RECORD KEEPING

Keeping proper farm records

HOW TO TAG YOUR GOAT
WHY KEEP RECORDS?

Too often, there is a misconception that one needs to keep records for tax purposes only.

PRESENT day farming operations are becoming more business-oriented. The key to becoming a successful farmer today is to be a good producer, as well as, a good financial manager. Farm records serve a number of purposes on the small farm - even if it's a hobby farm. Here are some of the reasons to keep farm records:

1. Monitoring progress
If you are serious about running your farm, you will want to make sure that you are making progress toward your goals and that you are moving forward on your business plan.
2. Managing the farm - keeping track of things like:

- how many animals you have
- what their health is
- what health issues you may have had with them
- what you're feeding them and how much/how often

If you keep a detailed farm journal about the specifics of your farm operation you're getting a full picture of how your farm is functioning.
WHY KEEP RECORDS?

3. Obtaining loans and grants

Many grants and loans for small farmers require that you have financial records to show:

- what you have earned
- what your expenses are etc.

If you'd like to borrow money from a bank or other financial institution, they may require financial statements to prove that the farm is financially viable.
WHAT RECORDS SHOULD YOU KEEP?

They are mainly three kinds of records that a farmer must keep — enterprise production records, the health and growth records and the financial records.

There are many farm record systems. They range from simple, hand accounting systems using pencil and paper to sophisticated double-entry computer-accounting systems, which require computer operations. Some require a mix of hand and computer operations. Choose a system that is easy to understand.
WHAT RECORDS SHOULD YOU KEEP?

ENTERPRISE PRODUCTION RECORD

The enterprise production record includes how much a particular enterprise produces. For example, records of a dairy cow show how many litters of milk it produces per day. Keeping production records enables a farmer to know whether his enterprise is facing a slant or increase in production. If it is slanting, a farmer should intervene to stop the slant, if it is increasing he works to maintain the progress.
WHAT RECORDS SHOULD YOU KEEP?

HEALTH RECORDS

Keeping the health records eases the work of veterinary doctors and farm workers who treat the animals. A farmer must know:

- when and what afflicts his animals most
- the treatment given to the animals previously and
- the reaction of the animals.
HEALTH RECORDS

For individuals with one or two backyard animals, or for those keeping individual records for animals, record keeping can be as simple as recording:

- Sire and Dam identification
- Immunizations, date and dosage
- Parasite tests, date and results
- Parasite treatment, date and dosage
- Feed quantity and type
- Injuries and illnesses (cause and treatment)
- Disposition information (death, personal use or private sale, and price received)
# HEALTH RECORD TEMPLATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of observation</th>
<th>Goat ID #</th>
<th>Signs observed</th>
<th>Treatment type/name</th>
<th>Dosage</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</table>
WHAT RECORDS SHOULD YOU KEEP?

PRODUCTION RECORDS

Production records. If one is keeping animals on a commercial basis, there is a profit requirement within. Therefore, this is why keeping records of:

- how much the animals produce
- tracking the growth and
- performance of the animals is important.
Maintaining records of the doe will assist the farmer in making a decision on the whether to keep or cull the animal
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birth date</th>
<th>Dam ID #</th>
<th>Sire ID#</th>
<th>Sex of kid (Male/Female)</th>
<th>Birth Type</th>
<th>Birth Weight (kg)</th>
<th>Weaning Weight (kg)</th>
<th>Final weight (kg) &gt;180 dys</th>
<th>Kid ID #</th>
<th>Breed Boer, Nubian, Native mixed …..</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
WHAT RECORDS SHOULD YOU KEEP?

FINANCIAL RECORD

Records relate primarily to money or the financial interactions of the farm. Financial records justify or prove farm income or expense transactions. Information to be recorded includes:

- product sales,
- operating expenses,
- equipment purchases,
- accounts payable, accounts receivable,
- inventories, depreciation records, loan balances and price information.
CRITERIA FOR RECORDS

A. They must be useful
Unless data which is being recorded will at some future time be used (turned into information) in making management decisions it should not be recorded at all.

B. Records must be kept in such a form that they can be easily converted into information
Before keeping a record, the eventual end use must be decided upon so that the form in which the data are recorded will facilitate later analysis and interpretation. Too often the end use is not considered, and the usefulness of the data is severely impaired.
CRITERIA FOR RECORDS

C. Record keeping systems must be simple
Farmers have enough to do without burdening themselves with complex record keeping systems, that are difficult to understand and time consuming to complete, and therefore nearly impossible to delegate to employees.

D. Duplication must be avoided as much as possible
Some data may have to be recorded more than once in different forms, but this must be reduced to a minimum. In other words, if a record is to be made in the field, the recording system should be such that data can be conveniently entered in the field and does not have to be re-entered back at the office.
CRITERIA FOR RECORDS

E. Records must lead to actions being taken

Unless a record is specifically intended to be used for some future action or in management planning it should not be kept.
Reproductive Efficiency: - No of kids born/No of breeding females

Reproductive efficiency has profound effects on production efficiency, profitability, and sustainability of commercial livestock production. Optimal reproductive efficiency requires excellent management, not only of reproduction, but of the environment, feed, etc. Since objectives for reproductive efficiency are species and even herd or flock specific, data to monitor progress should be frequently collected, analysed, and reported.
USING YOUR RECORDS TO MAKE DECISIONS

KID REARING EFFICIENCY

Kid-rearing efficiency: No of kids/no of breeding females

The number of kids reared per doe is one of the most important single factors affecting the productivity of the goat herd. Consequently any measure that can increase the number of kids that are produced has a major impact on the profitability and viability of the sheep enterprise.
Weight and value of weaned kids produced per doe per annum

On average, weaning weights decrease as litter size increases and young does wean lighter kids than mature does. Buck kids are typically heavier than doe kids. Buck kids are compared only to other buck kids and doe kids compared to other doe kids.
USING YOUR RECORDS TO MAKE DECISIONS

Kidding interval (time between kiddings)

Average weights by group - male/female, single twin triplet etc

Mortality %
DEVELOPING A CODING SYSTEM FOR YOUR FARM

Animal identification and traceability systems: management tools for farmers

Farmers around the world appreciate the necessity of farm animal identification and traceability systems as management tools that provide direct and indirect benefits.
Benefits of Animal identification and traceability systems

The main benefits are:

- Help farmers to improve herd management at the farm level.
- These systems support farmers in protecting their ownership rights, while simultaneously preventing livestock theft and fraud.
- Help manage farm records.
- Helps provide consumers with safe food; it enables faulty products to be withdrawn from the market, preventing animal contamination and correcting problems at the source.
TAGGING YOUR GOATS

Easy to read tags.
The easiest tags to read have black print on white, yellow or orange tags. The hardest tags to read have hand printing on black, purple, brown, red or dark blue tags. Tags collect dirt and make darker tags harder still to read.

Reliable tags
The best place for tagging is in the centre of the ear about two thirds of the way up from the end. If you put the tags too low in the ear then the chances of losing the tag increases greatly as the tags may tear out.
USE LOGICAL NUMBERS

Tag numbers should follow logical and sensible orders. Use numbering systems that do not overlap (these systems are almost idiot proof). There is no need to put detailed tattoo numbers or even origin of the goat on the ear tag.

Logical numbering and good computer record systems will solve these problems easily. You may use different colours to represent different grades of goats or different years, but decide and stick to a system.
EXAMPLES OF TAGGING SYSTEM

| Year A | Green tags 1 to 500 |
| Year B | Yellow tags 501 to 1000 |
| Year C | Orange tags 1001 to 1500 |
| Year D | White tags 1501 to 2000 |

or

| Bucks Green tags | 1 to 1000 |
| Does Yellow tags | 1001 to 3000 |
| Wethers Orange tags | 3001 to 5000 |