

Factors Affecting Dressing Percentage

*taken from research presented in "Marketing Prime Goat Kids" -
Paul Greenwood, et.al. New South Wales Agriculture 1996*

Dressing percentages (calculated as (hot carcass weight / liveweight) * 100) can vary widely for goat kids from about 35% to 55% with 45% being average for most kids with no Boer breeding. Kids with higher fat scores generally have higher dressing percentages than kids of the same liveweight with lower fat scores. Dressing percentage is affected by:

- live weight,
- fatness -an increase in one fat score will increase dressing percentage by about 2.5%, fatter kids also suffer less live weight and carcass weight loss from fasting prior to slaughter than do leaner kids,
- time off feed and water - this affects gut fill and therefore live weight. Liveweight percentage losses average 2, 2.5, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10, and 12% for goats off feed 2, 4, 6, 8, 12, 24, 48, and 72 hours respectively. Goats coming off lush pastures will generally have a higher dressing percentage than goats on drier feeds if live weight is calculated only a short time after animals are off feed because lush feed passes through the gut faster),
- pre-slaughter fasting and stress - affects dressing percentage because of its influence on gut fill and carcass weight loss. If animals are deprived of feed for 6 or more hours, carcass weight will start to decrease and dressing percentage will actually drop even though the goat's live weight is also decreasing. Carcass weight loss is 2-2.5%, 3-4%, and 6-7% after a 12, 24, 48 hour fast, respectively. Deprivation of water results in another 2% loss in carcass weight ,
- skin weight - determined by type of goat and shearing. Skin weight generally averages about 9% of the live weight for a short-haired or shorn goat kid, but can be as high as 15% for an unshorn angora kid,
- sex - doe kids tend to be slightly fatter than buck kids of the same weight in the same herd. However, this difference is so slight it rarely affects dressing percentage noticeably,
- breed
- weaning - weaned kids tend to have a lower dressing percentage than suckling kids of similar fatness and liveweight.