

Control internal parasites to keep goats healthy

DOVER, Del. — Goats are very susceptible to many kinds of internal parasite including tapeworms, several types of roundworm, pinworms and lungworms. Their eating habits are partly to blame.

A milking goat consumes anywhere from 25 to 40 percent of its body weight in grass compared to 15 percent for sheep and 20 percent for cows. Since worm larvae often enter host animals by way of infested grass, this means the goat probably ingests more larvae (for its size) than these other ruminants. It also has relatively more stomach wall area for its size than they do. So there's a lot more surface to which worms can attach themselves.

Sue Waterman is a pre-vet major at the University of Delaware who raises goats. Last semester she did a special student project on the internal parasites which afflict them, under the guidance of dairy specialist Dr. George Haenlein. They both agree that worms can be a serious problem in goats.

Signs of infestation include weight loss, listlessness, and roughness of coat. There may be a drop in milk production, or poor growth in kids. Itching may indicate pinworms. And since many parasites feed on blood, anemia is often a symptom.

It's also possible for an apparently healthy animal to be infested. So the surest way to know whether a goat has worms is to take a federal sample and have this analyzed.

Certain environmental conditions increase the chance of

parasitism, says Waterman. Pastures that are fouled with goat manure provide favorable hatching conditions for eggs. Once larvae hatch they climb the grass, ready for grazing animals. It's easier for larvae to crawl up wet grass, so wet pastures add to a parasite problem.

Trying to keep too many goats in too little space can lead to parasitism. Since sheep and goats share the same parasites, this can contribute to the problem. (It should be noted that these parasites do not transfer to people.)

Any stress that lowers an animal's resistance is an invitation for parasites to take their toll. These stresses include illness, old age, crowding, and heavy milk production. Changing from hard food to soft, or vice versa, can make a goat's digestive tract more susceptible to parasite attack. Kids that lose too much weight after weaning may suffer serious worm damage. Heavy infestations are more likely to occur in older, heavy producing does or young, recently weaned kids than they are in the average backyard doe.

Waterman says there are many ways to disrupt the life cycle of parasitic worms. Avoid overstocking pastures by rotating and resting them as needed. Be sure the land is well drained. Manure is a source of contamination, so remove it promptly. Keep it away from food and water. And wean kids away from older animals because these can infect them.

Such preventive measures are very important. But the best

control is to worm your goats regularly. Since worms can become resistant to a compound that's used repeatedly, frequent changes of medication are advisable.

Many kinds of worm medicine are available. If your veterinarian does the job for you, make a note of the medication used. It's your responsibility as owner to remember the compound and see that the treatment is changed often enough.

You can also administer the

wormer yourself. But take care not to exceed the recommended dosage or to stress an animal unduly. Make sure that the medicine is compatible with pregnancy since some worm medicines will abort goats. It's best to worm goats when they have just recently freshened (had kids). Milk from treated goats should not be used for human consumption for 96 hours.

This is an excellent time to worm goats because, with frost or snow on pastures, there's no chance of

reinfection.

With the proper precautions to avoid contamination and spread of larvae and with the proper worming medications, you can keep infestations to a minimum.

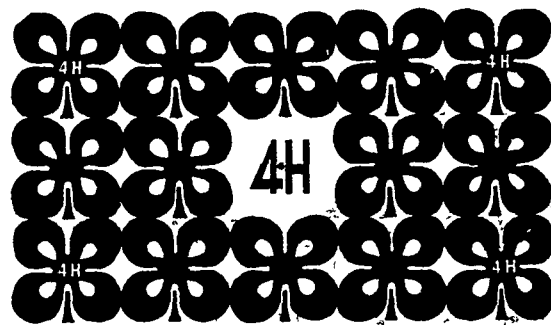
Both Waterman and Haenlein agree that worming pays. With fewer worms there will be less stress on the goat's system. As owner you'll benefit, too. Your goat will do its job better - whether that job is producing milk or mowing the lawn.

Brenda Walters is Jr. Simmental president

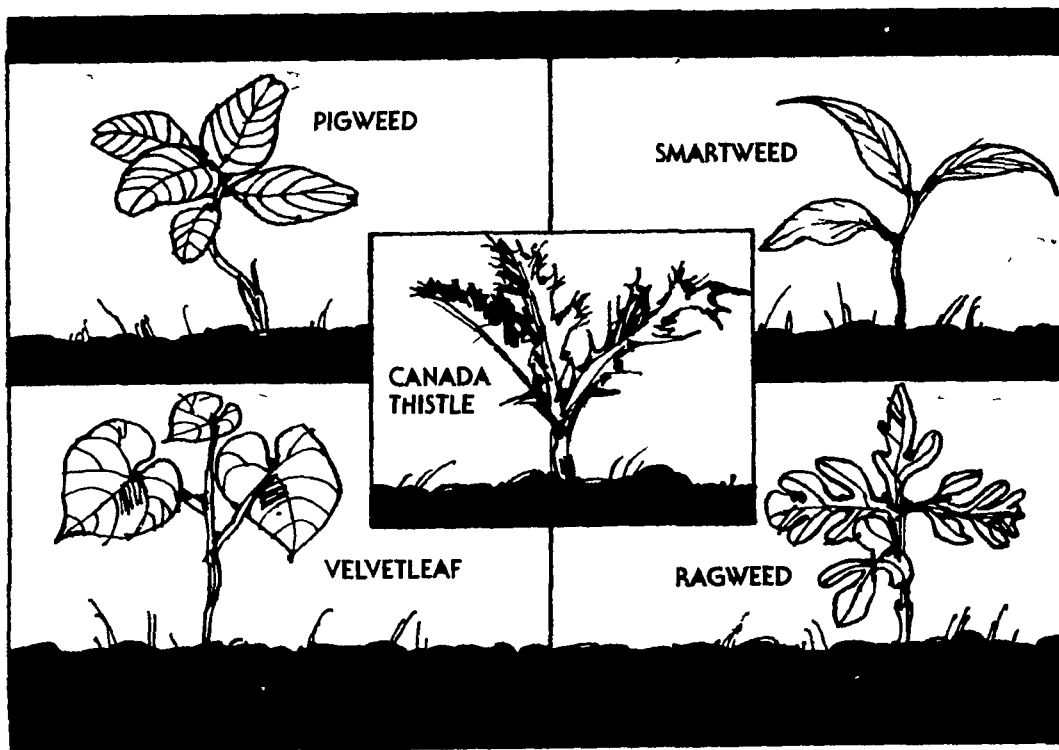
STATE COLLEGE — Brenda Walter of R2, Airville, was elected to serve as the first president of the Pennsylvania Junior Simmental Association.

Brenda is 19 years old and lives on a 150 acre farm with her family. She has been involved in livestock and meat judging contests at county, regional, state and national levels. Brenda is presently employed by the York County Agriculture Extension Service where she works with the 4-H program.

Other Junior officers are Joe Messick, vice president; Josephine Popp, secretary; and LeRoy Bowles, treasurer.



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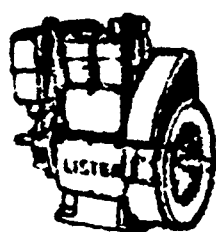
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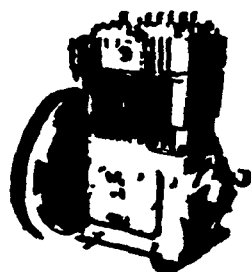
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