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Goat Yoga

What is goat yoga and why are people talking about it?

By Mary Bowen



Photo by Mary Bowen

We have been in the business of renting goats to eat unwanted vegetation since 2011, and each year the interest in renting the goats grows larger. One thing I have noticed when people rent the goats is they enjoy sitting and watching the goats clear their property. But even more so people want to hold the goats and be near the goats.

What stands out the most for me when renting the goats is the sense of community the goats create. People are kind to each other, and they want to communicate with each other.

Yoga is an ancient art of meditating inward, learning how to center the body. Research shows that baby animals help people lower their blood pressure. They can calm down when being near or holding baby animals. When holding baby animals your breathing slows down, and the dopamine in the body rises giving you a sense of peace.

Although some think it is shameful to have goats in with a class of yoga students, we find it quite the opposite. The goats love the interaction as much as the participants do. There is even goat yoga for tots, taught by my 4-year granddaughter. For thirty minutes prior to the start of class, my granddaughter teaches the children that attend class with their moms about handling baby animals and that baby animals are fun to be around. The barnyard experience has been a great way for children to learn to not be afraid of livestock.

Adults that attend class sometimes are skeptical of attending but from nudging by a friend will attend and at the end of the class of signing up for the next

(Continued on page 8)

Drug Options for Coccidiosis

By Susan Schoenian

Coccidiosis (*Eimeria* spp.) is a troublesome disease in sheep and especially goats. Lambs and kids between the ages of 1 and 6 months are most commonly affected. Weaning is a particular stress that often leads to disease outbreaks. Diarrhea (scours) is the most common symptom, but any young lamb or kid showing signs of ill-thrift should be suspect.

One way to reduce the risk of coccidiosis is through the use of coccidiostats. Coccidiostats are substances that can be added to feed, mineral, water, or milk replacer. They disrupt the reproductive cycle of coccidia and reduce the shedding of coccidia oocysts (eggs). To be effective, coccidiostats need to be fed 3-4 weeks before the anticipated period of risk. They are commonly fed to ewes and does in late gestation and to young, growing lambs and kids. Intake is the limiting factor. Coccidiostats should not be fed year-round, as resistance could develop.

Lasalocid (Bovatec®) is FDA-approved as a coccidiostat for sheep (maintained in confinement). Monensin (Rumensin®) is FDA-approved as a coccidiostat for confined goats. Decoquinate (Deccox®) is FDA-approved for young sheep and goats. Bovatec® and Rumensin® are both ionophores, a class of antibiotics that are not used in human medicine. Ionophores have many potential benefits besides prevention of coccidiosis, but they (especially Rumensin®) can be toxic to equines and mixing errors have caused toxicity in ruminants.

Unfortunately, no drugs are FDA-approved to treat coccidiosis in sheep and goats. Amprolium (Corid®) is the drug most commonly used (extra-label). It is administered in the drinking water or via an oral drench; the latter is recommended to ensure adequate intake. It is better for treatment than prevention. While amprolium is available over-the-counter (OTC), its use requires a veterinary approval. Overuse of amprolium can predispose sheep and goats to polio.

Another class of drugs commonly used to treat coccidiosis in sheep and goats is sulfa antibiotics (e.g. sulfadimethoxine). As a result of last year's Veterinary Feed Directive, antibiotics administered in the water



must now be obtained from a veterinarian. This includes sulfa antibiotics. They are no longer available OTC. Producers who wish to use a sulfa antibiotic (e.g. Di-Methox®) for coccidia control need to contact their veterinarians prior to the risk period.

Two highly effective drugs are available internationally: toltrazuril (BayCox®) and diclazuril (Vecoxan®). Unfortunately, neither drug is currently available in the US. However, Marquis® (ponazuril), a metabolite of toltrazuril is available as an antiprotozoal for horses.

While sheep and goat producers are fortunate to have some medical options for dealing with coccidia, the best prevention is still good management. Good management starts with good sanitation and hygiene. Feeders and water receptacles should be kept free from fecal matter. Pens should not be overstocked. They should be clean and dry. Hot spots' on pasture need to be avoided.

Animals should not be unnecessarily stressed. Lambs and kids of significantly different ages should not be mixed. Good nutrition, starting with adequate intakes of colostrum, will improve disease tolerance. Healthy, well-nourished lambs and kids will develop immunity to coccidia, but exposure levels must not be so high as to cause clinical disease.

Editor's note: this article was originally published in the Delmarva Farmer and Lancaster Farming.



Junior Sheep & Goat Skillathon

The Junior Sheep & Goat Skillathon will be held Sunday, May 6 at the Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival. Registration will begin at 8 a.m. The contest will be held from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. Lunch (pizza and sodas) will be provided. Awards will be presented after lunch. The event is usually over by early to mid-afternoon.

The Skillathon is open to individual and teams of youth between the ages of 8 and 18. Youth compete according to their age as of January 1, 2018: junior, 8-10; intermediate, 11-13; and senior, 14-18. Teams consist of 3 or 4 youth from the same county, state, or program.

Skillathon stations will include sheep and goat breeds, fleece judging, fiber ID, sheep judging, equipment ID, Feed/forage ID, Meat ID, and a written test.

The Maryland Sheep Breeders Association provides ribbons and premiums to the top 10 individuals in each age category and festival t-shirts to the top three teams in each age category. This year's competition will include special awards for the top individuals in the three stations that pertain to wool/fiber.

Pre-registration is requested by April 30. The pre-registration link is <https://go.umd.edu/skillathon>. Registration information can also be sent to Susan Schoenian at (301) 432-2767 or sschoen@umd.edu.

For more information about the Skillathon, visit the Skillathon web page at <https://www.sheepandgoat.com/skillathon>. Links to study aides, including online quizzes, are available on the web page.

The Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival is always held the first full weekend in May. It is held at the Howard County Fairgrounds in West Friendship, Maryland. Parking is free, but there is a small fee to attend the Festival. For more information about the festival, go to www.sheepandwool.org.



Let's Grow Resources

Having awarded five rounds of grants in the past three years, the Let's Grow Program of the American Sheep Industry Association has developed a vast resource of research and information that will prove beneficial to sheep producers around the United States.

"That information is now available in an easy-to-use Let's Grow Resource Center that was recently developed with information obtained through the grant recipients," said Let's Grow Committee Chair and ASI Secretary/Treasurer Susan Shultz of Ohio. "That information can play a vital role in helping sheep producers increase their flock's productivity and efficiency."

Information will also be added as available from ongoing grant projects. Visit http://sheepusa.org/Resources_LetsGrowResources.



New Fact Sheets About Internal Parasites

The American Consortium for Small Ruminant Parasite Control (ACSRPC) will be publishing a set of fact sheets entitled "Best Management Practices to Control Internal Parasites in Small Ruminants." All fact sheets will be written and reviewed by members of the consortium. They will be published mostly in 2018. So far, two fact sheets have been published: 1) Pasture management; and 2) Copper oxide wire particles.

<https://www.wormx.info/bmps>

Between August 2013 and November 2017, fifty-eight (58) Timely Topics were published to the web site of the American Consortium for Small Ruminant Parasite Control (ACSRPC). The articles were written mostly by members of the consortium and covered a variety of topics. Of course, all topics pertained to internal parasite control in small ruminants. The Timely topics are in the process of being published as fact sheets (PDF). So far, eight topics have been published.

<https://www.wormx.info/timelytopics>



Proceedings Available On A Flash Drive

Proceedings from the Delmarva Small Ruminant Conference All Worms All Day are now available on a flash drive. The conference was held December 9, 2017, at Delaware State University. Speakers were members of the American Consortium for Small Ruminant Parasite Control (ACSRPC). All topics pertained to internal parasites (worms and coccidia).

To receive the flash drive, send your name and address, along with a \$10 check payable to the University of Maryland to All Worms All Day Flash Drive, Western Maryland Research & Education Center, 18330 Keedysville Road, Keedysville, MD 21756.

**GET YOUR
FLASH DRIVE**



**ALL
WORMS
ALL DAY**

Hold The Dates



December 8 – All Worms All Day

The 2017 Delmarva Small Ruminant Conferences All Worms All Day will be repeated. In 2018, it will be held Saturday, December 8 at the Western Maryland Research & Education Center in Keedysville, Maryland. The speakers and topics will be similar to the 2017 event at Delaware State University. The whole day will be devoted to internal parasites and speakers will be members of the American Consortium for Small Ruminant Parasite Control

January 19, 2019 – Lambing & Kidding School

After a few years break, the Biennial Lambing & Kidding School will be brought back. It will be held Saturday, January 19, 2019, at the Howard County Fairgrounds in West Friendship, Maryland. The featured speaker will be Kevin Pelzer, DVM, from the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine. There will be both an adult and youth program.

More Information On Sheep & Goats Can Be Accessed

www.sheepandgoat.com/

acsrpc.org or wormx.info

mdgoatquest.blogspot.com

www.sheep101.info/

www.facebook.com/MDSmallRuminant

issuu.com/mdsheepgoat

mdsheepgoat.blogspot.com

www.youtube.com/c/MarylandExtensionSmallRuminantProgram

Bluefaced Leicesters: What Makes Them Special ?

By Margie Smith

When approached by a friend and asked, "What makes a Bluefaced Leicester (BFL) so special?," I felt I had to tell the whole story. To begin, a BFL is a truly good dual-purpose animal: their fleece is superior (more on that in a bit) and they also create a good muscular frame with good amount of meat that is tender (even when they are no longer lambs!). In addition, they are from lines that go as far back as the 1900s and have not been compromised genetically since then. As a purebred, a BFL is what it is – no throwback genetics. The BFL is one of the three Leicester breeds, the other two being: Border Leicester and Leicester Longwools all originating from the UK and going back to Robert Bakewells' genetic creation.



Photo by Nancy Cox Starkey

The BFL has a great genetic base here in the USA. Our rams include some of the best flocks in Britain and we have enough genetic presence in the US to keep the breed viable. BFLs came to the US purebred, instead of being upgraded through AI from a different breed, so there is no chance of "throwback" genetics. USA breeders are really committed to maintaining the breed for both meat and wool. The BFL sheep in the USA have been very uniform in their characteristics. BFLs are great in a maternal terminal-sire program, and BFL sires improve the structure, wool and prolificacy of almost any breed, meat or fleece. The BFLs make good mothers with ease of lambing and good milk production for easily raising twins or triplets.

The Bluefaced Leicester has a clean head and neck with a beautiful "blue" face, as well as legs and belly that are free of wool. They are the perfect height for working with in the field – not too large that you'll be pushed around and not so small that you need to crawl under them to see what it going on! Their disposition is gentle – similar to most of the fleece breeds. As a female shepherd who often works alone with her flock, it is easy for me to worm, give vaccines and even change sheep sheets (involves lifting one hind foot at a time while keeping the sheep steady in the front).

Due to selective breeding for the "blue" face, Hexam (from Northumberland, UK) sheep breeders created a

breed that has one of the most predictable fleeces – you know what to expect and the fiber will not let you down. The BFL fleece is a longwool (6"-12" depending on the type of crimp or curl) with a high luster that stays with the fiber well after washing and dyeing. Knitters and spinners who have bought my fleeces in the past have created everything from socks to sweaters with the fiber. Each item that is made shows the luster that some breeders in the

USA have worked so hard to maintain. Katie Sullivan from Vermont stated, "My BFLx Cormos have the best of both worlds with lovely BFL structure and soft Cormo wool with just a little BFL-like twist to it." The yarn/ fiber of a purebred BFL will have a shimmer that sets it apart from Merino, Corriedale and even Alpaca. There is no mistaking BFL fiber when you see it – the fiber will glisten!

If you are looking for a quick-growing spring lamb that is purebred BFL, you may be disappointed. However, if using a terminal BFL sire on another breed, you will end up with amazing results for spring lambs. Should you want to use purebred BFL for meat, a fall lamb will not disappoint! The meat is tender and tasty with just the right amount of muscling and fat. Since BFLs are not bred to be the size of a small pony, there will not be a lot of waste – their legs are tall enough to keep that beautiful fleece off the ground, but not so tall that you are throwing away inedible leg parts! Dawn Richardson from Maryland stated that she will keep a ewe or ram until about four years old, then butcher it. The meat from that animal is as tasty and tender as any lamb from another breed!

The BFL fleeces in the USA are pleasing to the knitters and hand spinners. The wool is widely known, so selling it is as easy as saying "BFL"! At the Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival, to see a BFL fleece priced at \$60/lb. is not unusual. If the fleece is clean and without fault, it will easily bring that price! Bluefaced Leicesters can be white or natural-colored and no matter the color, the fleece will glisten before your eyes!



Photo by Nancy Cox Starkey

Twilight Tour & Tasting - June 13

The 4th Twilight Tour & Tasting will be held Thursday, June 13, 4 to 8 p.m., at the Washington County Agriculture Education Center and Western Maryland Research & Education Center.

The event is open to the public. Participants will have the opportunity to sample lamb and goat dishes and cheese made from sheep and goat milk. They can join in a wine tasting/pairing demonstration.

Arik Mills from Rik's Café (a restaurant in Hagerstown) will be the featured chef. Shepherd's Manor Creamery, Maryland's first and only licensed sheep dairy, and Caprikorn Farms, a licensed goat dairy, from Gapland, will showcase their small ruminant dairy products.

Patty Sanville from Budding Creek Farm in Frederick will give a fiber demonstration. Browsing Green Goats from Southern Maryland will discuss their business of leasing goats for vegetation control. Joe Fiola from University of Maryland Extension will explain how to match wine with meat and cheese.

The purpose of the Twilight Tour & Tasting is to showcase all things sheep and goat. Besides learning about the products and services provided by sheep and goats, participants can go on a wagon tour of the Western Maryland Research & Education Center to learn about



the sheep research being conducted by the University of Maryland.

Pre-registration is required for the event. Attendance will be capped at 100. The registration deadline is June 1. The registration fee is \$10 per person. Children under the age of 10 will be admitted for free. To register, go to

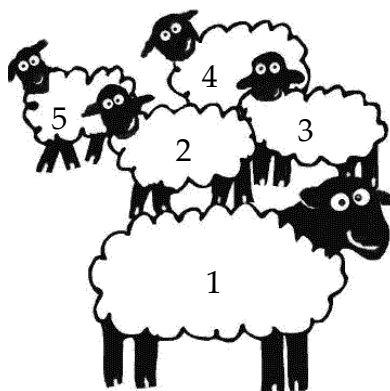


Counting Sheep: Slight Decline In US Sheep & Goat Inventory

Every January, USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) releases its annual Sheep & Goat Report which provides industry statistics. Compared to a year ago, both the US sheep and goat inventories declined slightly.

On January 1, 2018, sheep and lamb numbers totaled 5.23 million head, down slightly from 2017. The breeding sheep inventory declined 1%. The lamb crop was 2% less than 2016. The 2017 lambing rate was 105 lambs per 100 ewes one year and older, unchanged from 2016. The market sheep inventory was 2% higher than 2017.

Four percent fewer sheep were shorn in 2017. Wool production was down 5 percent. The average price paid for wool in 2017 was \$1.47 per pound. The average weight per fleece was 7.2 lbs.



On January 1, 2018, the goat and kid inventory totaled 2.62 million head, down 1% from 2017. Most of the goat inventory is classified as Meat and Other. It totaled 2.1 million head and was down 2% from 2017.

The inventory of dairy goats was up 2% from a year ago. It totaled 380 thousand head. The Angora goat population declined another 7% to 142 thousand head. The average Angora goat sheared 5.5 lbs. of mohair that sold for an average of \$5 per pound.

It is no longer possible to learn the size or trends of the Maryland sheep and goat population, as Maryland's data is lumped into "other states."

Read full report at <http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/usda/current/SheeGoat/SheeGoat-01-31-2018.pdf>

Sheep Research At WMREC

A sheep research program is being initiated at the Western Maryland Research & Education Center (WMREC) in 2018. The only other time, sheep were grazed at WMREC was 2005, the year that preceded the establishment of the Western Maryland Meat Goat Performance Test, which ended after 11 years (in 2016).



will be about 3 months old at the start of the study. During the study, they will be rotationally grazed among five 2-acre paddocks and ~2.5 acre silvopasture. This year, the lambs will graze mostly annual forages. Perennial forages will be established at the end of this

This year's research will compare the performance, carcass, and fertility traits of ram, wether, and short-scrotum lambs. A short-scrotum is a ram whose testicles have been pushed up inside his body cavity. The empty scrotum is banded.

Ram lambs grow faster and produce better carcasses than wether lambs. Because short-scrotum rams still have their testicles – thus testosterone secretion – they should grow similarly as ram lambs and produce similar carcasses. However, because their testicles are at body temperature, they should be infertile.

Sixty East Friesian x Lacaune lambs will be used for this year's study. They will have been previously weaned and

year's research project. The silvopasture contains cool season perennials.

While grazing, the lambs will be supplemented with a complete pellet.

At the end of the study, the lambs will be scanned to determine their loin depth and back fat. Five lambs from each group will be harvested to measure carcass traits.

At the end of the study, the lambs will be evaluated for libido and semen quality. Each lamb will be exposed to estrus-synchronized ewes to determine their desire to mate. Semen will be collected from lambs that successfully mount ewes. Blood will be drawn to determine testosterone levels.

Is it safe to raise lambs and kids on cow's milk?

It can be expensive to artificially rear lambs and kids. Though preferable, lamb and kid milk replacers can be expensive. Is store-bought cow's milk an alternative for feeding lambs and kids? Sadly for the dairy industry, retail milk prices are low, making store-bought milk cheaper than milk replacers, especially if you are paying higher prices for your bags of milk replacer.

Cow's milk should be a viable alternative for goat kids, as cow's milk contains a similar amount of fat and protein as goat's milk. However, sheep milk has twice as much fat and protein as cow (and goat) milk. Therefore, it is recommended that fat be added to cow's milk, if it is fed to lambs. Waste milk (milk from cows treated for mastitis) has been long advocated as a source of milk for artificially-reared lambs and kids.



European researchers conducted a study to compare the effect of milk source on body weight and immune status of lambs. Sixty lambs were divided into three groups. Twenty lambs were naturally reared by their dams. Twenty were fed a commercial milk replacer, and twenty were fed whole powdered cow's milk. During the milk feeding period, the naturally-reared lambs had higher body weights and immune parameters. By the end of weaning, the artificially-reared lambs compensated for the differences and showed higher body weights. There were no differences between the lambs fed milk replacer or cow milk during both periods. The researchers concluded that whole powdered cow milk was a cheaper and safe alternative for feeding lambs (Livestock Science, 2015)

Cost per 25-bag of milk replacer	\$40	\$50	\$60	\$70	\$80
Cost per gallon of milk reconstituted	\$2.86	\$3.57	\$4.29	\$5.00	\$5.71

*A bag of milk replacer makes approximately 14 gallons of milk (4 oz powder + 16 oz water).

Delayed Weaning Proves Beneficial

When do you wean your lambs? In 2014 and 2015, two experiments were conducted in Ohio to determine the effect of weaning age on the health and performance of lambs.

In the first experiment, two weaning options were compared: 1) lambs were either weaned at 60 days and put on pasture (PC); or 2) lambs were left with their mothers until weaning at 123 days (E). E lambs had higher body weights and average daily gain than PC lambs. While none of the E lambs required anthelmintic treatment, 41.7 percent of the PC lambs required deworming. The E lambs also had higher packed cell volumes.

In the second experiment, four weaning options were compared: 1) lambs were weaned at 60 days and put on pasture (PC); 2) lambs were left with their mothers until weaning at 123 days (E); 3) lambs were weaned at 60 days and placed on pasture with non-lactating, non-related ewes (SF); and 4) lambs were weaned at 60 days and put in a feed lot (FC). None of the E lambs required anthelmintic treatment, whereas 5, 50, and 55 percent of the lambs in the FC, PC, and SF groups required deworming. E lambs had the greatest final body weights, whereas the FC had the highest average daily gain.

Delayed weaning in both experiments proved to be beneficial. For producers that are interested in utilizing more pasture, decreasing the use of anthelmintics, and decreasing the amount of grain require to finish lambs, delayed weaning may be a viable option.

Source: Ohio's Country Journal, January 18, 2018



Photo by Brady Campbell

Goat Yoga (continued from page 1)

available class. Classes are an hour long and the first to sign up for each class get to feed the baby goats a bottle for before class. The classes are held outside on the grass which also supports the immune system and the endocrine system with what is called earthing. Earthing has been around for a long time teaching you that walking on the earth without shoes is good support for your body.

We look at health as all encompassing. Research has shown that prisoners in jail working with animals make great progress not getting into more trouble while incarcerated and helps them have a sense of purpose to be a better inmate to get parole. Veterans with PTSD have service dogs that help calm them when they have night terrors and so forth, goat yoga does the same thing. I have noticed that the goats know who needs the attention more and flocks to that person. Animals share love they don't hold back love like humans do. Exercise through yoga is great for the body but exercise through with goats is an act of self love. You learn to open your heart to yourself and others.

For more information about Goat Yoga visit www.goattobezenyoga.com

**Register
Now !**

The 2018 Junior Sheep & Goat Skillathon will be held Sunday, May 6, 8 a.m. to 12 noon, at the Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival, at the Howard County Fairgrounds in West Friendship, Maryland.

Upcoming Events



May 5-6

Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival

Howard County Fairgrounds, West Friendship, Maryland
Info: www.sheepandwool.org

May 6

Junior Sheep & Goat Skillathon

Howard County Fairgrounds, West Friendship, Maryland
Register at <https://go.umd.edu/skillathon>

June 13

Twilight Tour & Tasting

Washington County Agricultural Education Center,
Boonsboro, Maryland
Learn more and register at
<https://2018twilighttourtasting.eventbrite.com>

August 4

Pennsylvania Performance Tested Ram & Buck Sale and Invitational Ewe and Doe Sale

Pennsylvania Livestock Evaluation Center, PA Furnace, Pennsylvania
Info: <http://www.livestockevaluationcenter.com/>

August 25

Virginia Performance Tested Ram Lamb Sale and Replacement Ewe Sale

Virginia Tech Shenandoah Valley Research & Education Center, Steele's Tavern, Virginia
Info: <https://www.apsc.vt.edu/extensionandoutreach/Sheep-Extension/sheep-programs/va-ram-test.html>

September 28

Southwest Virginia AREC Sheep Field Day & Ram Test Sale

Virginia Tech Southwest Agricultural Research & Education Center, Glade Spring, Virginia
Info: <https://www.apsc.vt.edu/extensionandoutreach/Sheep-Extension/sheep-programs/swarec-ram-test.html>

December 8

Delmarva Small Ruminant Conference: All Worms All Day

Western Maryland Research & Education Center, Keedysville, Maryland
Info: Susan Schoenian at (301) 432-2767 x343 or sschoen@umd.edu.

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