National Identification Program

Report to the Canadian Goat Society
Submitted by the Dairy Goat Committee
October 7th, 2002

As an industry we must formulate a plan recommending an administrator, forms of individual identification, a timetable for implementation, and suggest penalties for non compliance. Once we have a plan in place we must then approach the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) with our formulated plan and CFIA reviews it and judges if it meets the standards of a nationals id system. If it meets the requirements, then our plan can then be written into regulation. If the plan does not meet CFIA's recommended standards then we will have to go back and formulate a new plan. It now appears that the only way we can get goats into the legislation with minimal investigation would be to simply add goats to an existing policy. At present this would mean joining the existing cattle regulation including their tagging methods. In the near future the sheep regulation will be completed and once we have a chance to examine their final program we could investigate the possibility of utilizing their regulation including their tagging methods. It seems that no matter what we decide, we will still be required to test tagging systems to ensure that they can meet the retention requirement of 95% set out by CFIA.

Given the responses already received from inquires made to the CFIA, it is very unlikely that tattoos will be accepted as a form of identification. We can however notify other commodities, slaughterhouses, auctions etc. to inquire if they would be willing to accept tattoos or other forms of id. that are not presently included in the list of official forms of identification. It also appears that CFIA is leaning heavily towards the Canadian Cattle Identification Association (CCIA) as administrator of choice so it would be prudent to include CCIA as an option in our plan. No matter which administrator we approach, we will have to first determine if they would be able to act as administer for our proposed plan and second, how much it would cost.

Since this will not be forced upon us, at least not anytime soon, it may be prudent to observe other commodities for some time prior to attempting to formulate one of our own. There are rumours that the cattle industry will be altering their existing system. If this happens, it may offer the goat industry new ideas or opportunities for animal identification.

The large ear tags presently approved for cattle, are unacceptable to many dairy producers, in any case, it is unlikely that they would meet the 95% retention criteria set by CFIA. Reports from Holland indicate that these large tags have an average 10% loss every 2 to 3 months in dairy herds. This usually involves broken or destroyed tags which can be replaced using the same hole in the ear, however there are many incidences where the ear is torn and a replacement tag has to be reset elsewhere in the ear. There are small button tags available like the ones used in the U.S. for the scrapie program, these would probably be better retained in dairy goats and may be better accepted by dairy producers but in order to be acceptable to the CFIA these small tags would probably have to be chipped which raises the cost considerably.

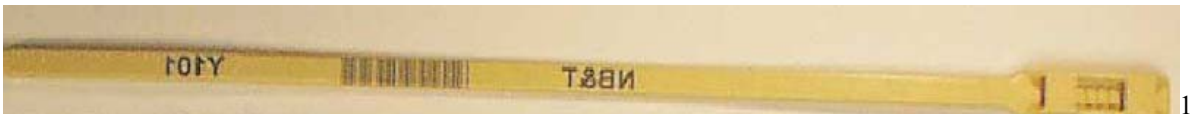
The committee has investigated the several tagging methods, including leg bands which were made for ratites and other purposes. The ratite bands (**Figure 1**) are the right size and can be bar coded (easily read). The price at this time is unknown but is probably under $2. U.S. They could possibly be used as a neck band on young kids and then may be moved to the leg of young breeding stock when the kid grows too big for the use as a collar. These particular bands are quick release which may not meet the permanency criteria but may be available in a non quick release style which would likely be more acceptable to both CFIA and producers. The band in (**Figure 2**) is a tamperproof security band and is narrow and inexpensive This would be a good choice, however it is unknown if these can be bar coded.

Figure 1

Figure 2

The bands in (**Figure 3)** are inexpensive tamper resistant bar coded bands that may be a very good identification option. Similar but larger bands are already being used in many diary herds and therefore information regarding their retentiveness is readily available.

Figure 3


10" by ¼"

We have also investigating the use of RF tags (chips). The glass subcutaneous transponder is by far the most promising and attractive option for goat producers. These are easy to apply, no more invasive than a needle, easily read, impossible to lose, and would most probably be accepted by the CCIA and CFIA though these are not usually used in food animals. It is also very likely that the price will drop in the future, especially it this form of ID takes off for other commodities. It is important to remember that there will be administrative costs attached to any system we develop. However the cost, at this time, for chipping is prohibitive. The cheapest we have found so far is $3.15 each U.S for a read only chip most prices are around $10.00 each. There are chips that are very low cost (see below) but would have to be incorporated into some sort of devise i.e. ear tag, which raise the final cost considerably.

The cost of the radio frequency reader for these devices is quite high (>$400.00), however we may be able to get around that with an alternate form of verification ID such as tattoos or numbered leg bands which would identify the chipped animal to producers, the e-tags (**Figure 4)** that CCIA have approved also have numbers etched on them for this purpose. This would make the purchase of readers only necessary for official sites like auction barns etc. where reading from a distance is required. These tags are small enough to satisfy dairy producers but once again the cost would be prohibitive for many.

Figure 4 30mm RFID Tamper-Proof Ear Tag $7.50 CCIA approved

CCIA-approved tags bear the trademark half maple leaf with letters CA, a visual 9-digit individual ID number, and either a barcode or electronic chip for automatic reading. There are currently eight approved colours (white, yellow, orange, pink, light pink, red, purple and green) although not all tags are available in all colours.

The Canadian Cattle Identification Agency (CCIA) has currently approved 29 tag options for use in the Canadian Cattle Identification Program. These tags have been tested under trial conditions and have met the Program's criteria for retention, readability and ability to withstand tampering in cattle.
The approved bar code tags are all large dangle type ear tags.

The committee recommends polling goat producers and asking them to rate the type of identification they prefer in order of preference.
For example:
1. tattoo
2. leg band 1
3. leg band 2
4. rf tag
5. subcutaneous transponder
6. dangle cattle tag

The Poll should also include as many options as possible relating to all aspects of an identification plan including but not limited to timing, administration, tagging options, maximum acceptable cost, implementation schedule, and fines for non compliance. The producers should also be asked to comment on whether to wait and observe the success of other plans or to begin the process for goats immediately. It would also be advisable to ask producers for comments or suggestions.

Once the data is collected from producers, CGS will be able to formulate a multi level plan utilizing the various options in descending order. This will hopefully eliminate the need for further producer polls and keep the cost of gathering information to a minimum. Once a plan is designed, it would be very easy and inexpensive to resubmit additional programs using the data collected from the polls, should the first option be rejected by CFIA.