

SETTING UP OR EXPANDING YOUR GOAT DAIRY:

Planning ahead for herd health and
production

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We love goats. But can they
make us money?



Getting real.

1. Facilities
2. Equipment
3. Genetics
4. Feed
5. Health
6. Ag and Markets
7. Raising replacements
8. Out-of-season breeding
9. Markets
10. Other practical considerations

Facilities

Promote

- ▣ health,
- ▣ production,
- ▣ labor efficiency

housing

- ▣ Housing for dairy goats does not have to be elaborate, but it must satisfy the health and comfort of the animals. There are five requirements of good housing for goats:
- ▣ The building should be adequately ventilated but not drafty;
- ▣ The walls and ceiling should be free from condensation;
- ▣ The bedded area should be relatively dry and clean;
- ▣ The hay, grain and water receptacles must be well built and located so that feed is not wasted or contaminated; and
- ▣ The facilities should provide easy access to the animals

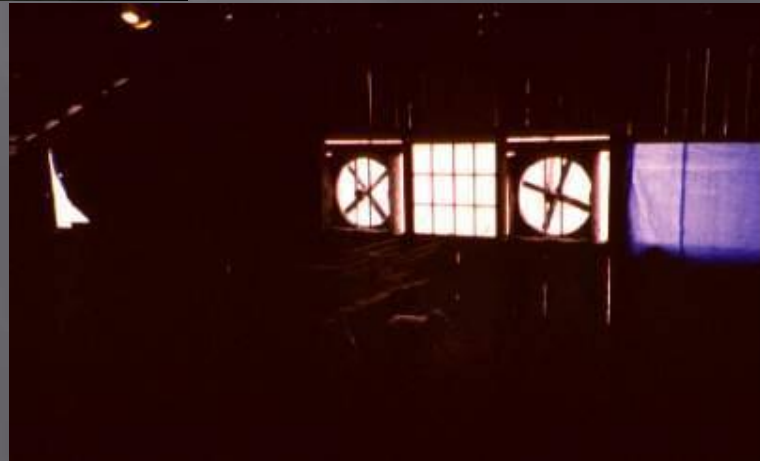
Solar barn



Free Stall: feed from outside



High ceilings, wind resistant screening, fans



Individually feed for level of production





Genetics: DHI

What matters is milk.



**Somehow you need to measure
milk production**



Feed

Whole grain plus protein vs. mixed feed

Forage fed

Level of protein

Legume or mixed,
mostly legume

14 to 16 percent

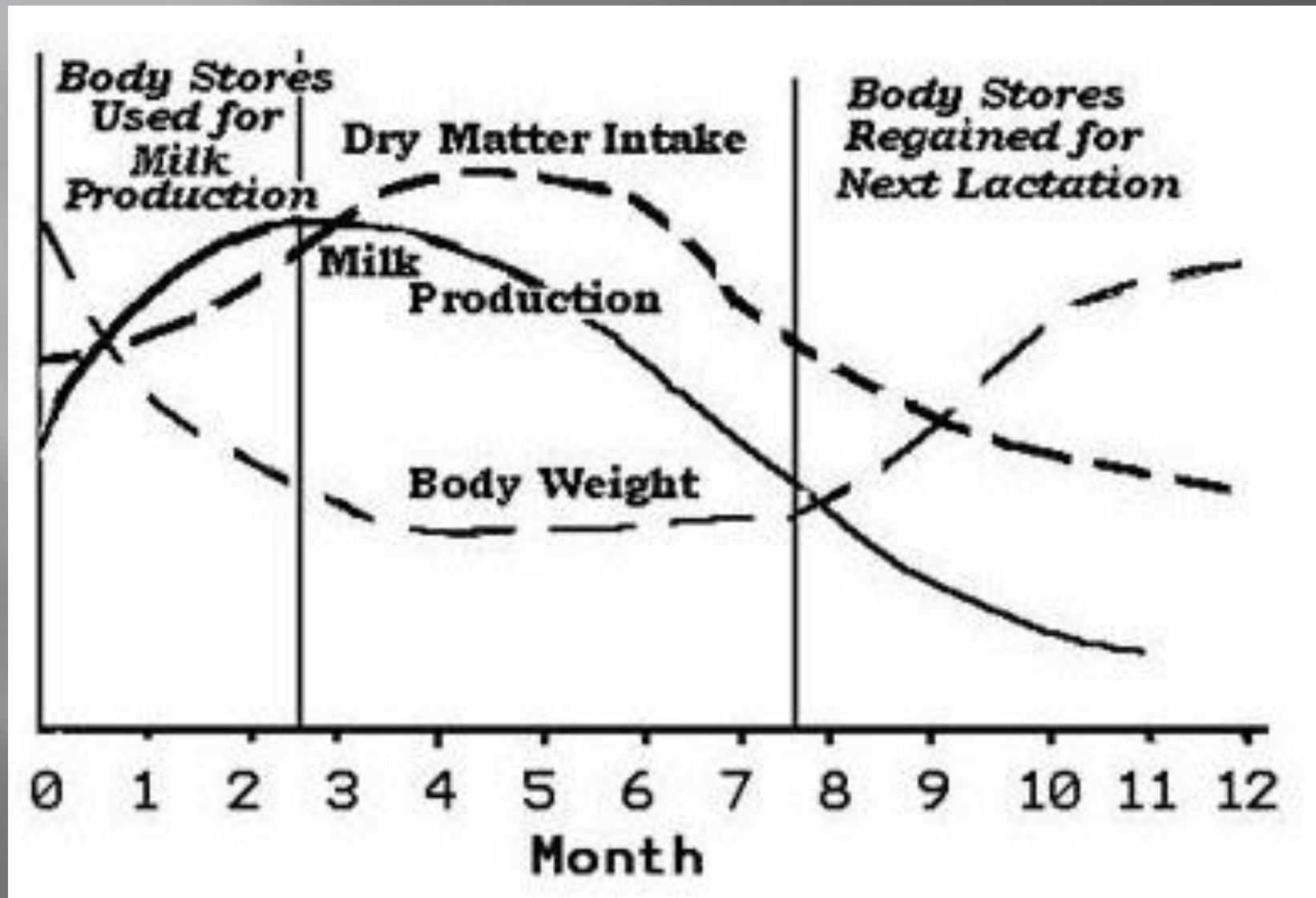
Legume or mixed,
mostly grass

16 to 18 percent

How much grain?

To determine the amount of grain to feed, consider level of milk production, amount and quality of forages consumes, appetite and state of fleshing.

Nutrient requirements over the lactation



Raising replacements



Out of Season Breeding

Goats naturally breed after the summer solstice as day length shortens = season of *estrus*, or breeding season.

Anestrus means the female goat does not come into heat . This occurs when the days are lengthening,

- after the Winter Solstice (Dec 21 or 22), less chance of goats cycling
- between Spring Equinox and Summer Solstice, even less chance

Creating an artificial “Fall”

Artificial lighting is used to lengthen the day. Cutting back on light simulates summer solstice with shortened days.

Work backwards:

- ▣ 2 months for doe's hormonal apparatus to react to shortened day length.
- ▣ Aiming for September/October; counting back five months = April/May for breeding dates.
- ▣ “solstice” date of February = lights off
- ▣ Two months of extra light = on in December

Creating extra light

- ▣ 17-18 hours a day for two months (no need for gradual lengthening nor shortening).
- ▣ Does need 50-60 CF (candle feet)
- ▣ Bucks: 60 watt fluorescent bulbs 9 ft above floor, 1 bulb/10.5 sq ft floor space.

**Form an association of goat
milk producers?**