheep and Goat Medicine," says he thinks the ones the predators get are the ones too parasitized to get away from them. He is joking, but it's a fact that parasites kill more goats than predators.

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If your veterinarian does not work with goats, find one who does. The American Association of Small Ruminant Practitioners may be a good resource for you. They can be reached at (419)-496-0696. I tell people that even if their goats are healthy, it's important to develop a relationship with a veterinarian before you need him or her.

With intestinal parasites of sheep and goats, we need a new mindset. We need to be talking about parasite management. That question, "What is the best dewormer?" is outdated.

The worm most likely causing your problem is *Haemonchus contortus* or the Barber Pole Worm. They are prolific blood suckers and egg shedders. On many farms across the country, these worms are resistant to every class of dewormer we have. That means we must get very creative with this idea of parasite management. We can no longer deworm our way out of the problem. We must manage. Some key management tools I encourage producers to utilize include:

1. Pasture Rotation. The more you rotate pastures, and the longer they can lay fallow, the more worm eggs die. Optimal rotation times vary by season, weather conditions and location. One study in Oklahoma showed benefits from a 60-day rotation.

2. Stocking Density. It's important to have adequate land for the number of animals on it. A good goal is to keep grass at least 3 inches tall, which is proven to keep

pastures healthier and more productive. Parasite larvae can only crawl 3 to 4 inches up a blade of wet grass. So, you don't want such a high stocking density that you force goats to graze below that level, as this exposes them to more parasites.

3. Species Rotation. Rotating pastures with other species like horses or cattle can help "clean" pastures, since the goat worm larvae they consume will die inside them.

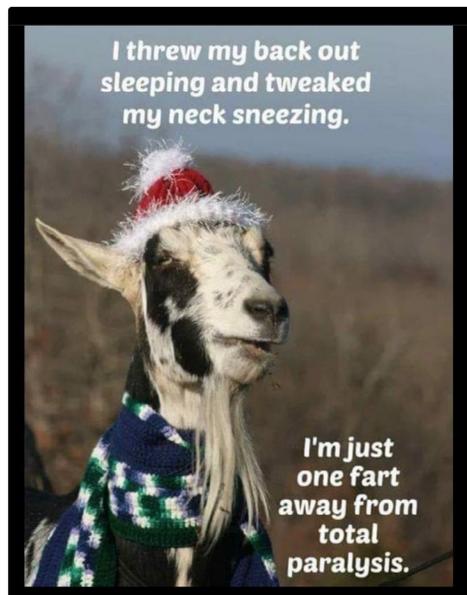
4. Optimize nutrition. A complete and balanced diet really helps goats resist parasites and diseases. Always include a high-quality complete goat mineral and recognize the need for energy and protein supplementation at times. Be cautious with excessive grains, however, as this can lead to other serious issues.

5. Pasture species. Plant tannin-producing plants in pastures including sericea lespedeza, birdsfoot trefoil, and chicory. These contain high levels of tannins, which have been shown to reduce parasite numbers in goats. In addition, many of the vines, scrubs and weeds goats eat are high in protein and tannins.

6. Selective deworming. If you have never heard of the FAMACHA method, it's time you did. The idea behind this program is to only deworm the most severely infected goats. This is designed to maintain susceptible genes in the worms, and to select for goats that are more naturally resistant to worms. Think of it this way: If every goat is dewormed, the only worms that survive are those that are resistant to the dewormer used. This makes these dewormers less effective over time. Also, by selecting not to breed those goats that repeatedly need deworming, you are building a herd with more of a natural ability to be resistant to those parasites.

For more information, go to the American Consortium for Small Ruminant Parasite Control's website at: www.wormx.info.

Old Goat Health Issues



Paradise Ranch

Pack Goats

COUNCIL GROVE, KANSAS

Paradise Ranch Research and Development will be offering a large assortment of Packgoat kids in 2021. We have been designing, breeding and training specifically bred Packgoats for well over 20 yrs, our genetics are HUGE. Now is the time to reserve your 2021 Packgoat kids. The reservation list is filling quickly! Don't let another year pass you by. We will sell out quickly!

We offer 8 full blood breeds, Alpines, Oberhasli, Saanen, Boer, Nubian, Toggenburg, Lamancha, Kiko and a number of hybrid lines like our 300lb Sabors.

We offer Saanens that will get near 300lbs, 41". Our ever-improving genetics are second to none, "The Best is Yet to Come!" We breed for Packgoat confirmation and temperament and the results speak for themselves. Have we hit the mark? Are our Packgoats any good? Don't take our word for it, ask the ones who have purchased them, Larry Robinson, Charlie Jennings, Caroline Eddy, Clay Zimmerman, Kent Daniels, Dave Suisse, Nancy and John Clough, Matt Lyons, Stephen Barnhill, Marc Warnke, Ryan Marler, Andy Hurst, Chris Gifford, Jarod Wright, Chuck Powell, Jysen Lancaster, Karrie Tingelstad, Kate and Bruce Logan, Pam and Debbie Anderson, Richard Bend, Robin Gamble, Sally Kagele, Sam Pacioretty, Sean Gabriel, Margaret Scott, Travis Browne, Rhonda Rousey, and many others.

Our specifically bred Packgoat kids will sell out in 2021, don't wait too long to order. They each come with all vaccinations, coccidia treatment, worming and a lifetime of support from us. All kids are hand raised, individually, with many hours of hands-on personal training by the time you receive them. "The Best is Yet to Come" phone: 785 466 6955 or email: paradise27@tctelco.net



Mudslide & Louis, Bridger-Teton NP, Wyoming



You could be the proud owner of good-looking boys like these

These pictures are from a past years crop of Dwite's goats



From the Training Pen

(The Best of Rex Summerfield)

Goat Body Language



In our early years of goat packing we often traveled many miles in search of large-bodied goats to buy. Some were bought to pack with and some simply to add to our breeding program. The side benefit of all this travel was that we had the pleasure of meeting goat people from all over. I'd have to say that most goat owners are very caring and friendly people. It was common for owners to talk to their goats like they were another person but only a few owners actually thought the goat talked back. Being able to have a conversation with your goat would be hugely beneficial in the training department but unfortunately that talent seems to rest with only a very select group. We'll leave it at that... For the rest of us less fortunate owners, that leaves us to try and utilize other means to communicate with our furry friends. While it can be verbal, in the form of moans, baas or bawls, most communication with your goat is going to be non-verbal.

Body language is such a subtle thing that it is hard to describe all the nuances. Observations made over time are the best teacher. Just watching the goats interact will teach you volumes about goat behavior. For a new goat owner, a body language dictionary would be nice. A photo and written description of what the goat was saying, what a great idea! Unfortunately one doesn't exist at the moment, so in this issue we'll take a few minutes and go over the basics. Hopefully, when we are done you'll have a better grasp of what your goat was trying to tell this morning when you out in the barn feeding it.

Teeth grinding: Usually a sign of pain. Often accompanied by licking or biting in the area where the goat hurts.

Goat walks or stands with its hindquarters hunched: Usually a sign of pain. Can be anything from a stomachache to a saddle sore.

Moves away from you: It is either afraid of you or showing you respect as the dominant member of the herd. It is not hard to tell which. If the goat runs

away obviously fearful, then you will need to take it slow and easy. If the goat is friendly but moves out of your way when working around it, that is normal goat behavior and nothing to worry about.

Sniffs you with an extended neck: Curious about you but doesn't fully trust you. By standing as far away as possible and stretching out its neck it gains some reaction time to flee if things go bad.

Sniffs you standing close: The goat trusts you and is curious about where you have been.

Leaning on you: Trusts you totally and wants affection. May also be done by small goats for protection from more dominant goats in the pen. I think they enjoy the feeling of closeness and protection. I always take it as a sign of trusting acceptance when a goat chooses to lean on me or lay next to me. You should never allow a bigger goat to force the goat away from you. Make them all wait their turn.

Tail wagging: Generally caused by excitement or more aptly, something stimulating the goat. It can be warm milk to a kid, rough-housing with the other goats or a mature doe coming into heat. It can also be pain induced.

Rubbing its head on you: Generally this is a sign of comfortable familiarity. The goat wants you to pet and scratch it. It can also signs of a dominance issue. Generally if the goat is rubbing its neck and face it is friendly. If it gets very insistent, almost trying to force you to pet it or it is using the top of its head and pushing forcefully, then it is most likely dominance related.

Running and bucking: This is exuberant play. Often includes head butting and posturing. (see below)

Posturing: This is a tip of the head and sideways stance. The goat will look like it is standing on its tiptoes to make itself look as big as possible. It may also have its tail erect and its dorsal hair standing up: This can either be a protective posture or a dominance posture. A protective posture is

taken when the goat feels threatened. Posturing from dominance is the first step down the nasty road of aggression. Not a big deal if it is done to other goats, but corrective action needs to be taken if it is done to people. If you are in doubt about which message the goat is trying to tell you, try this simple test; walk up to the goat when it is eating and gently push it away from the feeder. Does it simply try to keep eating or maybe moves away allowing you to claim the feeder (sees you as dominant) or does it tip its head to warn you out of its space (sees you as subordinate). The first is good, the second is bad.

Rearing up and stomping down: This is a threat posture. This goat is either very afraid and trying to warn away the thing it is afraid of, or it is challenging for dominance. It is usually accompanied by the posturing described above. Use the same steps to determine which.

Head butting and/or horning: Can be done out of fear, such as during a dog attack, or as a show of aggression. For young goats it can be both play and a way to measure itself against others in the herd for social standing. Humans should never play head butting games unless they want to have a full-grown goat head butting them a few years down the road. Horning on the other hand is almost entirely a dominance issue. Subordinate goats never horn a dominant goat. If you are getting poked by your goat's horns after they are one year old you can bet it is on purpose. Kids under one year old may not realize they have pokey things on their head yet but they should still be corrected them if they poked you with them.

Biting: Usually seen in herds with a matriarchal herd structure. Grandma teaches it to mamma who teaches it to the kids. It is just like your grandma grabbing you by the ear and dragging you away from the cake you just stuck your finger in. If it is being done to a human it is a sign of disrespect and the goat is telling you it does not recognize you as an authority figure.

Rigid stance, staring with ears erect: This is usually a sign that the goat sees something and is trying to determine whether it is cause for concern. It will usually stand quite still, with both eyes and ears pointed toward the object.

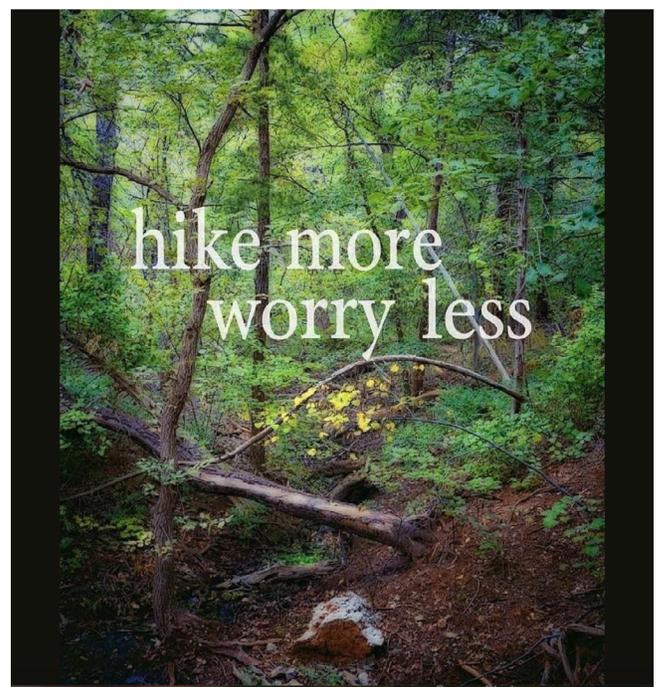
Goat warning call: This one is both verbal and

non-verbal and usually follows the rigid stance listed above. A goats alarm call sounds like a snort/sneeze. The goat is letting everyone know that it sees something it thinks is a threat. If the threat is distant you can follow the goats gaze to help determine what it is. If the threat is imminent the alarm snort/sneeze will be given on the run.

Buck behavior: Bucks exhibit a whole new chapter of body language. If you own, or plan to own a buck, keep in mind that he will exhibit the same body language listed above plus some not so pleasant ones. These include peeing on its face, beard and front legs, lip curling, foot stomping and oral masturbation. None of which make you want to jump in and scratch Ol' Bucky behind the ears. As a result, many bucks are penned separately and not handled much making them even more likely to exhibit the dominance issues listed above.

There are literally dozens of small gestures, actions and movements goats use to speak to each other. Understanding them is the first step toward successful training. Take the basics covered in this article and couple it with watchful observation and you will soon be hearing your goats loud and clear.

Happy Trails! Rex Summerfield



Seems like there outta be at least one hiking story, so since I am not generating any right now, and I haven't received one from anyone else, I dug into the archives here.

A Year of Hiking 'Busts'

Where I live in Idaho, I only have little more than 2-1/2 months of summer to hike in. So it is obligatory that one go like mad to jam as much as possible into these couple of months or so of hopefully good summer weather. And I definitely did, getting in 130 miles or so. But that is far from the whole story. This was a summer of 'busts', hikingly speaking, and a poignant reminder that, as I tell my hiking partner, the 'hiking plan' is only gets you to the trailhead (TH). By the time I exit the woods, I usually have gone from the original plan, to revision 'Z'. *So trudge on with me through this summer... if you dare!*

=====

The first venture was into the Mable Lakes area ([44.45583, -115.15194](#)), which is basically at the west end of the Stanley Basin in Idaho. The only reason this hike even was necessary this year, was due to last year's plan 'busting' and the inability to finish the hike I had originally programmed. So this year is not the first time things have not gone according to my carefully planned script.

My usual plan is to target a specific area, and try to 'bag' all of the lakes in that area. So this year this year, I planned to explore Mable Lakes, proceed over the ridge to the north, collect a couple of lakes there, then continue down the drainage to Fall Creek, explore the lakes in that area, lake 7805 ([44.477843, -115.192149](#)) & Iris Lake ([44.517143, -115.202658](#)), then back up Fall Creek to Finger/Moon lakes, then over the ridge to the south, and out to the TH. Sounds like an orderly little package, eh?

Well, up to the point of getting to the jump-off place for Iris/7805, it was orderly. After that? Not so. If you looked at the map you know that it is a 2000' very steep ascent to Iris. What the map doesn't show is the almost impenetrable jungle on the way up. Hiking partner is a 75yo lady, and not up to this kind of challenge, so we didn't make it very far into this area.



So I cut my losses and abandoned Iris/7805 to another time, and moved on



to Finger Lakes ([44.494546, -115.157164](#)). They were quite interesting, especially since there was an Otter family at Little Finger Lake, and they were, as always, definitely ready to put on an impromptu Otter show for us.

From there it was on to 'Moon' lake and a surprise for sure. And that was, that Moon lake was exceptionally beautiful, with a deep turquoise color, and as well, one of a very few lakes that drain out through its banks, or bottom, and ends up with a lot of shoreline looking not unlike many of the irrigation reservoirs here in Idaho. To cap this experience, the fish in this lake were exceptionally large and swimming near the shore where they were eminently visible. My kingdom for a fishing pole! Moon Lake was the last for this trip, so it was on up the ridge and out.

Our second jaunt was a completion of the Little Queens River/Queens River Loop on the western edge of the Sawtooth National Recreation Area (roughly [43.89889, -115.14194](#)). This is one that I have wanted to do for some time, but since it promised to be kind of a long jaunt, it had to have a fairly big time slot



to accommodate it. So I gave it the first couple of weeks in August this year. Why August? Because in Idaho August can always be counted on to be severe clear and

sunny. Right? Welcome to lightning central. On this trip, which eventually got cut short due to the horrid weather, I was exposed to more lightning than I have been since I have been in Boise. One morning, about 7 days in, after being subjected to 3 completely different waves of extreme lightning/thunder in the same night, I consulted an Oracle (tongue firmly in cheek here). Oracle said, "Larry, get out of Dodge." So I did. Sadly, between navigational errors (mine), and just plain crappy weather, we missed a lot of the lakes I had wanted to 'bag'. So this one goes back in the bucket for another grab.

My third venture was sort of an impromptu event, and I decided to sally forth back into the Falls Creek area for another attempt to gain Iris Lake ([44.517143, -115.202658](#)). A side benefit would be that I would be able to retrieve my goat's highline, which I inadvertently left the trip before. Unfortunately, things began to disintegrate rather rapidly. Just before I was to leave, a lightning-caused fire closed the TH I had planned on using. So I had to default to another TH that only added a little extra mileage to this venture. The good news was that it passed by my favorite hot spring. The bad news was that it involved 3 river crossings.

In spite of the fact that I don't have any trouble with my guys regarding water crossings, I personally *DON'T* like deep



& strong river navigations. This could possibly be due in part of my almost 70yo age level. One tends to get a lot more conservative with time.

However, cross the rivers we did, and on down the middle fork of the Salmon River we went. This was sufficiently interesting to make the trip worthwhile (If you look at the pictures on my website, referenced at the end of this epistle, you will see what I mean).

Once at the Fall Creek jumping off point for Iris Lake, on up we went. All went well until just about at the top of this drainage, where believe it or not, the goats bailed on me. In all fairness, I have to tell you that they were carrying saddles and packs, and where I had muscled my way up to achieve the point I found myself, was perilously close to mountain climbing. It just might be said that the goats had more sense than I. Two factors combined to make me bail again. One; I was very tired and the thought of going down to where the goats were and trying to find another way



up was more than I could stomach, and two; the previously mentioned fire was pluming enthusiastically one ridge behind me, and the prudent course of action

seemed to be, 'get out of dodge... *again!*'

So, back up the river, splash into the hot spring again, and on out. Trips this year seem to be star-crossed.

Our fourth and last attempt for 2010 was to venture over to the highly-touted Strawberry Wilderness in Oregon, and visit the 8 or so lakes in that area. One of the reasons for choosing this location was that the weather everywhere else was less than optimal, and this area was supposed to be good for 3-4 days. Time would show that to be patently false.

However, away we went. First day we traveled the 180 or so road miles, then hiked into and made camp at Slide Lake ([44.28944-118.66167](#)). Weather was great. So far, so good.

Next day dawned out a little murky, but we set out to explore High Lake ([44.283656, -118.683247](#)), Mud Lake ([44.275783, -118.659871](#)) and others. Weather was very mixed, a lot of threat, but fortunately no action other than a chilly wind. So we pretty much were able to wrap that part of this area up. That night? A hurricane. Wind blew, the tent flapped, the rain sounded like hail, and my tent leaked for the first time in the 6 or so years I have had it. Bummer.



Next morning we were fortunately to have a weather respite, and so

had breakfast and prepared to hit the trail. Naturally, just as soon as we had the tarp irretrievably down, the rain started in earnest. *Murphy lives!* So down the trail we went, with the goats bumping my rear attempting to say, "Let's get going to where it isn't doing this!" After about a mile of the five we had to go, they settled down and resigned themselves to being sopping water-babies. ;-)

We did take a short side jaunt to Strawberry Lake ([44.30695, -118.68574](#)), which originally had been on the must-visit agenda, but there was so much fog and low cloud that it could barely be seen. Since we were pretty well completely wet, it was time to bag this one as well.

The lasting impression from this area, is that my contention is still secure, that there is little can

compare with the Sawtooth and White Cloud mountains in Idaho. These lakes were either algae-filled or muddy or both, and certainly not up to the pristine standards I have come to expect in my Idaho hiking.

In the final analysis, we got in lots of hiking, and that was good. We also proved the adage that 'life is what happens when you are making other plans!' But all hiking is good hiking, and my sights are already firmly set on 2011. T'will be along wait indeed.

Larry Robinson <http://www.boiselarry.com/>



It just doesn't get much better than this, 103 degrees and very lonely, my favorite type of location.

Snowdon walker finds goat casually sheltering from the storm in women's toilet

BY Jaymelouise Hudspith Reporter, 30 Mar 2021

<https://www.dailypost.co.uk/news/north-wales-news/snowdon-walker-finds-goat-casually-20289191>

The goat moved into the toilets and did not budge for several hours

A mountain goat left a storm battered and rain soaked Snowdon to take shelter in a women's public toilet.



Terry Philips spotted the creature while leaving the men's public toilets near Pen-Y-Pass in **Snowdonia**.

Mr Phillips did not manage to make it to the loo after the **weather** deteriorated but when he returned to the Pen-y-Pass car park the goat still hadn't budged from its hiding spot.



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In my frequent forays into the files that make up the GT Archives, I have come to the conclusion that the only reason that everyone doesn't have a copy of this information is that they just don't realize how completely entertaining lots of this stuff is. There have been some great writers for GT over the years!

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When I decided to print this article from GT 1996, I had no idea that John 'M', the writer, was so prolific. It turned out to simply be too long for one edition of GT. Therefore the first half of this article was published in the Spring edition, and the subsequent half is here. What I can say about this incredible writeup, is if you don't learn something from it, better go back and read it again... slower this time.

Urinary Calculi, an Exhaustive Analysis

By John Mionczynski

Part 2

So what's this got to do with urolithiasis? Bladder stones that slowly build up to a critical threshold (that is to a life-threatening size that will block the urinary tract), will in herd terms, increase predation by infirm behavior or simply increase the death rate directly and reduce the population. The fact that this happens at all means the habitat is somehow out of balance, whether it occurs in the steppes of Central Asia, the Great Basin of North America, or in your back yard.

It has become abundantly clear to me that these programmed balancing tricks that have been working for tens of thousands of years are not accidental freak events, nor do they indicate that goats are delicate, overly sensitive animals that must be maintained on a very strict dietary intake. If this were so, the Moroccan goatherds would never get away with feeding their goat bands a mono diet of dried sardines for weeks on end during long desert migrations. No, these population and health controls are specific. They are designed by programs outside the DNA of the goat as a species, and reflect a much more complex order that governs the health of the entire ecosystem as a unit.

In addition, ecosystems are not static. The patterns of energy sharing are in constant flux... flowing like a river. Each year the seasonal prerequisites to energy flow repeat their limiting agents in terms of plant, animal, terrain and climate factors to keep the ecosystem flowing in good health.

Many of the "limiting" factors we call plant toxins that can be responsible for urinary calculi are indicators of imbalanced density or seasonal occurrence of specific plants, if we were analyzing a native habitat. Alfalfa, for instance, is a very good goat feed, perhaps because it is a wild plant along seeps and streamsides of Central Asia where wild goats originated. Alfalfa is not native anywhere else and would never occur in large fields of nothing but alfalfa. In the wild, its occurrence is spotty and occasional, often out competed by other more dominant species.

Furthermore, it is a spring and early summer plant in the wild, disappearing by late summer. It is high in protein and calcium which goats put to good use during their spring and early summer high growth phase. Goats crave its taste and smell above other plants because it is not overly abundant and must be sought out in their wild environment. The genetically programmed craving for this flavor and smell reflects the fact that it is not abundant in their native habitat (e.g. it must be sought out). A mono diet of alfalfa is not healthy for wild goats on a year round basis. Humans crave sugar for similar reasons. It is a great source of energy and brain food for an animal that has a large brain and uses it for survival; but sugar is rare in natural human habitats. Over use of sugar (through cultivation) decreases longevity through early tooth loss as well as other physiological imbalances related to blood sugar levels.

After alfalfa matures and withers, large annual grasses which produce high phosphorus containing seeds (grains) begin to mature. At this time, goats begin selecting for high fiber woody shrubs and will crave the sparse occurrences of high phosphorus grass seeds. Prior to this, phosphorus is only available in small amounts in small perennial bunch grasses with tiny seeds and a variety of forbs, mostly in the carrot family. Wild goats would tend to take on calcium in high levels at a different time than they would take on high levels of phosphorus.

Since one of the primary types of urinary calculi is based on high levels of both calcium and phosphorus in the diet at the same time (calcium phosphate) it makes sense to mimic the native environment of goats and feed high calcium alfalfa and high phosphate grains at separate periods of time. Both calcium and phosphorus can be stored in the goats body for future use, and with a varied diet, both will be available in small maintenance levels anyway. Since high levels of both calcium and phosphorus are fed to dairy does at the same time and are immediately converted in the nutritious milk we all love, you can see why feeding a dairy goat diet to a wether or buck can be a death sentence. The unnecessary and unused calcium and phosphorus concentrate in the wether's urine and become a super saturated solution precipitating out as calcium-phosphate crystals. Under wild conditions, high phosphate would be eaten during times of low available calcium and high rough age from woody shrubs and mature semi-woody forbs. But under dairy goat conditions, low roughage

concentrates including high protein feed such as alfalfa mixes, would add protein by-products as well as unnecessary and unused protein and starch to the wether diet. This could contribute mucoproteins to the already supersaturated urine which tends to coat and solidify the crystals into less soluble calculi. This makes treatment and recovery more difficult. This fact would eliminate wild goats from occupying lowland wet savanna habitats in mid to late summer by causing physiological stress and population decline. Grain is seldom if ever necessary in your wether's diet.

Another common type of urinary calculus is magnesium ammonium phosphate. This requires an abundance of magnesium in the diet at the same time phosphate is high in the diet... mid to late summer. The green parts of plants, especially herbaceous forbs, are full of available magnesium (the ammonium fraction of the crystal is derived from normally present components of urea from protein digestion) at the same time as high phosphate grains (highly craved by goats any time of the year because of their scarcity in wild goat habitat), are also available. Not surprisingly, goats in the wild veer away from green forbs at this time of year in preference of woody shrubs primarily in the aster and rose family, shrubs notoriously high in roughage and low in magnesium. Irrigated or damp climate domestic goat pastures rarely have enough woody species of plants to divert the animal's attention from the high magnesium grasses and forbs that look so green and lush and tasty to our bovine oriented agricultural mentality.

Goats are dry climate animals and should only use low roughage-high magnesium plants in spring and early summer.

In my years in wildlife research I traveled in the company of several wildlife veterinarians and heard the same story many times: From time to time, wild ruminants starve to death, but they almost always die with a full rumen. Ruminants will continue to eat even if what they need is not there. Studying the rumen for necropsy is a qualitative not a quantitative analysis.

Many wild plants concentrate chemicals as they mature for the sole purpose of developing a disagreeable taste or texture. The older the plant gets, the more disagreeable it becomes to herbivores. Goats are apparently immune to many of these chemicals. However, calculi in goats is associated with at least two types: silicates from some grasses, graminoids and plants in the Equisetaceae family (horsetail or

jointfin) and oxalic acid in plants in the wild buckwheat family (sheep sorrel, sour dock, cutly dock, rhubarb, etc.) and a few others.

If wethers are forced to eat mature grasses, sedges and jointfins in pastures or hay in the late summer, fall and winter without some roughage from woody plants they would normally prefer, they may develop silicate stones, especially during times of stress when water intake is low. This could occur on grass pastures, grassy wetland pastures, or in pens where they are fed oat hay or other grass hays as a mono diet, especially in arid climates. In the wild, goats would not be eating grasses, sedges or jointfins at this time of year, except possibly as a supplement to high roughage feeds.

High oxalate pastures, especially those containing plants in the buckwheat family (polygonaceae) can result in the formation of crystals of calcium ammonium magnesium carbonate when alfalfa or clover is present in the diet. In the wild, goats will avoid high oxalate producing plants in late summer and fall because of the bitter sour taste they have at that time of year, but I've seen them eat these species when more desirable woody plants like willows were not available.

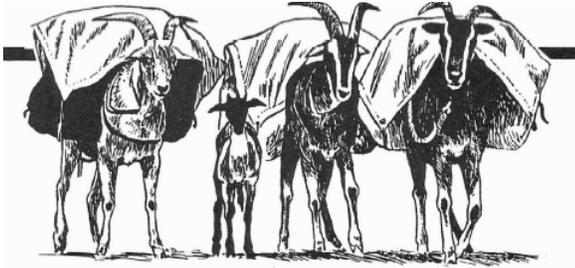
It's important to remember that when these "poisoning" conditions exist; the goats physiology can combat stone formation with extra minerals in the diet, so a free choice mineral block is a good idea all the time. Wild goats have mineral rich limestone rocks to lick. Plenty of available water (warmed in the cold months) will also help dilute urine saturation and delay stone formation, especially in very hot or very cold weather, but the key to healthy wethers is prevention. Prevention of urolithiasis in wethers can be summed up in three words: Roughage, roughage and roughage.

One other way to mimic nature in working wethers is to castrate after six weeks of age rather than earlier to allow for greater development of the urethra and penis. Two months old is even better if you can manage it, as the urethral diameter will be closer to mature size by then, allowing stones to pass more easily should they develop. Castrating too early can create a disaster from a minor stone problem later in life.

In 24 years I have had hundreds of wethers of all ages and only three cases of urinary calculi. Two were wethers that were cut early (2 weeks) and one was a five-year-old buck that tipped over a grain barrel and ate about 20 lbs. of C.O.B. (com, oats and barley) at one sitting. Only one of the wethers required surgery and recovered fully. The

others recovered on their own, and I've learned to store my grain barrel in a goat-proof shed.

Well, I hope this tome has shed some light on how goats are programmed for their environment, and how your goat habitat can be improved at home. Remember, tree trimmers, Christmas tree salesmen (on December 25th) and your neighbors probably throw out tons of good goat habitat. With a little study you can learn which trees and shrubs may be toxic in your area. Your county extension agent or local college will probably be able to help you there.



It's May and the goats have begun to fight

FORREST HARTLEY, May 9, 2021

https://poststar.com/opinion/columnists/columnists-its-may-and-the-goats-have-begun-to-fight/article_9f56c3a6-f906-5248-8a96-2af236283da3.html

Well, this is Thursday of last week, six days into May.

All the songbirds have arrived and are filling the air with morning and evening birdsong.

The maples have begun to leaf, and the goats have begun to fight.

That's right. Our longtime does, Bunny and Star, are having at it. Though Bunny will probably win out and remain as head of the tribe, Star is not giving up yet.

I couldn't stand it for a couple of days, so I pegged Bunny on the front porch for two nights.

Does will sometimes try to improve their status within the group, either right before or after kidding.

Star had a baby a few days ago. It was doing the right things, looking for its mother and making noises.

And, the cousin goats were doing the right thing and visiting.

I was in and out, watching the progress. All seemed according to plan.

Star was also doing the right thing, cleaning the baby and being attentive, but the baby died in the first day.

We gave Star a few days to recover after her ordeal.

When she went back into the paddock, she and Bunny decided to fight for head of the tribe. Another longtime

goat, Luna, decided she would be Bunny's helper.

Does will help in a conflict either to sustain their place in the hierarchy, back up a buddy, or to slightly improve their own status.

I know this is the way of goats. But this was the most violent fight we have ever had.

About two years ago when Gilly Goat gave up her head spot to Bunny, it simply seemed agreed upon.

There may have been the typical jousting and testing and playing, but that goes on all the time within a tribe of goats.

Gilly has been here most of her life. She is the oldest. Star is her daughter.

During the fighting Gilly would try to stand between the belligerents, but they were determined.

Bunny, who has always been a very sweet animal, seemed indignant with Star for the challenge, and has shown her fury.

When I went into the yard a few times, to kind of curb things, they did not try to challenge me or try to fight while I had them by their collars, and they acted as their normal sweet selves.

These are goats that are milked every day, jumping on to the milking stanchion and seemingly enjoying themselves.

What a change. What a horrible riot.

I know that grazing animals sort themselves out with this kind of dominance behavior. It is my least favorite part about the whole business.

People also display dominance behavior. I know this now. But in my early life, I had no idea what it all meant, and largely stayed out of it. It was in the hallowed halls of academia, in business and in politics when I learned how vicious and backstabbing humans could be to one another within their own groups in their quests to dominate.

With goats, after the does settle on a winner and establish their pecking order, all returns to normal, often for years.

I hope I can stand the process.

Forrest Hartley lives in Hadley, N.Y. You can leave a message at new_americanogothic@yahoo.com





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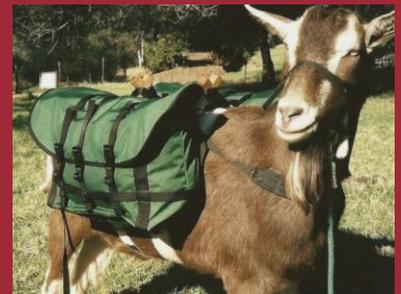
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PACKGOAT CLASS, and OBSTACLE GUIDELINES

Taffy Mercer and Nan Hassey have been collaborating on a NAPgA packgoat project guide for youth programs. They are currently working out skill requirements for each completed year, as well as obstacle recommendations and ideas for project leaders.



What is a packgoat?

A packgoat is a goat used to carry your items when you are hiking. They wear saddles and panniers built specifically

for goats. Packgoats are very loyal and want to be with you wherever you go.

How much can a goat carry?

A mature goat can easily carry 25% of its body weight. A large, fully grown (4 years or older), *fully-conditioned* wether can carry up to 60 pounds of gear. That's a lot of gear! But if you need more gear, add another goat.

What do you look for in a packgoat?

A packgoat needs characteristics such as strong feet and legs, strong back, wide and deep chest, long strides and most of all a friendly "can do" attitude.

What is the cost of a packgoat?

The largest expense is not the purchase price of the goat. It is in caring properly for the goat after you get it, maintaining housing and fences, and purchasing the right equipment.

What do I need to consider if I decide to purchase a goat?

You need at least 2 goats. Goats are herd animals and should not be kept alone. Goats also need quality year-round pasture and/or hay and they must have a dry, draft-free shelter. Goats handle cold well but not being wet. You must provide adequate protection from predators, including domestic dogs. Goats need regular attention, training, and exercise if they are to be good partners on the trail. You need access to a good vet and a way to haul your goat.

Land: Minimum 1000 sq. ft. for 2 goats.



Fencing: 5 ft. high field/horse fence. NO barbed wire. Strands of electric wire inside and outside of fence at base and top will help deter predators and keep goats from rubbing or climbing on fence.

Shelter: Covered on at least 3 sides. Dry and draft-free.

Food: Horse quality grass or grass/alfalfa hay. Loose minerals made for goats.

Water: Fresh daily. Use a heated bucket or tank heater in the cold months.

Health Care: Yearly check-ups, deworming, annual vaccinations, regular hoof trims.

Why goats and not llamas or horses or mules?

Goats are less expensive to purchase and to keep and require less space than other types of pack stock. Goats are easier to transport and can negotiate rougher terrain. Generally, goats can be handled by people of all ages. Goats are friendly and easy to train.

Using a doe goat as packer

Nearly all packgoats are wethers (castrated males) because they are significantly larger and stronger than females and are not influenced by hormones. However, packing is a good job for a strong doe that is not pregnant or producing milk.

A lactating (in milk) doe can be used for packing if she is in good shape. Fresh milk on the trail is a tasty treat! If you hike with a doe in milk, make sure her udder is high and tight enough to

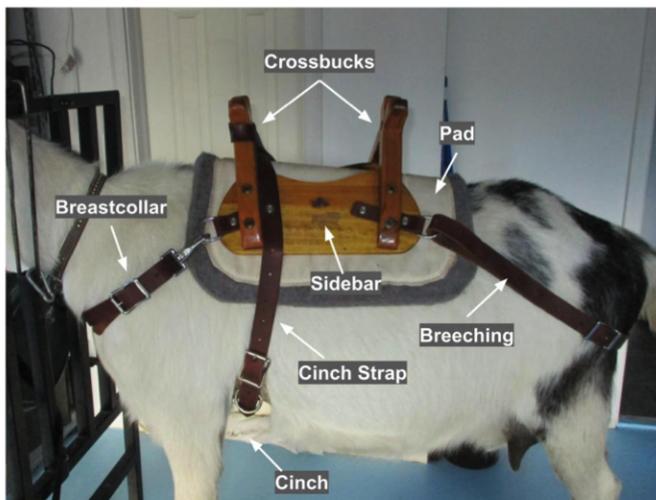


keep it from being injured by brush and logs. Milking her completely out in the morning before heading out on the trail is a good idea.

Do not take a doe on the trail when she is in

heat. A doe in heat can be very vocal and may attract wildlife and predators. She may also be disruptive to your wethers and to your sleep!

Saddle: Most saddles consist of two sidebars held together by two crossbucks. The straps can be made of nylon or soft leather. The rump strap (breeching) should be adjustable and should fit comfortably around the rump. The breast collar should also be adjustable and should preferably have a clip for easy placement and removal. The cinch consists of the cinch straps (also called billets or latigos) and the cinch. Many saddles are double rigged with front and rear cinches. A good saddle supports the load evenly along the goat's back on top of the ribcage, with a channel down the center that provides clearance for the goat's spine. The load should never rest on the shoulder blades, hips, or spine!



Panniers

Panniers are bags made of a durable material such as canvas or nylon that go over the saddle. The panniers are attached to the saddle with straps to help keep them from flying up or off when jumping or swimming. Panniers come in many sizes and are used to carry your gear.

Panniers must be weighed after loading to assure they weigh the same on each side. Panniers with unequal weights will pull your saddle to one side, and they will cause your goat to tire more quickly and become sore from unequal pressure.



Day Packs

Day packs are small, lightweight packs without a rigid tree. Day packs made for dogs can be modified to fit a small goat provided



they do not put pressure on the spine or restrict the shoulders. Day packs should not be cinched tightly because they do not have a rigid tree to protect the spine. Therefore, it is extra important to make sure the panniers are balanced correctly. *These packs are not made to carry a lot of weight.* They make wonderful, inexpensive training packs for starting young goats and carrying small amounts of gear on short hikes, but they are not a substitute for proper saddles and should never be used for heavy loads or long, difficult hikes.

Commands

The words you use to tell your goat what to do are their commands. Use the same word each time and provide positive feedback when the goat responds so he clearly understands what

you are asking him to do. The following are a few examples that you can use for commands. Other words may be substituted provided they are used consistently.

“Whoa” is probably the most important command you can teach your goat. When you say, “Whoa” your goat should stop all four feet and stand in place. It can be used to make him stop if he moves in front of you on the trail and you want to catch him and move him to the back, or it can be used to tell him to stand still for saddling or hoof trimming. It is never a command to simply slow down. When you say, “Whoa,” make your goat stop moving completely before rewarding him. If you reward your goat every time he stops he will learn this command quickly.

“Walk” and “Trot” may be used to teach your goat to go beside you on a leash at these speeds. If a goat stops in front of you on the trail, “Walk” is a very useful command! You can also use it to reinforce a command to cross a “scary” object such as water. Walk and trot commands are essential for anyone interested in training a harness goat.

“Back” tells your goat to back up. This is useful for making him step backwards out of your space, or for making him back out of a tight spot on a trail.

“Up” or “Jump” tells your goat to jump onto or over obstacles, such as jumping into a truck bed or over a log.

“Load up” is often used for telling a goat to get into a truck or trailer.

“Give” or “Foot” are for telling your goat to pick up his feet.

Goats can also be taught trick commands such as “Shake hands,” “Spin,” or “Dance”.



Obstacles

Training your goat to complete obstacle courses is fun and it helps him learn trust and

obedience. Utility goat projects will require students to complete an obstacle course at the end of the year. Obstacles may vary in their construction but should consist of skills that a packgoat would be expected to perform on the trail.

Obstacle examples:

Jump over a log

Jump onto a platform

Walk over a tarp

Walk through water

Cross a bridge

Cross a teeter totter

Back up

Weave between cones on a loose lead

Walk through a distraction



The Goats Have Returned To Goat Island In Murrells Inlet

April 16, 2021, [Tori Adams](#)

<https://www.wfxb.com/2021/04/16/the-goats-have-returned-to-goat-island-in-murrells-inlet/>

The goats have returned to Goat Island in Murrells Inlet. Yesterday, a small crowd gathered to be a part of the annual release. The goats were loaded onto a pontoon boat and rode from the Murrells Inlet Marshwalk to the island where they'll spend their Summer and Fall maintaining the grass until November. The shelter on the island was also refurbished for the animals.



Goat milk: The beauty ingredient that works wonders on skin

Written by Meera Venugopal. Last updated on, Mar 29, 2021
<https://www.newsbytesapp.com/news/lifestyle/incredible-benefits-of-applying-goat-milk-on-skin/story>

Goat milk is dubbed as a natural skin care ingredient that is suitable for all skin types and especially for sensitive types.

What makes this milk effective is the fact that it has the same pH level as human skin and thus, it doesn't disturb the skin's protective barrier.

It has:

Has excellent exfoliating and moisturizing properties on the skin

Goat milk is rich in lactic acid, an alpha-hydroxy acid that has hydrating and exfoliating properties.

Lactic acid works wonders on the skin by gently removing the dead skin cells. This clears the skin and you get a healthy glow in the end.

Goat milk is also a natural humectant, which means that it can retain moisture in the skin.

Works well for those with skin issues like eczema, psoriasis

Goat milk is an effective remedy for those who have skin issues like eczema and psoriasis. Its anti-inflammatory properties are responsible for fighting such skin problems.

This wonder ingredient has been in use for treating such dry skin problems since many years.

Also, experts say that this milk boosts the skin's moisture level and repairs and maintains the function of the skin barrier.

Doesn't strip skin of its natural oils, prevents acne

The lactic acid present in goat milk may also help prevent acne. This is because it helps in unclogging and keeping pores clear of dirt, excess sebum, and bacteria, which are the root causes of acne.

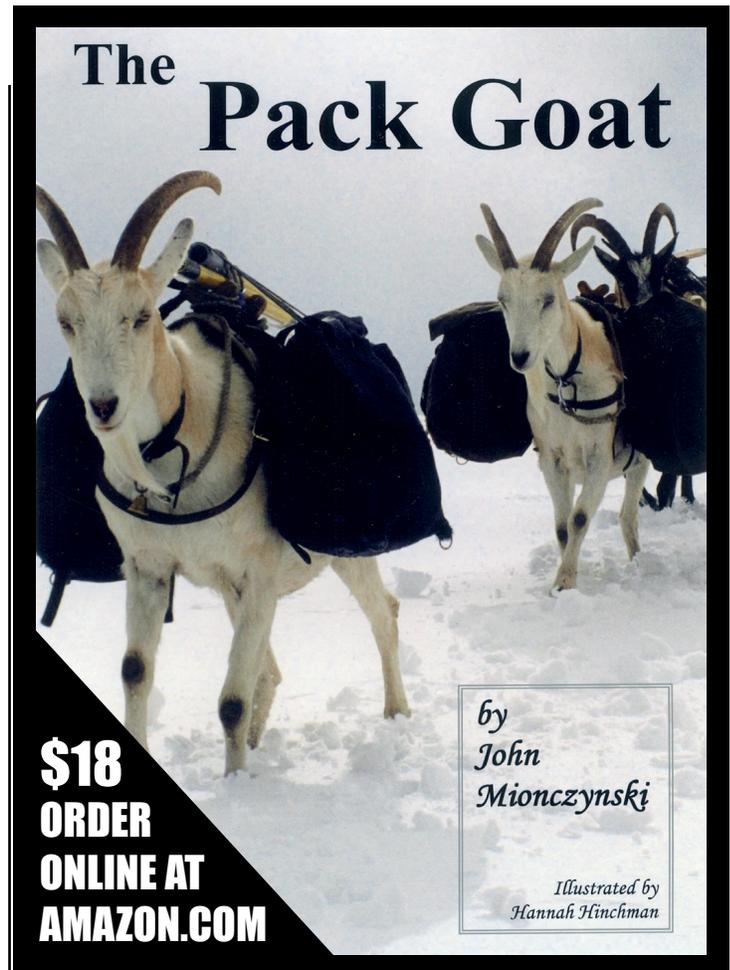
What makes goat milk a go-to option over other acne-preventing products is the fact that while unclogging the pores, it doesn't strip the skin of its natural oils.

Has anti-aging properties and prevents premature aging

Goat milk is rich in powerful antioxidants, such as vitamin A, vitamin C, and vitamin E.

These play a vital role in preventing the oxidative damages caused by free radicals in our body, which contribute to the appearance of wrinkles and fine lines.

Goat milk removes dead cells and reveals new cell layers underneath, thus, reducing wrinkles, fine lines, the appearance of sunspots, etc.



The Pack Goat

by
John Mionczynski

Illustrated by
Hannah Finchman

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Nothing to do with goats, but I thought it interesting

Have you ever thought what a strange material water actually is? A water molecule comprises of three atoms – two hydrogen and one oxygen. Oxygen is an element in Group VI of the Periodic Table; Group VI also contains the elements sulfur, selenium, and tellurium, in increasing order of size (oxygen is the smallest. Hydrogen can also form compounds with these elements: H_2S , H_2Se , H_2Te . These have the boiling points -60.7 , -41.5 , and -2.2 deg Celsius. Therefore, all these compounds are gases at room temperature. If we were following the size of the Group VI atom only, then water should have a boiling point considerably lower than that of H_2S . But it doesn't. In fact, the boiling point of water is higher than all those other compounds, at 100 deg C (or 212 deg F).

This, of course, is not the only anomalous property of water. The solid form of water – ice – floats on liquid water. So what, you might say. Well, the solid form of every other liquid, always sinks in its own liquid. If you have ever allowed molten candle wax to cool down, for example, you will notice it freezes from the bottom up. Nearly all liquids behave that way – except water! In short, the most common liquid in the world – the one that we require most for life – behaves like no other liquid. It is almost as if it were specially designed!

It was said by one commentator, that if water behaved like every other element, every lake would freeze from the bottom up, and every lake would eventually become completely frozen... and stay that way. ☺

It seemed to me that these next two articles were complimentary in nature. That is why I have placed them in sequence.

Importance of Touch

https://creationmoments.com/sermons/a-touching-truth-2/?mc_cid=a77338be34&mc_eid=5840490402



Which of your five senses is most important? Which sense could be lost with the least threat to your life?

Most people consider their sense of sight the most important. While the loss of sight is a terrible tragedy, life can go on. Lose your sense of smell, and food will be flavorless, but you can get by. Loss of hearing, too, is a great loss, but the loss can be adjusted to. And few

people's lives are threatened by the loss of the sense of taste. However, if you lose your sense of touch, you lose your sense of pain and, therefore, any warning that you might be injuring yourself. Unfortunately, there are people who have no sense of touch. Sometimes they receive life-threatening injuries because they cannot feel pain.

Science has shown that touching is necessary for life. Newborn animals that are licked by their mothers have a higher resistance to disease. They are also more likely to live to adulthood than newborns that are untouched by their mothers. Chihuahua pups have a notoriously high rate of death because their mothers are often unwilling to lick them. Lambs will die after birth if their mothers do not lick and nuzzle them. Even human infants who are not lovingly touched enough will suffer from depression, poor sleep, weight loss, poor immunity and, in extreme cases, even death.

We have been created/evolved (*whatever*) with the need for touch. Though we take it for granted, without touch, life would be impossible.

Study Finds That Goats Like It When People Smile at Them...

Meghan Overdeep, Fri, May 21, 2021

<https://news.yahoo.com/study-finds-goats-people-smile-212812644.html>

It's hard to look at a goofy little [goat](#) and not smile, and apparently, goats feel the same way about us!

As we venture back out into the world, into petting zoos, farms, and perhaps even to goat yoga, here's a delightful piece of information for you to keep in mind: goats like it when you smile at them.

According to the results of a British study published in [Royal Society Open Science](#) back in 2018, goats not only recognize happy human facial expressions, they're actually *drawn* to them.



In the study, researchers presented 20 goats with photos of unfamiliar human faces. The photo pairs showed the same individual displaying happy and angry facial expressions.

They found that the goats were much more likely to interact with images of happy faces. The animals looked at the smiling images, approached them, and even explored them with their snouts.

How sweet is that?

As researchers from the Queen Mary University of London explained in a news release, evidence that goats can read human expressions flies in the face of the long-held assumption that only domestic companions—such as [dogs](#) and horses—have the ability to perceive human facial cues.

“The study has important implications for how we interact with livestock and other species, because the abilities of animals to perceive human emotions might be widespread and not just limited to pets.”

It also has important implications for our hearts.

Turkmenian markhor dead at Hogle Zoo after sparring match with another markhor

By Kaitlyn Bancroft, May 15, 2021

<https://www.strib.com/news/2021/05/15/turkmenian-markhor-dead/>

The markhor — an exotic Asian goat-like species — died from its injuries late Friday morning.

A Turkmenian markhor is dead at Utah's Hogle Zoo following a sparring match with a fellow male markhor; the zoo announced Saturday.

Markhor are an exotic Asian goat-like species native to central Asia and the Himalayas, according to a news release. They have large spiral horns and broad hooves, which allow them to live in mountainous terrain between 2,000 and 12,000 feet.



NAPgA, the North American Packgoat Association...

puts together a yearly get-together they refer to as a 'Rendezvous'.

It is a fun and informative event where you can bring your goats, learn about goats, and even sometimes buy a goat. It is a no-miss event for anyone that contemplates obtaining a goat that they plan on hiking with and or developing into a cart goat.

From the NAPgA website

Our group campsite is located on NF-203 about 2.5 miles off Highway 21. We will be near Marsh Creek and Beaver Creek Trailheads as well as Lola and Beaver Creek campgrounds. There are plenty of opportunities for hiking and camping in the area in both the Frank Church and Sawtooths.

Read detailed directions here:

https://www.napga.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Rendy21_Directions.pdf

This is a primitive campsite and there are no hookups available but it is suitable for both tent and RV camping. NAPgA will be providing porta potties. Potable water is not available at the campsite but there will be a stream for watering animals and there is potable water available at the nearby public campgrounds.

This year because of Covid concerns there will be no potluck so we encourage members to plan all their meals, and we encourage you to have plans to pack out all personal trash. All classes will be held outdoors but there will be a main tent in case of poor weather.

We have supplied a map and a GPS location for the proposed campsite and will continue with more info as it becomes available.

Event/Area Map

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/44%C2%B021'01.7%22N+115%C2%B006'05.1%22W/@44.3504778,-115.1036097,827m/data=!3m2!1e3!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0x0:0x0!7e2!8m2!3d44.3504741!4d-115.1014213>

While this event is open to all, we earnestly encourage all participants to show support for the organizers by joining NAPgA.

NAPgA 2021 Rendezvous Schedule

Wednesday 6/16

Host will arrive and set up signs

Thursday 6/17

Arrivals and Camp Setup, porta potties to be dropped off in the morning

Friday 6/18

10:00 Forest Service Project - Setting a sign and campsite clean up at a nearby FS Campground

1:00 - USDA Guest Presentation: Microchipping and permanent ID's w/ Kelly Scheuer

3:30 - Goat First Aid w/ Nancy Clough and Taffy Mercer

7:00 - Napga Introductions and Mission Statement

Saturday 6/19

10:00 - Saddle Fitting and Camp setup w/ Clay Zimmerman

1:00 - Goat Packing Gear w/ Marc Warnke and Matt Lyons

3:30 - Breeding and Baby Goat Health w/ Dwite Sharp

7:00 - Best Management Practices with Curtis King

Sunday 6/20

Campsite Cleanup and Goodbyes



A class at the 2007 Colorado Rendezvous

A Message from NAPgA's President, Curtis King June 2021

Packing season is nearly in full swing, and that's exciting for everyone in the pack goat community. Whether your packing out that spring bear, exploring new territory, or just doing extended conditioning hikes in preparation for the season, it just wouldn't be the same without your four-legged partners. Also, since spring is definitely in the air, that means our annual pack goat **Rendezvous** is just around the corner.

As I mentioned in the last letter, if you're looking to break away from the COVID blues, then look no further than Stanley, Idaho for our 2021 North American Packgoat Association Rendezvous. We have a lineup of experts slotted to bring you some of the best instruction available on many different topics this year. Mark your calendar for June 17th – 20th in Stanley Idaho, and please visit our website at napga.org for all the details and directions. Bring the whole family, bring a friend or bring someone that has an interest in Goatpacking. We look forward to seeing you there.

□ Back by popular demand, don't miss out on the best yard sale you will ever attend that's all about goats. The NAPgA Virtual Auction starts May 31st and runs through June 9th. This is a great fund raiser for NAPgA and all proceeds go directly to the Association to help secure your rights to use packgoats on public lands. If you're looking for some great gear or if you can help contribute to the cause please visit and participate in our Virtual Auction as we will not be holding an auction or country store at the rendezvous in Stanley ID.

□ In other news NAPgA has responded in writing to the Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge Plan and Environmental Impact Statement. The refuge located in south eastern Oregon has a struggling Bighorn Sheep herd that is near extinction, with only 48 sheep observed during their last aerial survey. This is not a common area for pack goat use, however it is open for pack stock use and no current restrictions are in place banning the use of recreational pack goats. NAPgA would like to see it

stay that way without pointing the finger at our goats as being part of their problem. Currently predators, changing habitat, and drought seem to be the primary cause of concern. The project is open to public comments until June 14th at Sheldon-Hart@fws.gov,

NAPgA will continue to comment on public land related issues whenever or wherever the use of pack goats is of concern. In closing I want to encourage everyone in the pack goat community to strictly follow and adopt our Best Management Practices. If you are new to goat packing please visit our website for guidelines as well as our training video on BMP's. I also want to encourage our members to mentor and guide those that are new to this sport, in order to spread the education and awareness of our BMP's. We are, and will continue to be, under a microscope with the use of our goats in or near wild sheep habitat. Losing a pack goat is not an option and prevention is extremely critical to our reputation and success. We will be discussing additional prevention of the lost pack goat practices at the Rendezvous and I look forward to sharing them with you in open discussion. We are very good at what we do and we continue as a community to become even better. Thank you everyone for your continued support and I look forward to seeing you at our 2021 Rendezvous near Stanley Idaho.

“Long Live The Packgoat”

Curtis King
President, North American Packgoat Association



Curtis King & Lori, Christmas 2020



Why Join NAPgA? NAPgA is the only organization that exclusively represents goatpackers, and works tirelessly to open areas for camping and hiking with your goats that are closed right now, or have come under fire for the supposed danger of goats to Bighorn Sheep. The NAPgA governing board holds regular quarterly meetings, which are open to the entire membership (Meetings are conducted via computer and Internet-base meeting software).

Where do Your Dues Go? Since this is an all-volunteer organization, there is very little 'manpower overhead' and so your dues are exclusively used for issues directly connected to goatpacker concerns. As of late, we have spent a lot of money for our legal representation, but that has been well-rewarded in our successes with our fight to keep goatpacking open in the Shoshone and other unfriendly locations. Goat packers, due to our limited time as a recognized pack entity, have our work cut out for us in order to gain recognition as a viable part of the overall 'packer' spectrum. NAPgA is the only means to get that done, and those that are a part of the current BOD are working daily to make that happen.

Please join with us NOW and help us to encourage and develop packgoating nationwide. Dues may be paid with PayPal or with a check to:

Membership Classes:

- Bronze, \$20
- Silver, \$50
- Gold, \$100
- Youth, \$10

By becoming a member, you help NAPgA work to keep the wilderness open to Packgoats

NAPgA Mail Application

Date: _____ Date Received: _____

Member Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ eMail: _____

Brief Description of Packgoat Experience and/or Interest:

Contact: napga.org@gmail.com

Website: <http://www.napga.org>

What is Bottle Jaw?

Reader Contribution By [Shelby DeVore, Farminence](#)

<https://www.motherearthnews.com/homesteading-and-livestock/what-is-bottle-jaw-zbcz1910>



Many goat owners are well aware of the dangers that internal parasites can cause for their herd. The most common internal

parasite is the barber pole worm. These worms will chew on the digestive tract linings and create bleeding. The worms then consume the blood that spills out from the wound. In small numbers, these worms aren't really harmful to the goat. In large numbers, they can consume so much blood that the goat's body cannot keep up, causing anemia.

If left untreated, anemia can become severe. Severe cases of anemia are often accompanied by bottle jaw.

What is Bottle Jaw?

Bottle jaw is a term used to describe an area of edema under the chin of a goat. Edema is intracellular fluid, or simply swelling. It's not infection and would run clear if drained. Bottle jaw is not a condition, but a symptom of an underlying problem.

You may notice that a goat with bottle jaw tends to worsen throughout the day. The swelling will decrease overnight and may seem to have disappeared from the day before. As the day goes on, the swelling will return.

Bottle jaw appears in severely anemic goats. If your goat has bottle jaw then it needs treatment as soon as possible.

Causes

Bottle jaw is not an illness itself but it does indicate that there is an underlying issue with your goat. The underlying issue is usually anemia and can be caused by several things.

The most common cause of anemia in goats is the barber pole worm. If your goat has bottle jaw, your first reaction should be to treat them for worms. You can use a wormer medication such as Ivomec, Cydectin or Prohibit. Use a FAMACHA score to determine the level of anemia in your goat. Goats with bottle jaw will usually score high on the FAMACHA test, but it's a good idea to check them and keep a record of it.

There are a few other internal parasites that can cause anemia and bottle jaw. However, these are typically accompanied by other symptoms as well. Scours and

fever can indicate an internal parasite that is not the barber pole worm.

Bottle jaw can be caused by a copper deficiency or a copper toxicity. Make sure that your goats have ample copper from a goat mineral mix. Do not feed your goats a goat and sheep mineral mix as the copper will not be in the correct proportions. It's a good idea to have your soil tested as well to see how much copper is present in the soil naturally. Sometimes other minerals in the soil can prevent copper from being used properly. For example, if your soil has high levels of molybdenum, your goat may not get enough copper from the soil, even if it is present in large amounts. Molybdenum can block copper from being absorbed by the goat's body.

Traumatic injury can create an anemic goat. If your goat is anemic from an injury, you'll be able to tell. Don't worry about worming them but focus on healing them and preventing infection.

Treating Bottle Jaw

There isn't a way to treat bottle jaw. To get rid of it, you'll need to determine the cause of bottle jaw and treat the cause.

Start by worming your goat to make sure that they aren't anemic due to barber pole worms. This is the most common cause of bottle jaw and is more than likely the cause. You can supplement your goat's recovery with injectable B-12, Nutri-Drench for goats and Red Cell. These supplements will help restore much-needed vitamins and minerals to your goat so that their body can work on rebuilding lost blood cells.

If your goat does not show signs of recovering after a few days then you'll want to have your veterinarian check them out. Your vet can test fecal samples for various parasites and run blood work tests to rule out any diseases.

Staying on top of your goat's health is key. Check for anemia often using the FAMACHA score system. Don't worm your goats as a preventative throughout the year. Worm them as they need it to prevent parasites that are resistant to worming medication. If your goat is showing signs of feeling ill, check them out. Goats don't often act sick until they are pretty bad off, which means they'll need treatment quickly.

Shelby DeVore is an animal expert with a B.S. and M.S. in Animal and Dairy Science. Shelby has over 20+ years of experience working with animals and livestock. She lives in West Tennessee on a small farm with her husband, two children, dairy cows, goats, turkeys, too many chickens to count, two farm dogs and three tuxedo cats. You can read more from her on her homesteading blog [Farminence](#).



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Butthead Pack Goats & Equipment. Packgoat kids: Togg/Alpine/Oberhasli crosses. Northern California. CAE Negative tested herd. Twenty-two years, raising & training packgoats. Kids can be seen on web: buttheadpackgoats.com. Call Dennis Willingham, 530-432-0946.

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“CAE NEGATIVE TESTED HERD” (Use this only if your does are tested yearly or have tested negative in the current year.)

“GUARANTEED CAE FREE OR RETURN” (This means that you will replace the kid if he is found to be CAE positive at the earliest age of reliable testing, which is considered by WSU to be 12 months. This is the only context in which “CAE free” will be accepted. This does not guarantee a CAE free kid, just replacement.) Remember that you will have a year of work into a kid by the time it is testable.

Any of these choices will more clearly define a herd’s status to buyers and should be welcomed as a step forward in controlling a disease that is potentially crippling to packgoats.

Goat Tracks Advertising Pricing

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Business Card	2x3-1/2 or 3-1/2x2	10.00	30.00
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Submissions to Goat Tracks

PHOTOS: High-resolution jpgs are preferred, either mailed on disk or emailed to Larry@GoatTracksMagazine.org When mailing prints, please put your name and address on the back of each photo. Please include a SASE if you need your photo returned. Images sent to Goat Tracks may appear elsewhere, unless copyright is reserved when sent. Although every effort is made to return photos, Goat Tracks cannot be responsible for lost photos.

ARTICLES: Articles may be held for future issues. Submissions may be made by email or hardcopy (typed or neatly written).

Please include your contact information in case we have questions or need your data in a different format.

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Raymond the mule and Sonny the goat break up

May 26, 2021, Kari Pugh

<https://www.obxtoday.com/raymond-the-mule-and-sonny-the-goat-break-up/>



You might remember after Raymond the legendary wild mule had to be removed from the beach back in 2019, the Corolla Wild Horse Fund paired him with a devilish goat named Sonny.

A match made in heaven for the two troublemakers, right? Not so much.



In a Facebook post, Meg Puckett, herd manager for the Corolla Wild Horse Fund, explains what happened at the rescue farm in Grandy

“You may remember Raymond and Sonny at the rescue farm. that we adopted Sonny, hoping he would be a good pasture-mate for Raymond. He needed a new home because he was terrorizing the horses where he was living and we thought, Raymond is tough! It will be a good match! Well, it was not a good match because Sonny terrorized Raymond too! To the point where Raymond wouldn’t eat if Sonny was in the pasture with him because he was so scared of him. Hard to believe, we know. But Raymond is really one of the most sensitive, non-confrontational animals on the farm. A crazy goat for a roommate was not his idea of a relaxing retirement.

Our trainer Nora took Sonny to her farm to see if he might be happier with her goat Bernadette, mini horse Peaches, donkey Alfie, and BLM mustang Dakota. Turns out, this was the family that Sonny had been waiting for! He is so much happier, and so is Raymond. Last weekend two sheep joined Sonny’s pasture and he’s getting along great with them too.

Now everyone is happy, Sonny is still part of the CWHF extended family, and has a wonderful forever home! And Raymond hasn’t missed a meal since Sonny left.



Sonny the goat at his new home.

WORKING GOAT DIRECTORY

For only \$10 per year, (That's \$2.50 an issue), advertise your name, address, and goat related items that you offer, such as equipment, pack or breeding animals, stud service, outfitting services, artwork, ANYTHING relating to working goats. Even if you don't have anything to sell, this is a great way to just let other working goat enthusiasts know that you are out there. There is a 15 word limit (address and phone count as one word). Underline key words and they will be highlighted. Listings will be organized by state.

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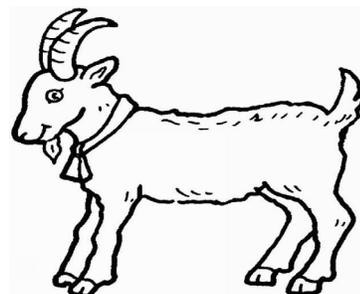
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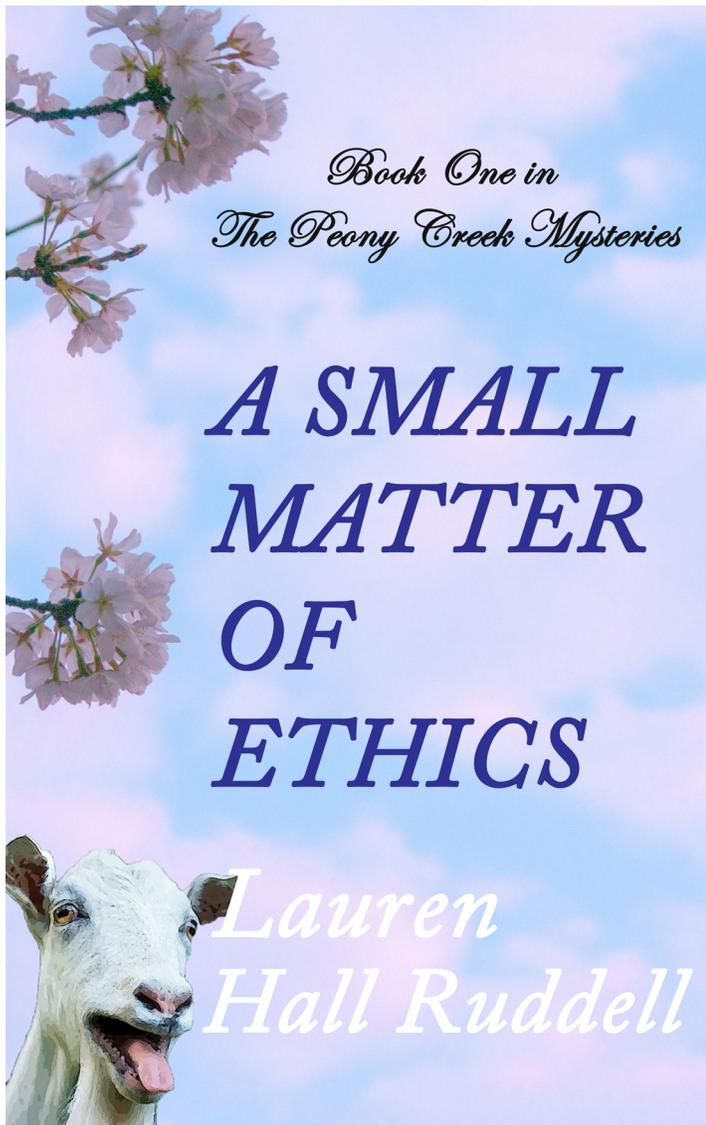
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*Book One in
The Peony Creek Mysteries*

A SMALL MATTER OF ETHICS

*Lauren
Hall Ruddell*

Chapter 2



When Weston arrived, he had Beth Raymond with him. Beth worked for Laurelyn occasionally, for very little money, just to get away from caregiving her diabetic and morbidly obese older husband. She knew the farm's layout well and would help get the remaining four hours' worth of work done in the remaining two hours of daylight.

"Bless you both," Laurelyn gasped out at Beth and Weston in a heartfelt exclamation.

Demanding the full story around brandy after all chores were done, the two workers set off, each to well-practiced tasks at the various stations. Weston set about freshening goat bedding, filling troughs, filling mangers, and watering plants in one of the two greenhouses. Beth milked the six Nubian does and took three steaming gallons of milk into the little side kitchen, where she filtered and chilled the milk and then sterilized all utensils.

Both helpers knew better than to do anything with the second greenhouse. This structure contained Laurelyn's 'plant babies,' as Beth liked to call the row upon row of carefully nurtured chilitipin peppers. No one was allowed to have anything to do with their care and feeding except 'the boss.'

To say that growing them at this elevation was tricky was a ridiculous understatement. Only a certified expert and genuine chili fanatic would ever attempt such a feat. And although the two years had seen a 60% mortality among the crop, this third year showed much greater promise. These plants had been propagated from only the hardiest of the previous two year's plants, and the selective breeding was already showing positive results.

The two stalwart helpers knew the night wouldn't get below freezing, and that the heat of decomposition of the compost piles used for additional warmth in the chiltipin pepper greenhouse would not allow the structure's interior temperature to fall below 40 degrees. Securing the front entrance was all that was needed. Beth made a mental note to remind Laurelyn of that when she also reminded her to close all of the ventilating windows.

Chores completed, they headed back to the house to see what else could be done.

Nancy Clifton had arrived and had been trying to coax words out of Saffron, to no avail. The woodstove had burned low and the temperatures had dropped. Laurelyn and Sandy sat at the small, oak dining table with shots of hot brandy, those shots poised for imminent immersion in hot coffee and goat milk standing by in two steaming mugs.

No dinner preparation was underway, so Beth raided the fridge and cupboards. Upon discovering frozen hamburger, Boston-baked beans, onions, and celery, she began to zap a pound of frozen burger. Once thawed, she began whipping up her personal specialty, known by all friends and family as 'bean shit'. It was rich and very comforting. It was one of the few things she could cook that her husband

would eat, mainly because it had a little sweetness to it.

As the ingredients began to sauté, she poured a little brandy for herself. They were joined shortly by Weston, who took pains to pull up a chair next to Beth after bringing in an armload of firewood.

"I'll be here first thing in the morning to milk," volunteered Beth.

"I'll be here right after I get my cows fed," offered Weston eagerly.

"Thank you both so much, you are both life-savers," she said and then dropped her eyes to the tabletop since someone's life had not been saved that day.

"I have a group coming in for the weekend wine tasting, but as soon as I get them checked in, I can come over late this afternoon," Sandy said, reaching for Laurelyn's hand. She offered her a paper towel from the holder in the center of the table as a tear slipped from Laurelyn's eye.

"Thanks, but I'm being stupid. Silly really, I wasn't all that close to the guy. He was sort of hard to like."

"Plainly, you're not the only one who thought so," Beth quipped in her usually

outspoken manner. Silence fell as everyone began to acknowledge the gorilla in the kitchen, the question of... 'who dunnit?'

"You think Milton might be capable?" Weston asked the table at large.

"Maybe," said Sandy, "but underneath all of the hairiness, Garrison was rather buff and athletic, wasn't he, Lor?"

"He certainly had no trouble hauling 50 lb. bags of feed over and over. And he could work just as hard as Weston any day of the week. I doubt that Milton has seen the inside of a gym in over five years. There's always the element of surprise, I guess."

At that moment Nancy Clifton emerged from the small side room adjacent to the craft room that Laurelyn had remodeled for her Wwoofers.

"She won't budge, won't talk. I asked her if she would like to leave and go to a hotel in Delta, but she shook her head no. I offered some insights and other housing options, but again, always no. She really, really, wants to stay here, for now, Laurelyn. Is that possible?"

Laurelyn, already butting up against numerous financial challenges, did a quick social vs. financial vs. ethical computation, and with a sinking heart said, "yes, of course."

Inside, she was screaming, *why me, why this, why now?* Over and over. Instead of having young urbanites living on the farm and helping out 20 hours per week in exchange for room and board, she was now a half-way house, unpaid, for the bereaved who were not of sound mind. She doubted her farm income would be sufficient to support herself and Saffron for very long, but her moral code screamed at her that this was the only ethical response.

It was ten o'clock before her friends and helpers sent themselves home and left Laurelyn to a restless, haunted sleep.

Chapter 3



Tuesday Morning

Ruefully, Laurelyn woke at her usual 4:30 AM. Normally, after having an hour's worth of coffee and doing some light bookkeeping, she would have started breakfast for herself, Garrison, and Saffron. Today she was not sure what to do. She decided on buckwheat pancakes, since they were very nutritious, tasty, and kept well. Besides, they never went uneaten for long, since Thor and Titan loved them, so nothing was wasted.

A surreptitious glance into the guest room revealed Saffron's tousled, mousy blond hair in unmoving peacefulness on the cruelty-free down pillow. She left a note on the table announcing the availability of pancakes and left for the greenhouses.

It was cool inside the 'chiltibarn' as she chose to think of her pepper house. The inside temperature of the greenhouse was a pleasant 45 degrees, which would soar as soon as the sun came up.

Laurelyn put on some pleasing New Age celestial tunes and began reviewing the growing records as the sun peaked over the red-tinted mesas. The music lilted, swelling, and fading, a cosmic dance of eternal serenity and universal benevolence. She found her heart calmed and soul soothed as, row by row, she plucked any peppers that seemed to have objected to the evening's mild cold.

These peppers would be dried for sale as a very expensive, high-end gourmet product. The tiny dried pods sold for \$10 an ounce locally. Health food stores, gourmet boutiques, and ethnic markets in Denver paid her \$15 per ounce. At a production rate of around 40 pounds per year, this single greenhouse generated around \$10,000 annually, almost as much as the vegetable and cheese sales

combined. This was one of the reasons that Laurelyn did not allow workers or visitors inside. A single visitor who was a smoker or a careless tomato gardener could introduce tobacco mosaic virus and wipe out half a year's worth of income, not to mention a priceless experiment.

The raw peppers contained the equivalent of 'hotness' to the better-known habanero. Always bearing this in mind, Laurelyn did her picking and packing with disposable gloves, that remained on until the end of the shift. To touch any part of her face during her shift risked being out of commission for the rest of the day. This was another reason she preferred the early morning shifts, so that all work for the day, other than watering, was accomplished before Wwoofers came outside or workers arrived.

Today there would be no Wwoofers, but with the help she had on hand, she knew goats would get fed and milked, the vegetable greenhouse and fields would be attended to, and anything else, like the hoof trimming that was scheduled for the day, would have to wait. It was CSA day, and folks would be coming to the tiny farm store for their shares. It would be Laurelyn's job to distribute the goods, and of course, with the news of death by foul play

spreading like wildfire in a small town, to answer questions. She dreaded it. She was not the penultimate people person that Beth and Sandy were. Like Bernie, she preferred animals, but had learned 'fake it til you make it' social skills that served her reasonably well. She knew that today those skills would be put to the test.

Margaret Stanley was the first to arrive. A notorious gossip, Laurelyn knew that an excruciating 'third degree' was about to get underway. She wasn't wrong. She knew that Beth would try to intervene at some point if she could, but with not enough help for the day, it was very likely that Laurelyn would have to field this one all by herself.

As it turned out, Margaret gave as good as she got. After a few perfunctory inquiries into Laurelyn's health and state of mind, she blurted out, "Did you hear, the cops think Milton Hornblend is the most likely suspect." She clucked on about the state of the world, nobody was ever safe, and you just never knew about people these days. After 20 minutes in that vein, Beth was finally able to come to Laurelyn's rescue.

Good thing too, because two vehicles immediately pulled into the small parking lot. One she recognized as Weston's returning to

the farm after running some lunchtime errands. And it looked like there was someone in the truck with him. But before she could greet them, a second vehicle, the kind seldom seen in those parts, pulled in as well. The middle-aged people emerging from the brand-new Lexus SUV were dressed more for a day at a Club Med than a day in Peony Creek.

The man was quite dapper, with his new hunting jacket, its suede protective patches never yet having known the touch of a rifle butt.

His wife was something else, altogether. Bleached blond hair, heavy red lipstick, low-cut top stretched to the point of tearing over enormous breasts, would have seemed much more at home in a honky-tonk. She swayed a little on high heels when exiting the car, so perhaps that had indeed been an earlier stop for them.

Laurelyn glanced at Weston and the older man he had with him. Weston signaled that he knew what needed doing and the two men headed straight for the goat barn. Laurelyn sighed with temporary relief and was able to turn her attention to the couple who had advanced very determinedly toward her. The man stuck out his hand in a used car salesman sort of way, all gusto, and toothy, insincere smile.

“Pirl Johnson, and it’s a pleasure to meet you, miss...”

“Laurelyn McNamara, sir. Is there something I can help you with?”

“Absolutely, absolutely, you can point us to wherever our little Edith is hanging out.”

Feeling as though the week couldn’t get very much weirder, Laurelyn was shortly more informed as to who these folks might be when the woman tottered up and said, “Now Pirl, you know that’s not the name she uses these days, it’s Saffron something or other.”

Laurelyn, knowing that Saffron’s folks hailed from somewhere in San Diego, just as she did, thought to herself, *Boy, that was sure fast.*

Laurelyn had a firm policy, based on unfortunate past experience, of never letting visitors wander around the grounds unsupervised, and she felt that should be doubly true for these two. So even though she was not at all sure she could deliver on her promise, she asked them to please wait right where they were, and she would go and fetch Saffron out. Then she popped into the store, where Margaret was still bending Beth’s ear. Beth, seeing Laurelyn’s strained expression, used her nice but hurried and overworked

farmer’s voice, and managed to send Margaret on her way, letting her know that she had unexpected guests in regards to ‘you know what’ and assurances that she would fill her in on all the gory details next week. Laurelyn assigned Beth to visitor wrangling and went fetch Saffron.

She found her up and dressed. The pancakes appeared untouched, though. Saffron was gazing out the window toward the gardens, a small track of an earlier tear striping one cheek.

“Oh, I’m so glad you’re up! Did you have anything to eat?” A slow shake of the head indicated no.

“Well, maybe around lunchtime then, but do try to eat something, please. And you have visitors, kiddo.” A slow disinterested turn of her head to meet Laurelyn’s eyes was the only response.

“Your parents are here.”

The disinterest fled from the dull eyes, to be replaced by a slowly dawning look of horror. She stood up abruptly, almost as if to flee, and then plopped back down again.

“They are waiting for you in front of the store. Let’s go out there together, shall we?”

Laurelyn had the strongest sense that if Saffron

wasn't escorted, then she simply wouldn't move. She didn't particularly want to invite the odd folks into her house, not until she got to know them better. Which she hoped wouldn't be necessary.

Getting no response, she held out her hand. Saffron slowly took it and rose from the chair again, even more slowly. With dragging steps, she followed Laurelyn out of the house and over to the store parking lot. Saffron's mother had lit up a cigarette and looked around the scene with the wide eyes of a curious toddler. An inebriated toddler, and with about as much intelligence.

Saffron's silent, deerlike approach went unnoticed until she stopped in front of her father.

Seeing her there so suddenly, he startled. But before he could get a word in edgewise, the woman exclaimed, "Edith honey, there you are. So terrible that this happened. You must be devastated. We were on our way to visit you anyway after seeing the sights in Denver when we got a call from the police. Came right over to help out our little Pookie."

No response from Saffron, or hugs, or even tears were forthcoming. Just more stony silence. To break the awkwardness and get

the family ball rolling in a direction that would allow her to get back to her chores, Laurelyn said to the woman, "This has come as a huge shock to all of us, Saffron most of all, of course. Perhaps you all could get caught up together for a few minutes? That picnic table over there is for guests and customers. Please feel free to use it, Mrs. Johnson."

"Call me Bambi," the woman said, extending a limp but carefully French manicured hand. Laurelyn wondered for a snarky moment if she should call her Bambi because that was her actual name, or because that was the all too appropriate moniker she fancied at the moment.

Laurelyn took the proffered hand in a too-firm grip, made muscular by hours of hand milking goats. Bambi winced slightly, which for some ignoble reason pleased Laurelyn. Beth, seeing that she was going to have to do a lot more babysitting, offered to go with them and bring them some apple cider.

In low voices, the parents encouraged Saffron in the desired direction. They almost made it, too, until Pirl attempted to place his arm around Saffron's shoulders. This proved to be too much familial intimacy, and with an audible gasp, Saffron bolted for the goat barn.

Like Laurelyn, she too had always found

the company of animals and Garrison, who exuded a sort of animal energy himself, to be more soothing than the company of any other humans. It was to comforting animals that she turned to now, safe, undemanding, quiet, trusting animals.

Laurelyn had stepped away to check on the heritage tomatoes in the herb and veggie greenhouse and Beth, seeing Saffron's flight, went after her, leaving the urban parental units unguarded.

Beth found Saffron desperately hugging the senior doe, a huge uddered, patient old gal that had seen it all in her 10 years on the planet. She usually had to endure hugs from enthusiastic children twice per year on open farm days. This waifish child woman was little different, so Belle stood immobile, placidly chewing a handy cud. The sound of chewing seemed to ease Saffron's distress. Beth took in the scene and decided for the meantime to leave well enough alone.

After determining that for today at least, there were no pests about to destroy a season's worth of high-priced tomatoes, Laurelyn headed from the veggie/herb greenhouse to the chiltibarn, just a few yards away. On her way, she glanced up and saw an odd thing, something even odder to her than the odd

couple. The chiltibarn door was open. With a gasp, she raced toward the structure, images of destruction dancing through her mind.

Despite their perceived high Scoville rating to human taste buds, goats could easily consume the fruits of her labors right on the bush. They preferred the leaves, but if the occasional pepper was ingested, they ignored it and continued to browse. Laurelyn had found this out in her first year, and ever since then, she had made it a cardinal rule that no one was allowed into the chiltibarn unless directed specifically by her. She never made this request when she knew she wouldn't be able to double-check the door after any helpers had left. Despite the chaos of the last 24 hours, she had not made such a request.

She burst through the doorway, not startling goats, as she had assumed she would, but nearly knocking over Bambi. With a shriek and a stumble, Bambi regained her balance by grabbing the nearest pepper plant pot. Her cigarette went down into the compost-covered path and her tobacco-wielding, but now empty, hand crushed the nearest leaves.

With a very inhospitable, "NOOO," Laurelyn grabbed the offender and the plant and roughly tossed both of them outside. Then she rushed back in to put the cigarette out and

to scoop up the compost it had landed on. She threw the compost outside and followed it with a slammed door and murder on her face.

Bambi, looking mortality offended, blustered, "What the fuck, I was just looking at the cute little plants. I wasn't going to steal them or anything. I could sue you for assault or something!"

Pirl rushed up and added to the confusion, with rapid-fire questions tripping over each other. Beth too came rushing up, sans Saffron, who hearing the commotion beyond, was now hugging poor Belle even more tightly.

Eventually, Laurelyn was able to calm down and explain that this crop was a very sensitive experiment and no visitors were allowed inside. Bambi started to babble that there should be better signage, this was a public place, after all, wasn't it? Laurelyn angrily stabbed her index finger at the sign on the now-closed again door. "No Admittance." Seeing this, the normally voluble Pirl, put his arm around Bambi and guided her back to the picnic table, with the quiet but fierce admonition to 'shut it.' Meaning her mouth, of course. Bambi did, but not before sticking another cigarette between her lips.

Once back at the picnic table, joie de vive, cajoling language started tumbling from Pirl's lips. "Well, I know how busy you must be, with all of this farming stuff and all. We'll just collect Edith and be off now."

Laurelyn, knowing full well that Saffron was not a minor, said tactfully, "I'll go ask her if she would like that." Beth stayed conspicuously and sternly present at the picnic table, not chancing losing them again.

"That's not necessary, I'll just go and get her myself. It's time she came home, anyway." He began to take a step toward the goat barn. Beth, not a bruiser but not a tiny woman either, stepped to bar his way. Pirl frowned and attempted to sidestep her. Beth, still angry at Bambi's invasion of the chiltibarn and determined not to let these people walk over her or anyone else, blocked his path again. Arms crossed, face stony, feet planted. Confronted with this defiance, Pirl's face began to purple with rage, all pretense of charm dropping away like turds from a goat's behind.

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