

Educational Articles

By Faron Stubbert

How to Beat the Heat

What do the Goats need to beat the heat, besides their horns that acts as a radiator? Water of course. So make sure they have plenty of fresh water on hand along with plenty of shade. Based on my experience, as long as I give shade and water, my Goats do fine, even the dehorned ones although they do pant. I have heard that you should only feed your Goats grain in the early morning or late evening, not during the day. Some even suggest not feeding them grain at all during the hot days when it's above 90 degrees. No matter what you feed them, it's a good idea to do so in the shade, so they aren't forced to go out in the hot sun to feed.

Goats Will Eat Anything

Just about everyone out there believes that Goats will eat anything, including tin cans and your clothes etc. Anyone who raised Goats knows how untrue this is and how finicky the Goats are. My experience, the Goats love blackberry bushes, so much that they will bust thru a fence to get to those blackberry vines, at the same time, there are types of grass in the pasture they won't touch. They will eat most types of grass, but they eat their favorites first and leave the least favorite for last.

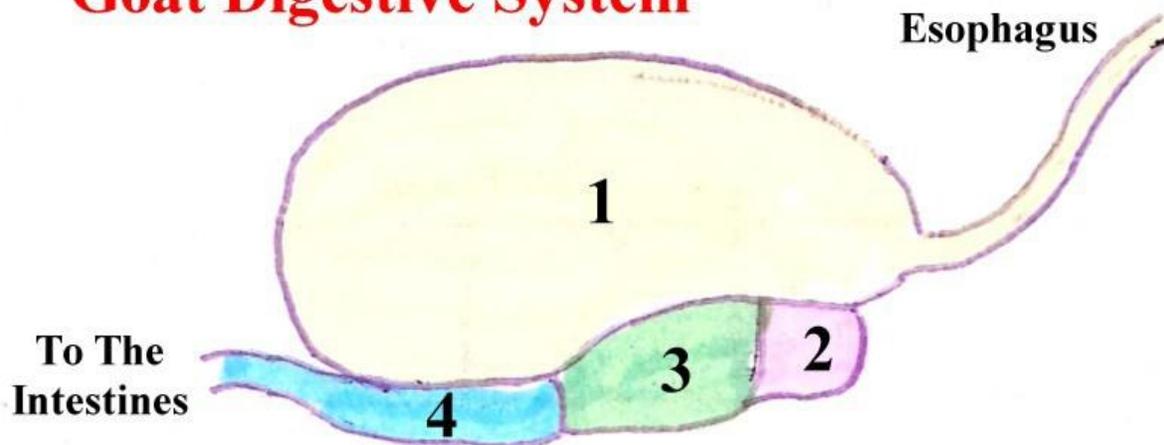
During Spring and thru the Summer, if you irrigate your pasture, the only supplement I give the Goats is good quality grain, but come Fall and especially Winter, you should have plenty of bales of quality grass stored in your barn. So, during the Summer months you should fill your barn with good quality grass such as Alfalfa, Orchard and Timothy. You want to make sure moisture can't get to your hay by keeping it off the ground. Some say sprinkle salt on your bales to absorb the moisture.

The Many Chambers of The Goats Stomach

Goats are in a group of animals called ruminants, which chew their cud and have four chambers in their stomach that are designed to digest foods that are high in fiber such as grass. The four chambers are the rumen, reticulum, omasum and the abomasums (the true stomach). The sizes of each chamber of the stomach change, as the goat grows older.

1. **R UMEN** – Most of the nutrients that are needed to provide energy for your goat are absorbed in the rumen. As the feed ferments by the process of the bacteria and the protozoa that supply an enzyme that breaks down the fiber, creates heat that helps keep the goat warm. The process also produces proteins and vitamin B. Gas can build up during the fermenting process and if the goat can't burp out the gas, it'll keep on building up and the goat will become sick with 'Bloat'.
2. **R ETICULUM** – Once the cud is small enough, it'll pass into the reticulum where any foreign objects will settle thru the honeycomb walls to be disposed of.
3. **O MASUM** – The fermenting particles then pass into the omasum where it removes water and absorbs more nutrients called volatile fatty acids that help supply energy.
4. **A BOMASUM** – Then the particles are forced into the abomasums where they are digested by the stomach acids, (hydrochloric acid), similiar to what occurs in our stomach.

Goat Digestive System



- 1. Rumen**
- 2. Reticulum**
- 3. Omasum**
- 4. Abomasum**

The kid's stomachs are much different than the adults. The abomasums chamber is the largest chamber in the kid as the rumen chamber is the largest chamber in adults. This is due to the kid's drinking milk as it is passed directly into the abomasums chamber. As the kid starts to eat grass and grain, the rumen chamber will slowly get larger as the abomasums chamber gets smaller. By the time the kid is an adult and fully eating grass and grain with no milk, the rumen chamber will become the largest chamber.