

***Goat Husbandry and Health***

Hilary Matthews (1996). Farming Press Videos: Ipswich. Colour VHS video. 48 minutes. Obtainable from the publishers, Farming Press Books and Videos, Miller Freeman Professional Ltd, Wharfedale Road, Ipswich IP1 4LG, UK (ISBN 0 85236 352 4). Price £15.99 plus £2.50 postage and packing.

This is a very professionally made, down-to-earth video. I almost wrote 'no nonsense' video, but the lighter side of goat-keeping with some amusing shots of kids playing 'king of the castle', and does having their faces washed in preparation for the show ring feature alongside all the basic good sense imparted by Hilary Matthews and her veterinarian husband, John.

The video runs for 48 minutes and deals, as one would expect from the title, with most of the basic elements of husbandry and health. The cover states that beginners and experts alike will benefit from seeing good health and husbandry practices in action. What it does not say is that the video is very much aimed at the beginner, and that it contains little that most goatkeepers, let alone experts, do not already know. However, a refresher course in the basics is no bad thing.

The video considers in some detail, the different goat breeds and their origins, and explains the distinctions between Saanens and British Saanens and Toggenburgs and British Toggenburgs, which still confuse many who ought to know. It also defines the 'British' goat (ie any other variety, or AOV in show ring jargon) and deals, too, with Anglo Nubians, British Alpines, Golden Guernseys, Boer Goats, Pygmies, Angoras and cashmere goats.

If the emphasis is on the dairy goat, that is understandable in view of their predominance in the national goat herd. A little bit more on fibre goats would not have gone amiss however, as some aspects of their husbandry are not well known. The video shows an Angora goat being shorn by the method traditionally used for sheep, whereas some would contend that, because goats are a different shape from sheep, it is preferable to shear them in the standing position. No mention is made of harvesting cashmere, either by combing or shearing.

The section dealing with housing is comprehensive and covers all the important points. Goats are, with justification, described in the video as accidents waiting to happen, and attention to the points made will help to prevent injury to the animals and damage to the goatshed and its furnishings. The need for strong, secure buildings and pens is well made; as the commentary says, Houdini had nothing on goats when it comes to finding new ways to escape! The video makes a lot of good, if commonsense points, right down to the siting of the muckheap!

The technique of hand milking is described well, although machine milking is not mentioned. The importance of hygiene in the handling of the milk is rightly emphasized, and the video shows all the stages from the milking itself to the filling of cartons of milk for sale. Unfortunately no mention is made of the important public health rules and regulations which surround the production of milk for sale to those who either prefer goat's milk or are allergic to cow's milk.

Goat health is dealt with by John Matthews, who is a leading expert in this important subject. He goes through the contents of the medicine chest which should be found on all goat farms, no matter how large or small, but all too often is not. He also gives good

demonstrations of the correct techniques of administering subcutaneous and intramuscular injections and deals with clostridial vaccination programmes for the different ages and classes of goats. The need for caprine arthritis and encephalitis (CAE) testing is made more than once, but unfortunately there is no mention of what course of action to take if a test should prove positive.

The health section also deals with the different types of anthelmintics available and gives easily followed advice on using them in rotation to prevent the build up of resistance to one particular type. The video shows a goat being given its anthelmintic dose from a syringe; many would prefer to make the modest investment required for a proper dosing gun. The need to pay attention to feet is rightly emphasized and the technique of foot-trimming is well demonstrated. Surprisingly, omissions include the failure to advocate the regular use of footbaths to prevent foot-rot and combat scald, and how to treat the various foot problems which almost inevitably occur in even the best-managed herds.

The subject of nutrition is dealt with from the viewpoint of the dairy goat farmer. While there is some mention of protein levels here and there, and of the benefits of a varied diet, no guidance is given as to quantities of the various roughages and concentrates for goats of different levels of milk production and for dry stock. Perhaps this important subject will be dealt with in another video. The cover contains useful information on the effects of poisonous plants, but unfortunately there is no mention there or in the video as what remedial action to take if, by misadventure, some of these plants are eaten.

Breeding, in the reproductive rather than the genetic meaning of the term, is dealt with only very briefly, and the important subject of kidding not at all. In fairness, the video cover does make clear that there is a companion tape on *Goat Breeding and Kid Rearing*, but the omission of this topic leaves a serious gap in this video on goat husbandry.

Overall, it is a good video, well put together and professionally produced. It will be particularly useful to anyone contemplating entering the fascinating and rewarding world of goatkeeping. Adherence to the principles outlined by Hilary and John Matthews must make a positive contribution to goat well-being in particular and animal welfare in general.

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***Electronic Identification, Monitoring and Tracking of Animals***

R Geers, B Puers, V Goedseels & P Woulters (1996). CAB International: Wallingford. 176pp. Hardback. Obtainable from the publishers, Wallingford, Oxon OX10 8BE, UK (ISBN 0 85199 123 8). Price £30.

The book is hardbound with laminated paper-covered boards, dimensions 160mm wide and 235mm tall. It has a 13 page introduction, 137 pages of text in 6 chapters, a 10 page bibliography and an 8 page index. There is a total of 43 line drawings, 22 tables and 7 half-tone illustrations.

BSE has focused attention on animal welfare and traceability, but the latter has always been important as bovine tuberculosis, swinefever, foot and mouth outbreaks and rabies scares at other times have proved. Telemetry in both farming and wildlife studies is used increasingly as a management tool and is indeed a subject on which a book is welcome.