

Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect

Craig Painter

State Agent

New Mexico State University



Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect

- Getting into the championship lineup is a combination of skill, knowledge, and just a little good luck.
- Remember that the goal of your market project isn't just to win or make the sale, but to provide an opportunity for the personal growth and development of the exhibitor.



Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect

- Regardless of the breed, sex or age of the goat, there are physical characteristics that the animals at the top of the line should have in common.
- This workshop is going to focus on teaching what those traits are.

Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect

- The first step in selecting a goat is to get a copy of the show rules.
- Rules vary a LOT from county to county and show to show. They will tell you:
 - When you have to have ownership of the goat;
 - What sexes are allowed;
 - The minimum and maximum weights;
 - Age, horn and clipping restrictions.

Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect

- The second step should be to look at enough goats to recognize what a healthy, appropriately grown goat kid looks like.
 - A noticeably undersized or unhealthy goat will probably never catch up.
 - Don't buy problems. You will get to experience enough on your own.

Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect



Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect

- Next, consider some of the factors that will influence how you will have to manage and feed these goats to get them where they need to be at show time.
 - Breed (Pure Boer, Boer crossed with Spanish, Nubian, etc.)
 - Age (Will they be growing fast, or have to be held back).
 - Sex (already wethered, intact buck, female)
 - Frame size (compact or stretchy).
 - Timing of management operations (such as weaning, castration and dehorning).
- These can all cause significant difference in the final size, weight and finish of two goats fed exactly the same way.

Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect

- Decide how much you are willing to pay for a project goat.
- Goats from a breeder that has had success selling high placing goats will cost more, but there is a better chance of getting a quality kid that has had a better start.
- If you wait until the last minute to buy a goat, you will either pay outrageously for it, have to travel quite a ways, or get picked-over junk.
- Also, remember, that you don't buy just one goat. They are social animals and do not do well by themselves. You also always want a backup goat in case something goes wrong.



Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect

- Finally, consider the child that will be showing the goat.
- When judging, I have seen too many unhappy 60 pound, 9 year old children being drug around the ring by an undertrained, overly aggressive or flighty, 120 pound wether.
- That is not the positive, confidence inspiring learning experience that we want this project to be.

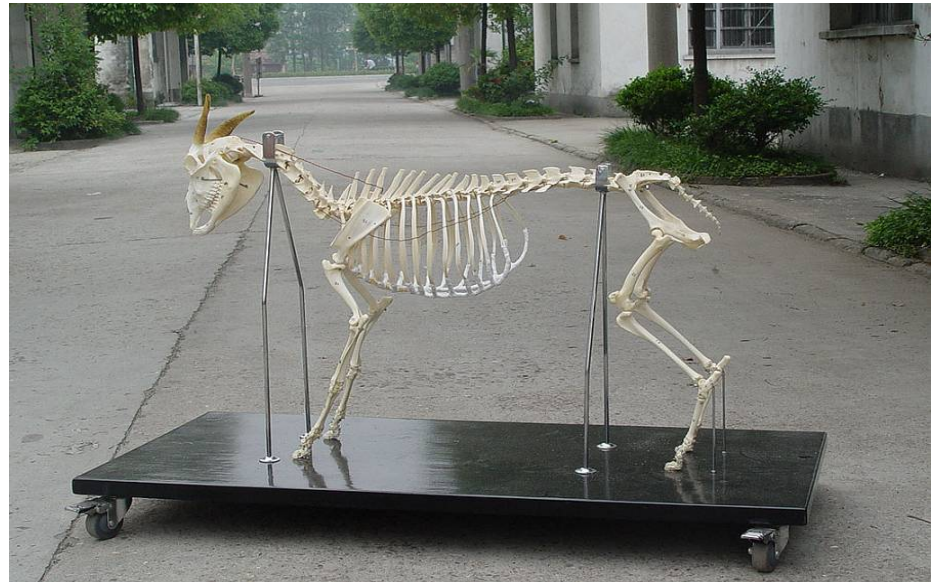
Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect

- At last, time to actually go out and look at the goats.



Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect

- The first thing we want to look for is the structural correctness of the animal.
- This is how the bones are put together.
- Everything starts with that framework, and if it isn't right, it doesn't matter how good the fit and finish of the goat is, it will not be at the top of a competitive show.



Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect

- Starting with the neck, it should tie in high at the shoulder, with no dip in front of the top of the shoulder blade.



Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect

- The back should be fairly straight from the top of the shoulder to the hip. Some depression in the chine is normal.



Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect

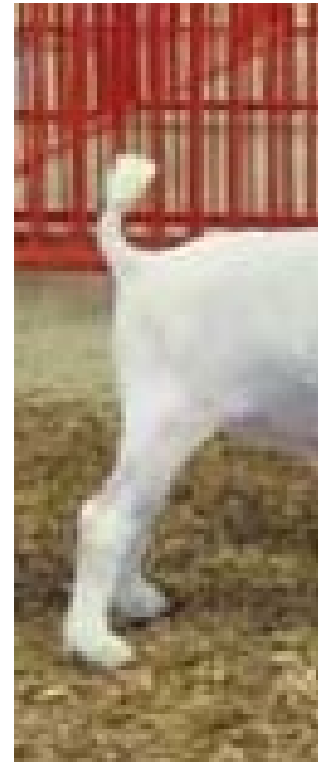
- The rump should be long, wide and slightly sloped from hip to tail.
 - Short rumps will indicate a short-coupled goat that will be lacking length everywhere.
 - Narrow rumps will indicate a narrow, light body frame.
 - A rump that is steep from hips to tail will cause the legs to set to far forward, again shortening the body.

Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect



Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect

- While more of a concern in breeding goats than market goats, the rear legs should not be straight from the tail down to the heel, and the pastern joint should be upright.
- In a competitive class, this is an easy thing for a judge to pick out and it will move you down the line.



Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect

- The front legs should be straight up and down.
- Toes point forward.
- Legs are widely set across the chest.



Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect

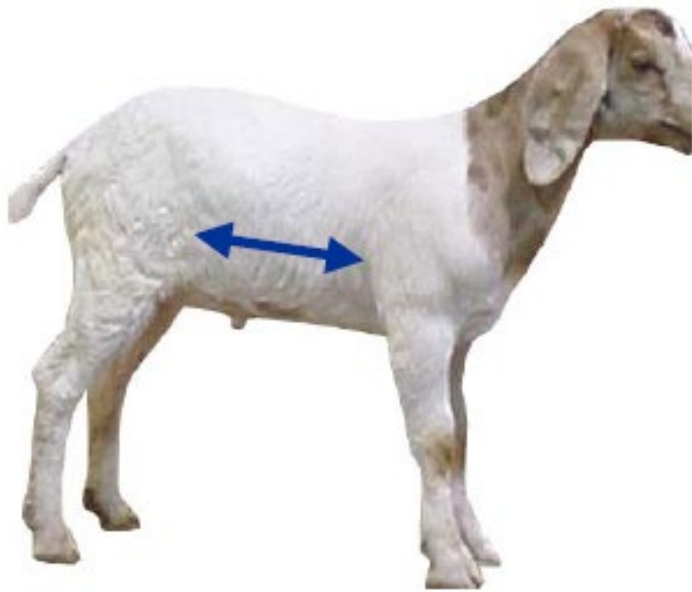
- After looking at the basic structure, we need to look at the growth potential of the kid.
- Most of the kids will be selected shortly after weaning.
- We need to pick kids that are the type to grow out to the desired weight and frame size by showtime.

Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect

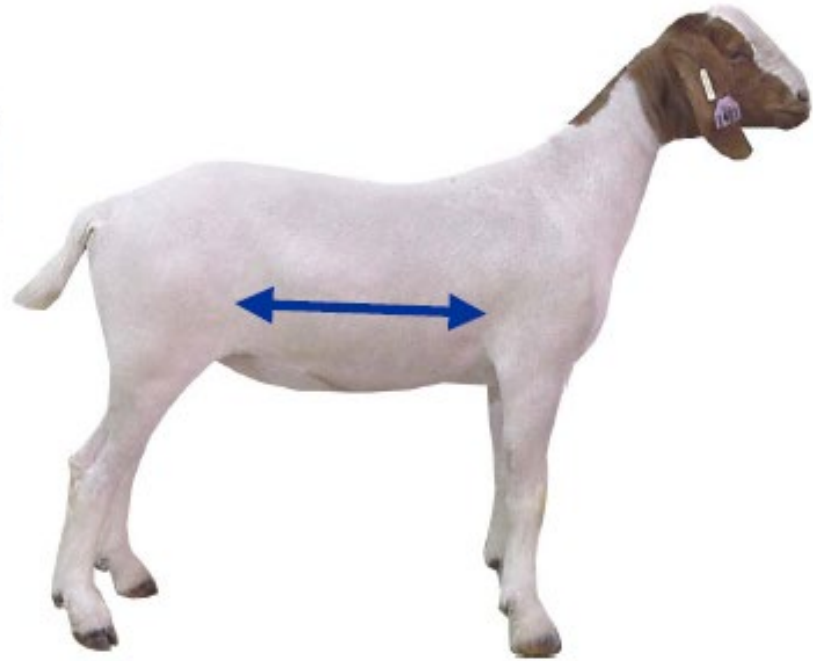
- The length of the goat from the front of the shoulder to the tail is an excellent indicator of potential frame size.
- Longer length goats tend to be larger framed and slower to put on fat as they approach their final size when compared to shorter, smaller framed goats.
- Goats that get to fat, to fast, are not efficient users of the grain we pay for, and they tend to be penalized in the showring.

Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect

Short Bodied



Long Bodied



The length of the canon bone and neck are also good indicators.

Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect

- The muscle is the product that we are raising these goats to produce.
- While it is heavily influenced by diet and exercise, we still need to be able to pick out the kid that has enough muscle to work with.



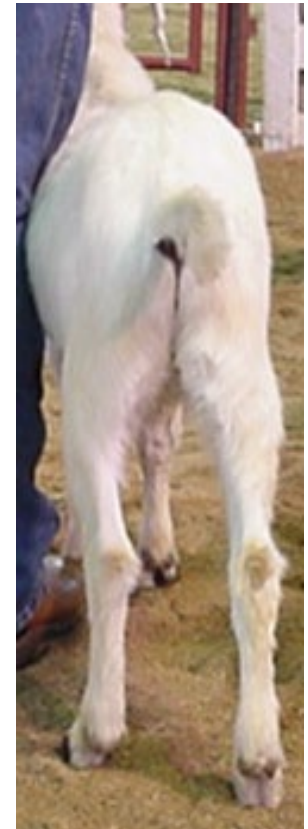
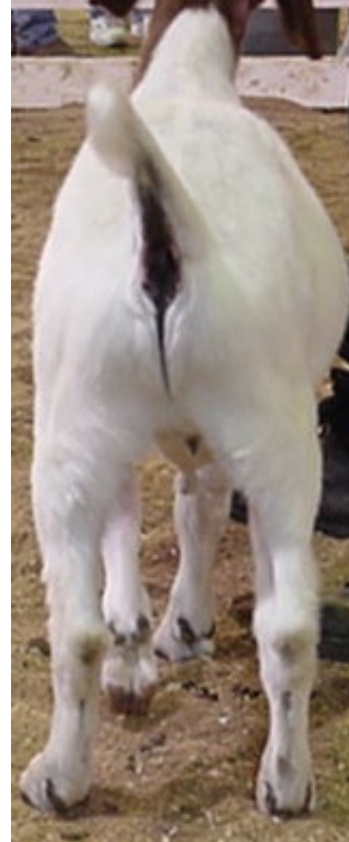
Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect

- Look for muscle from the rear of the goat first.
- The goat should *naturally* stand fairly wide between the back legs.
- Muscle should be the widest at the stifle, tied in deeply at the hock and with good thickness as you go up into the twist.



Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect

- The rump should be thick and round looking down from above, with the roundness extending up the back towards the shoulder.
- Muscle tends to be round, and if they are already getting fat up there, it will look flatter, especially over the loin.
- Put your hands on the back over the loin. The wider and longer this area is, the better.



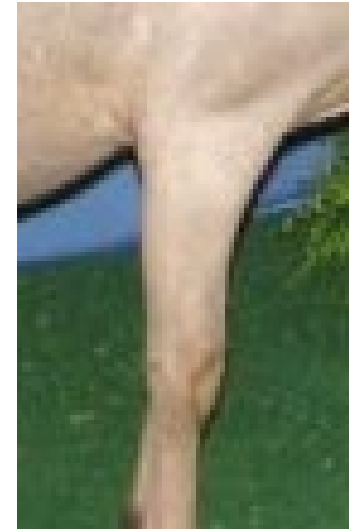
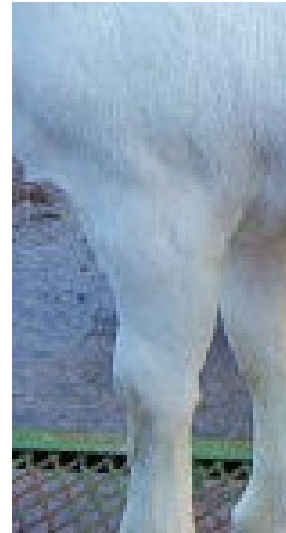
Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect

- Front legs should also be wide apart as the goat moves, but not so wide that the shoulders do not fit together properly.



Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect

- Bulging muscle in the forearm is a good indicator of growth potential.

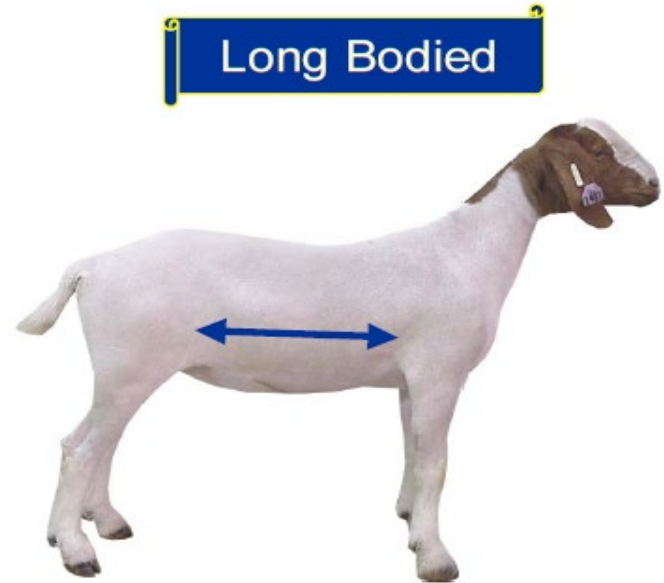


Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect

- The volume of the kid is important to the eventual size of the goat, and may also influence the general health of the animal.
- Volume is a measure of length, depth and width.

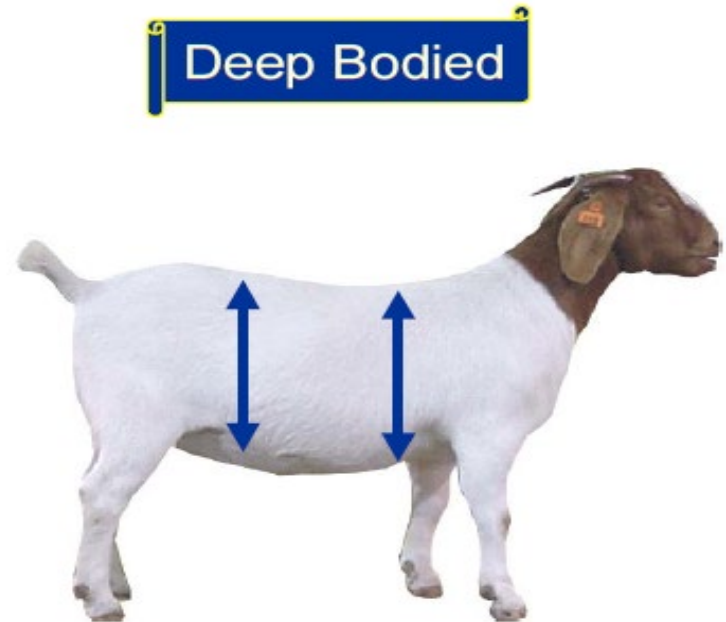
Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect

- Length is measured from the front of the shoulder to the tail.



Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect

- Depth is measured from right behind the shoulder to the underline at the chest floor.
- The depth here is important to allow room for heart and lungs and is a measure of the structure of the animal.
- Depth further back towards the stifle is more a measure of the feeding program.



Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect

- Width for capacity is measured by the spring of rib.
- This is directly related to the overall width of the animal.



Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect

- The last area we want to look at is some of the more intangible things that can make the difference in a placing, or how much the exhibitor enjoys the project.
 - Balance
 - Style
 - Personality
 - Coloration

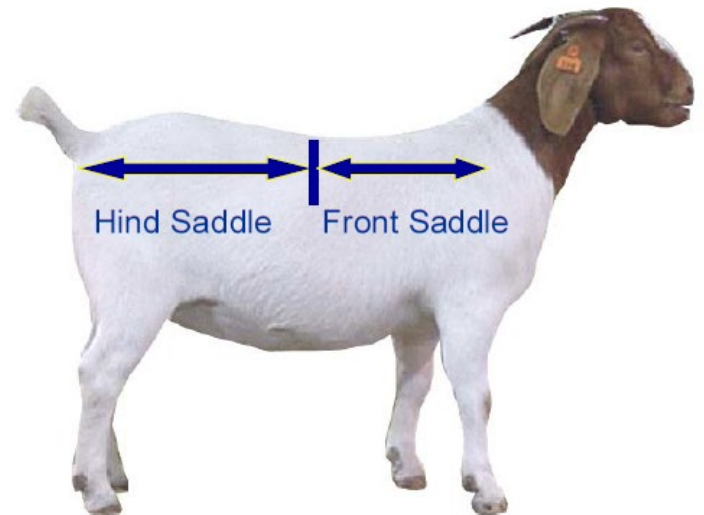
Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect

- Balance is how well all of the parts are in proportion with each other.
- This is the neck that isn't too long, the legs that aren't too short, the body mass that is about half and half between the front and back of the animal.



Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect

- Longer, cleaner neck compared to a short neck that does not blend smoothly into the shoulder or chest.
- The body mass should be equally divided between the front and back half of the animal.



Hind saddle should be at least as long as front saddle.

Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect

- The style of the goat has a lot to do with their attitude.
- If you have narrowed your selection down to a couple of kids that have the same length, width and muscle, look for the one that tends to move a little more smoothly and gracefully, keeps their head up, and is more alert and acts like it owns the place.
- They tend to act that way in the showring, and it can be eye catching to a judge in a close placing.

Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect

- The personality of the goat can be a big factor in the success of the project, especially for a beginner.
- Goats with a healthy curiosity and a big appetite and are much easier (and more fun) to work with than goats that are sullen, stubborn, overly aggressive, flighty or picky eaters.

Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect

- Training a goat that doesn't want to work with you can take a long, long time!

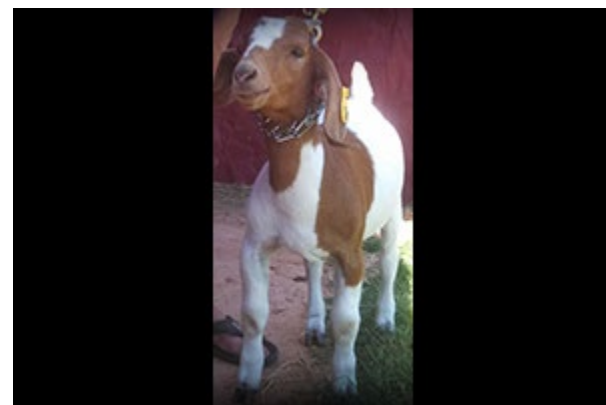


Selecting Your Market Goat Prospect

- This presentation should help you to pick out the type of kid for your project that will be able to grow into a goat that is structurally correct, large framed and heavily muscled.
- The rest is up to your ability to properly feed, exercise and maintain the health of your goat



Good Goats!



Final Thought!

- Good Goats are Born, Champions are Made!

