INTRODUCTION TO CGS CLASSIFICATION

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KEY POINTS

- The core purpose of classification

- How the traits being assessed translate into a productive and sturdy animal

- How classification can be used as a breeding and a culling tool

WHAT IS CLASSIFICATION?

- A program administered by the Canadian Goat Society

- Quantifies type traits

- Non-selective program with all first lactation does on farm being assessed

- Collects data for Genetic Evaluations

HOW DOES IT WORK?

- Compares all animals to a 'True Type' breed standard
- Assesses 24 individual traits
- Quantifies all the traits, both linear and qualitative
- Organized in 4 sections: Rump, Mammary System, Dairy Strength and Feet and Legs
- Age, Lactation Number and Stage of Lactation taken into account
- Generates a final score out of 100

LINEAR VS QUALITATIVE TRAITS

- Traits being assessed are either linear or qualitative

- Linear traits are a measurement

- Qualitative traits are assessed against an 'ideal'

- Linear trait examples include Rump Angle, Rear Udder Width, Stature and Heel Depth

- Qualitative trait examples include Bone Quality, Udder Texture, Angularity and Loin Strength

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RUMP

- Makes up 10% of the final score

- Has significant impacts on reproduction, mammary system and rear feet and legs

- The 'scaffolding' for the productive end of the goat

- Made up of 4 traits

RUMP TRAITS

- Rump Angle – Linear Trait – Ideal is 25, not too steep, not too level

- Thurl Width – Linear Trait – Wider thurls are preferred

- Thurl Placement – Linear Trait – Ideally placed 2/3 of the way from the hip bones to the pin bones

- Loin Strenght – Qualitative Trait – Broad and slightly arched, attached high and wide to pelvis
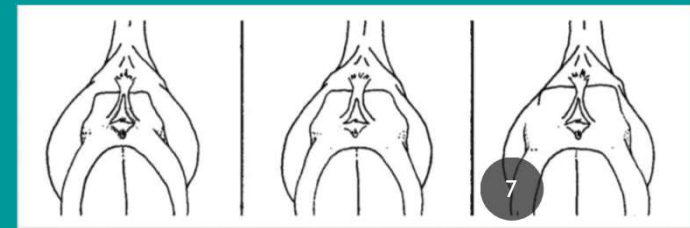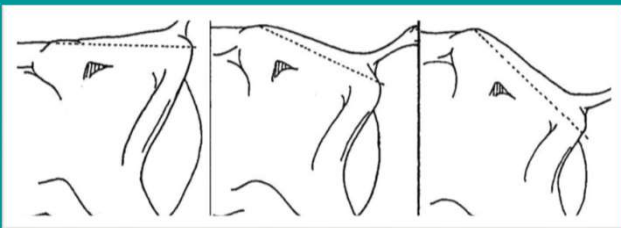
MAMMARY SYSTEM

- Contributes 42% of final score

- The goal is a capacious productive mammary system that will hold up to many lactation cycles and is resistant to mastitis

- Selects for ease of milking and strong attachments

- Made up of 8 traits

MAMMARY SYSTEM TRAITS

- Udder Depth – Linear Trait – A deep capacious udder without udder floor being lower than the hocks

- Udder texture – Qualitative Trait – A soft udder without excess flesh, pliable, elastic and well collapsed after milking

- Teat Placement– Qualitative Trait – Teats placed centrally in the udder halves preferred, to avoid contact with the legs while walking and facilitate easy milking

- Medial Suspensory Ligament – Qualitative Trait – The depth of cleavage and evidence of division between halves of the udder, stronger ligament preferred
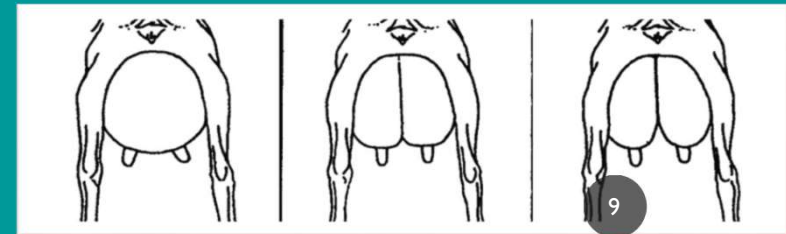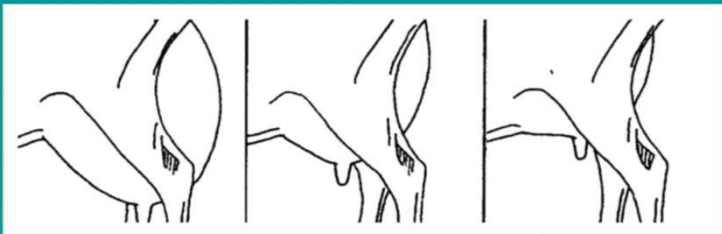
DAIRY STRENGTH

- Worth 20% of final score

- A collection of traits that contribute to the ability of an animal to maintain a high level of production over a long productive lifespan

- Combines strength and refinement

- Body capacity and strength of frame without carrying excess condition to the detriment of milk production

- Made up of 6 traits

DAIRY STRENGTH CONT.

- Stature – Linear Trait – Measured at the hips, compared to breed standard, animals meeting breed standard are the ideal

- Chest Width – Linear Trait – Width of the chest floor, wider is preferred to for large capacious respiratory and circulatory systems

- Body Depth – Linear Trait – Depth of body at the rear rib, deeper is preferred to house large capacious digestive system

- Angularity – Qualitative Trait – Angularity and sharpness of shoulders, freedom from coarseness (head to tail), spring of rib and cleanness of thighs
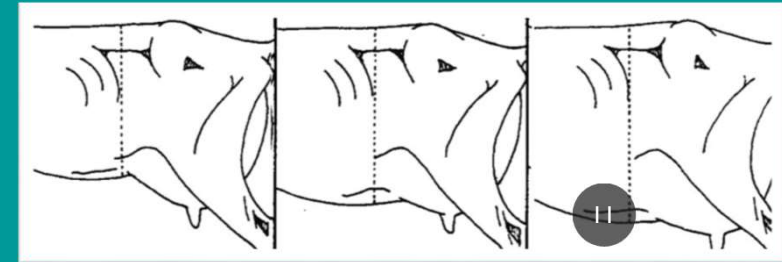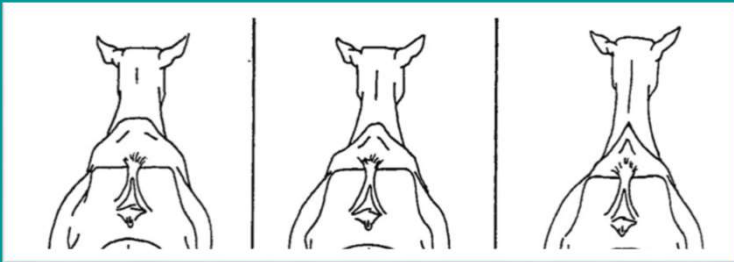
FEET AND LEGS

- Worth 28% of final score

- Assesses the structure of the hoof, pasterns and legs

- Vitally important to support a productive dairy animal with good body capacity and a capacious productive mammary system

- Necessary for an animal to comfortably move, feed and do the daily tasks we ask of a dairy animal such as climbing/jumping onto a milking stanchion.

- Made up of 5 traits

FEET AND LEGS CONT.

- Rear Legs-Side View – Qualitative Trait – Angle of rear leg from stifle to hock, avoiding being 'posty' or 'sickled'

- Pastern Strength – Qualitative Trait – Strong and flexible without being too upright or with too much angulation

- Bone Quality – Qualitative Trait – Flat, fine and wide bone pattern, assessed at the cannon bones

- Rear Legs-Rear View – Qualitative Trait – Rear legs widely set and parallel, accommodating a large capacious udder
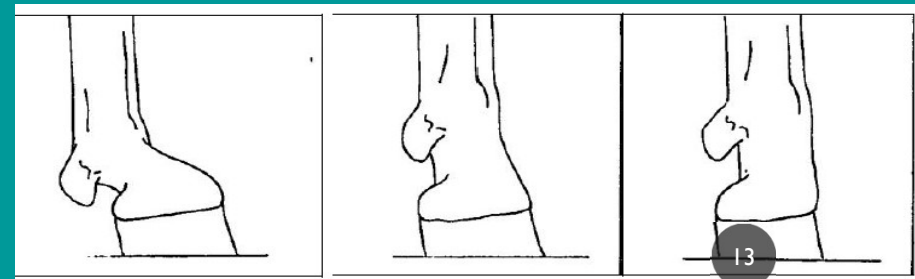
WHY DOES ALL OF THIS MATTER?

- Three of the most frequent reasons animals are removed from the herd include: reproductive problems, feet and leg problems, and mastitis/high somatic cell count

- A dairy goats peak production is between 3-6 years of age, so they need to be built to last

- If they are able to maintain good levels of production past 6, you need to raise fewer replacements

- A healthy/structurally sound animal costs less to maintain than an animal than an animal that contracts mastitis or has feet and leg issues

- Ease of reproduction is essential to continued improvement and development of a dairy herd

HOW DOES THIS HELP ME?

- Clearly identifies the strengths and weaknesses on a given animal

- Can help identify trends in a family line or progeny of a specific animal

- Gets an impartial expert assessment of your animals

HOW DO I USE THIS ON THE FARM?

- Final scores can be used as a marketing tool for breeding stock

- Specific trait scores can be used to select matings and plan culling

- Can be used to benchmark improvement in a herd

- Contributes to genetic indexes that can further help breed advancement
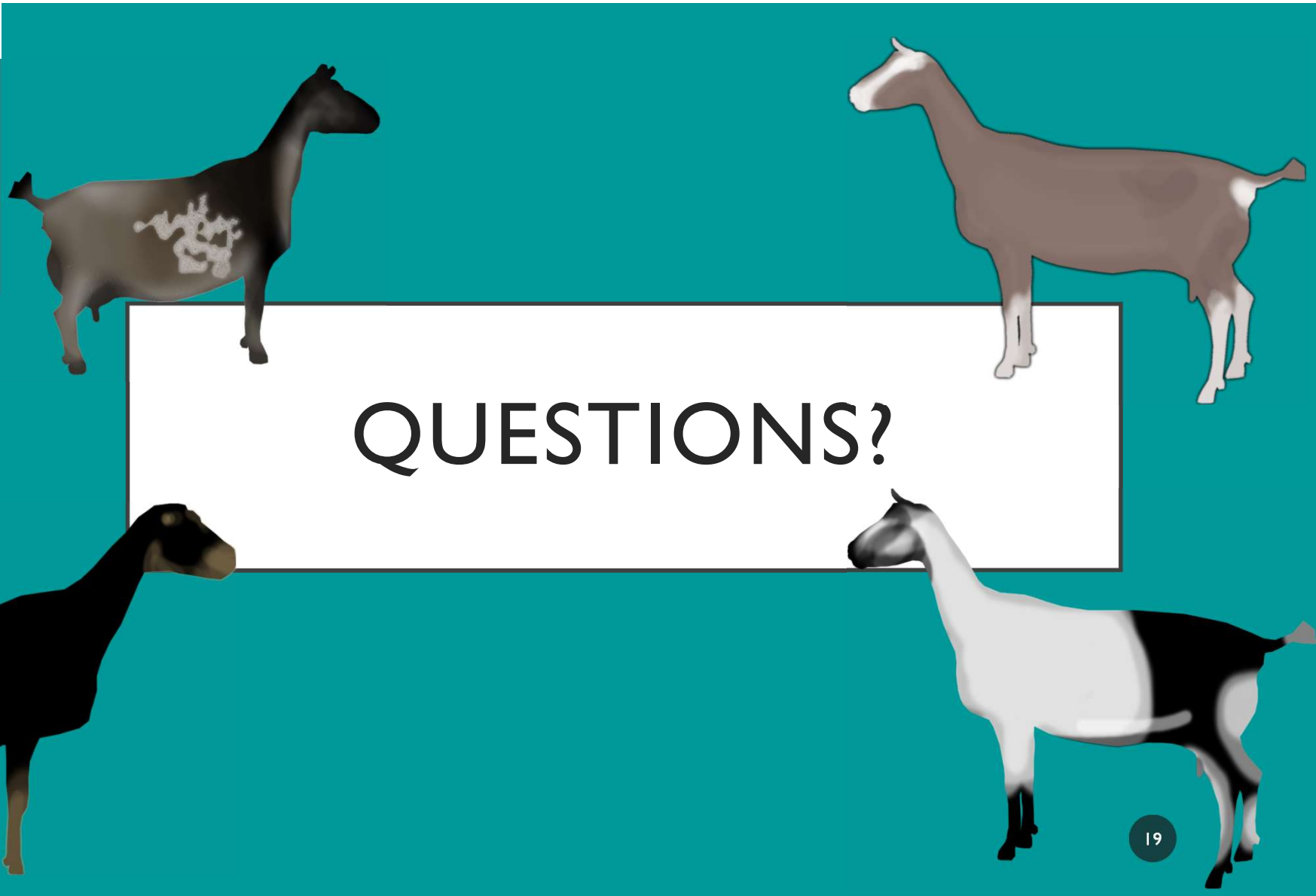
BREEDING BY NUMBERS

- Select breeding to improve specific traits

- Use a buck with strong feet and legs if this is weaker in the doe

- Breed does with wide teat placement to a buck whose dam has more centrally placed teats

- Overall, select compensatory matings to get the best of both the buck and the doe

CULLING BY NUMBERS

- Select young does and bucks with high thurl width scores
- Cull young animals with low pastern length scores
- Cull young animals with low rear leg – side view scores
- Cull animals with extreme teat length or udder depth scores

- Some traits are useful for culling young animals while others are useful for mature animals

QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU!

- https://www.goats.ca/classification/
- http://www.goatgenetics.ca/index.cfm