

**Dual Subjects:
Sustainable Marketing
and
Chlamydia Induced Kidding Problems
OMGP Education Article March 2008**

Sustainability. This is a word that we will see being used more often. I don't know how many of you read a recent article about a slaughter house in Chino, California. They have been found guilty of 'egregious violations' of federal animal care regulations by the USDA. The Dept. of Agriculture has now 'formally withdrawn their inspectors' from this facility. The bottom line of this whole horrid tale is that sick animals were being readied for 'inspection' utilizing inhumane measures. High pressure water into nostrils, electrical shock and forklifts were used to make sure that these bovines were standing for inspection by the USDA. The original article noted that the inspectors came at prescheduled intervals so that the facility could be ready for inspection. MMM what about that fast food burger or the 'sloppy joe' that your child had for lunch? This is precisely why 'sustainability' is becoming a household word.

What does sustainability mean? I am sure that it is different for many people but what it says to me is a product that can be provided on a regular basis. To me this is a product that is created with quality in mind for a consumer who wants to avoid the many hazards of mass production. Super bacteria and incurable diseases are being introduced into our market places. We are terrified not to follow through with government tracking of our animals and yet huge slaughter houses that are 'inspected' are moving diseased animals onto American's dinner plates. I don't know about you but I am moving toward making sure that my meat, eggs, milk, produce etc. is coming from a source that is responsible. Our goat meat is a prime example of such a source.

Marketing is part of the mission statement of OMGP. As a not for profit organization, we cannot market your animals for you. What we can do is create education about the markets that are either available or how to create a market for yourself in your own locale. Here in the Willamette Valley there are emerging entities to help with creating markets. Area 1 is connecting with their local community college in working toward sustainable marketing. I am in the process of joining a group in Lane County that has similar aspirations. Since we live in more densely populated areas, the opportunities are more numerous. As we gain knowledge and experience with local sustainability, we should be able to bring this to the more outlying areas either to help them create their own markets or to include them as sources of product to bring in when the demand in certain areas is higher than others. The main aim of sustainability is to create and market your product close to home. Consumers are becoming wary and want to be more aware of the handling of the product that they are going to purchase. Local marketing also keeps overhead lower which is essential to stay in business. One of the local sheep

farmers sells his lambs at the farm level to the consumer. When the lambs are ready for slaughter, he has a mobile business pick up the animals. The rest of the handling is done off his farm with the pick up of the end product by the consumer. He is paid by each consumer prior to the animal leaving the farm. This eliminates any transport costs and the pure hassle of loading and delivering. He deals with a well known outfit that has a good reputation. He has created a responsible, sustainable way of marketing his animals. It is personal and his customers can be as aware as they want with the care and handling of the animal that they purchase. His business is by word of mouth. Utilize contacts in your own communities to introduce consumers to your product. Stay local and create a market that is sustainable.

Another matter that has come to my attention is the fact that there seems to be an increased incidence of kid loss this year. In my own herd, my first two does had premature births with no surviving kids. Both does were healthy and well fed. The fetuses were well formed. We have had a few more does that have had floppy kids. In a set of twins I would have one vigorous kid and one who had no desire to get up and attempt to survive. Most of the kids that failed were of good size that was equal or surpassed the size of the other successful kid. My does receive optimal feeding and are wormed and immunized. So what gives? I sure felt like a failure until I heard that others are having the same problem. I received an email that told me of a 'virus carried in by ravens'. I had to sit and think about this for awhile. There is the fact that ravens, crows and other such birds frequent our barn and pasture areas in search of grain fragments to feed on. They move in groups from farm to farm so therefore could be moving some sort of infectious disease on their feet. There is a transmittable disease that can cause abortions and such. It is called Chlamydia. In humans this is a sexually transmittable disease. It is also transmitted in goats in the same manner. Most often, Chlamydia shows up after you have introduced new animals into your herd. I did bring in some new does this year. A couple of weeks after they arrived, the majority of the yearlings that they were housed with developed a laryngitis that was followed by a cough. This malady eventually spread to my older does but only affected a portion of them. None of the affected animals ever appeared ill. They had good appetite and no weight loss or other problems. All three of the new does who were also maidens had birthing problems, floppy kids and retained placenta. I wrote this off to being maidens but with the ongoing problem in the rest of my kidding season, I suspect that there is a common denominator. This really underlines the need to isolate all of the new animals that are introduced to your farm for a minimum of thirty days. This bacteria, key word here is bacteria not a virus, is treatable with the use of antibiotics. If you have had a lot of problems with kid loss this year, it would be a good idea to call your vet and get a recommendation for how to treat your herd to avoid the problem in your next kidding cycle. This would include treatment of your bucks as well as the does. Disposing of any products of the kidding process is a must to prevent increasing the incidence in your bedding areas. My guardian dog is meticulous about getting this job done for me. I was still not quite sure about what was going on in my herd until I noticed that the last kids born a few days ago had developed conjunctivitis. This is pink eye to the lay person. That was my confirming factor as Chlamydia not only causes kidding problems but also can cause eye and lung problems as well. I can't really stop the process in my herd this year but I am going to

contact my vet as to what would be the best way to treat my herd. Next time I have an unusual occurrence in my herd such as the laryngitis and cough episode, I am going to question until I get an answer. Having a 50% mortality rate in kids this year is a mistake that I don't want to see repeated. My next kidding cycle will be in June and I want to make sure that those does are successful. I hope that this answers some questions that you may have.

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Spring is upon us! Happy goating.

Linda DeHart