

Table 7.1. The effects of breeding season and breed of sire on the reproductive performance of native does

Effect	# of Does Exposed	Kidding Rate ¹	Kidding % ²	Prolificacy ³	Twinning Rate ⁴
A. Overall	#	%	%	%	%
	120	86.7	167.7	192.2	81.5
B. Breeding Season					
1. Fall 1987	38	89.5	181.6	202.9	88.2
2. Summer 1988	39	92.3	179.5	194.4	86.1
3. Spring 1989	43	79.1	141.9	179.4	70.2
C. Breed of Sire					
1. Native - 1987	13	92.3	207.7	225.0	91.7
2. Nubian - 1987	12	91.6	158.3	172.7	72.7
3. Spanish - 1987	13	84.6	176.9	209.1	100.0
1. Native - 1988	19	94.7	184.2	194.4	88.8
2. Nubian - 1988	20	90.0	175.0	194.0	83.3
3. Spanish - 1988	--	--	--	--	--
1. Native - 1989	14	78.6	150.0	190.0	81.8
2. Nubian - 1989	14	78.6	121.4	154.0	45.5
3. Spanish - 1989	15	80.0	160.0	200.0	83.3
¹ Kidding Rate = No. of does kidding/does exposed.					
² Kidding Percentage = No. of kids born/does exposed.					
³ Prolificacy = No. of kids born/does kidding.					
⁴ Twinning Rate = No. of multiple births/total no. of kiddings.					
SOURCE: Florida A&M University Meat Goat Research Project.					

The progressive meat goat producer should want optimal performance from his or her animals, and the input of nutrients must be ample to bring this about. Therefore, quality forage, hay, grains, and the utilization of forbs and browse plants, crop residues and crop by-products can provide a balanced feed program for goats raised for meat.

Pastures

Pastures are usually the cheapest source of essential nutrients for grazing livestock. Good permanent pastures containing a mixture of cool season perennials or reseeding legumes, warm season perennial grasses and temporary forages should provide grazing for a normal year. Some of the best pastures for goats raised for meat in Florida are bahiagrass, millet, sorghum, sudan grass, and a mixture of a grain, grass and clover (rye, ryegrass and crimson clover).

Forbs and Browse Plants

Forbs refer to any herbaceous broad leaf plants without regard to family classification. Browse plants include plants other than grasses and forbs but are usually taller plants such as trees, shrubs, and vines having woody stems.

Goats are natural browsers and weed eaters. Forbs and browse plants can contribute to an overall feeding program for goats. The nutritive strategy of goats appears to be to select grasses when their protein content and digestibility are high, but to switch to forbs and browse plants when their overall nutritive value may be higher. Leguminous forbs and browse plants, for example, commonly contain more than 25% crude protein, whereas perennial grasses seldom exceed 15% in crude protein content. The energy contents for fruits, seeds and nuts of forbs and browse can exceed 1.6 megacalories (MCal) digestible energy per pound of dry matter. In grass foliage, 1.2 MCal per pound of dry matter is considered high quality.