GOAT MANAGEMENT

A practical Guide for the Highland Areas of Uganda



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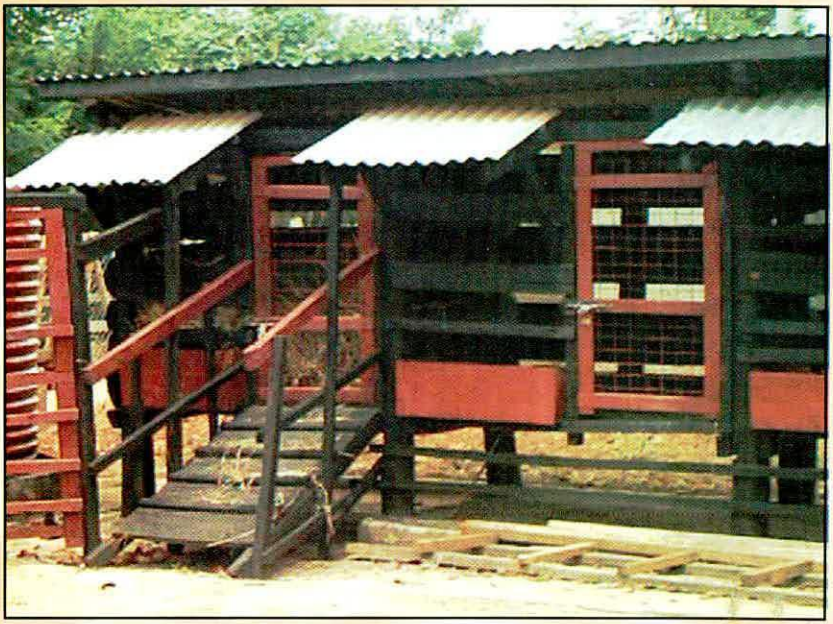
INTRODUCTION

- Highland areas are densely populated with little land for production of both food for humans and fodder for animals.
- Smallholder farmers in these areas can keep goats for meat, milk, cash and other social benefits
- Goat production is limited by lack of quality fodder as the goats are fed mainly on residues from food crops
- Supplementation with high-quality protein-rich fodder and improved housing, breeding and disease control are a key to increased productivity.

HOUSING

- House goats to protect them from coldness and rain. New born kids can suffer from extreme coldness. House goats in or adjacent to the kitchen to keep the kids warm at night.
- House the goats on a raised slatted floor. This helps to keep the goats clean
- Compartments of 1 x 1 m can house 2 goats up to 30 kg or 3 weaners up to 18 kg
- Avoid dumpness and accumulation of manure in and around the house



Modern goat house with raised slated floor

FEEDING

- Good nutrition is very important for profitable goat farming because it affects all other production parameters i.e. reproduction, growth, and disease resistance.
- Sufficient feed must be available throughout the year
- Lactating does have higher requirements compared to when they do not have kids.
- During late pregnancy allow a lot of feed to increase the weight of the unborn kid and the kids' ability to survive
- Kids must suckle and take in colostrum as soon as possible after birth in order to build up a natural resistance to disease and take in feed.

- Provide water to the goats all the time.

SUPPLEMENTATION

Most locally available forages and crop residues are deficient in protein and must be supplemented with a combination of energy and protein feeds.

- ***Local Energy sources*** *are* maize bran, rice bran, wheat bran and ***Protein sources*** *are* cottonseed cake, lablab hay, sunflower seed cake, sweet potato vines, calliandra leaf hay, leucaena leaf hay.
- Local indigenous trees e.g. mango and ficus are good supplements during the dry season. They also have medicinal properties.
- Provide mineral blocks for goats to have regular access

PRODUCTION OF LEGUMES FOR SUPPLEMENTATION

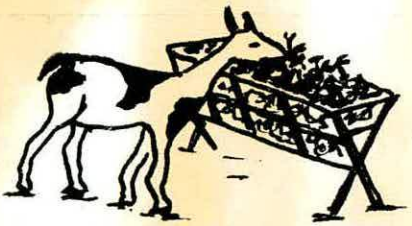
- Tree legumes like calliandra and leucaena should be planted in rows at the edges of the garden.
  Forage should be stripped from the legume trees and the stemmy part left for fuelwood.
- Lablab should be undersown between the rows of perennial crops e.g. banana and coffee.
- It should be cut back for feeding before climbing the banana or coffee trees.



Lablab forage plated under banana plantation

FEEDING GUIDE

- Chop up the forage and place in a feed box or tie the forage in a bundle and allow to hang from a height of 3 ft above the ground
- Provide fresh crop residue all the time. Use the following guide
  - Crop residues + 120 g dry legume leaves + 100 g bran or,
  - Crop residues + 60 g cottonseed cake + 100 g bran or,
  - Crop residues + 60 g sunflower cake + 100 g bran
- Provide a mixture of forages or residues daily
- Allow the forage to lose some water by wilting for a day before feeding.
- Harvest legumes and dry in shade. Store for use as supplement in the dry season.



Best way to offer cut forage to goats is by putting it in a rack

REPRODUCTION MANAGEMENT

- Local and exotic breeds which may be for milk, meat or both can be used.
- Local breeds like the Mubende, and exotic breeds like Boer, Toggenburg, Anglo-Nubian are suited for the highland areas.
- Because of the very low temperatures during the rain season mate the does to kid during the hot months (December -January) and June - July) i.e. mate in July and February
- Do not use bucks that are related to the does. Periodically buy a buck from outside of your flock to avoid inbreeding
- Select the fast growing animals for use in breeding. The animals selected should be free of any abnormalities
- Before mating give the animals more feed to increase the number of eggs produced

PREVENTING DISEASE IN GOATS

- Give a dewormer every 4 months. Make sure to give the correct dose.
- Keep the animals protected from cold and rain.
- Avoid accumulation of manure in the house by cleaning the houses regularly.

- Keep the goats free of ticks and mites by spraying.
- Feed the goats well. Do not feed moldy or wet feedstuffs
- Kids should be allowed to suckle colostrum immediately after birth.
- Provide clean water for drinking all the time
- Separate sick animals from healthy ones.
- Report any illness to the veterinary staff.

RECORD KEEPING

- Give each goat a number or name.
- Buy a hard cover book and have a page for each animal you have.
- Keep a record of each event/ activity regarding the animal e.g. date of birth, name of father, name of mother, date mated, date weaned, date of kidding, date of sickness and the treatment given etc.
- An example of good record sheet is given below

Number /Name	025/Gotti
Date born	10-06-2002
Buck used	Jogo
Date	**Description**
01-12-2003	*Kidded twins, 1 male & 1 female*
15-12-2003	*Male kid dead*
02-03-2004	*Female kid weaned*

GENDER AND GOAT PRODUCTION

- Most of the actual goat husbandry work is carried out by women and children

- Goats are owned by all gender categories in a homestead
- If goat productivity is enhanced income and well being of entire families will be improved

MARKETING

- Sell animals that are not needed for breeding at 1 year of age.
- Take the weight using a tape and estimate weight of meat to be 55% of the live weight.
- Goats born in December/January are ready for market around Christmas and those born in June/July are ready around June. These are periods of highest demand.



Goats being fed on banana leaves—lablab mixture

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