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Peaceful Mountains Dairy

BY TASHA KNOWLTON

Brenda Miedema runs a local goat dairy called Peaceful Mountains, located on Thompson Creek Road, in the heart of the Applegate Valley. Brenda grew up on a cow dairy, and has been around the milk business her entire life, so running her own dairy comes naturally to her. Raising goats began as a hobby; she found goats to be sweet and friendly animals that were easy to handle. Brenda's children also raised goats for 4-H projects and eventually it grew into a dairy business that she has maintained for 15 years. She is now known as a bulk milk producer.

Sciencedaily.com, on July 31, 2007, cited studies that have shown that goat's milk may prevent anemia (iron deficiency) and bone demineralization (when the bones soften). However, this hypothesis has yet to be tested on humans. Associated content.com, on February 6, 2007, stated that goat's milk can help arthritis, allergies, and tuberculosis. Goat's milk contains more calcium, vitamin B-6, vitamin A, and potassium than cow's milk. Goat's milk is easier to digest because the fat globules do not cluster together and people who are lactose intolerant can often drink goat's milk without ill effect. Goat's milk is also a complete protein and contains more of the essential amino acids than cow's milk. Drinking cow's milk often causes our body to produce mucus, while goat's milk causes us to produce less, if any, mucus.

With all this scientific information, goat's milk seems like a healthier choice than cow's milk. Now, thanks to Brenda and Rogue Creamery, we are able to have good and fresh goat's milk available for Applegaters as well as in surrounding areas. But this is no easy task and we would like to recognize the work that Brenda does, with the help of her family, on her dairy.

There are about 120 goats on her farm and there are about 40 that have to be milked twice a day in order to get better milk production. Her ideal goal is to get one gallon of milk a day per goat. The goats start to get milked at the age of two years and can usually produce until about nine or ten years of age.

The local creamery comes and picks up her milk every other day and hand makes it into cheese. Their cheese is called a raw product because it isn't pasteurized (they never let the milk reach a higher temperature than the body temp of the goat). By not heating the cheese, the

vitamins and enzymes that aid in digestion are kept intact.

Because these goats produce such large quantities of milk, they also require large daily amounts of food intake. They are fed alfalfa twice a day and are fed grain while they are being milked. Brenda also likes to pasture them on grass.

When goats are born Brenda keeps most of the females because they are potential milkers, but most of the male goats are sold unless they have the potential as good breeders. The main breeds of goats that are on her dairy farm are Nubian, Saanen, and LaMancha. Her favorite mix of goats to breed is the Nubians and Saanens. She keeps the bucks and the does separated from each other so that she knows when they are breeding and doesn't have any unexpected babies. The male goats also have a musky odor that could affect the milk, which is another reason for their separation.

One of the hardest things to deal with on the dairy is predators. A cougar came to Peaceful Mountain Dairy three different times. In the worst attack, eight goats were killed in one night. Other predators that she has to deal with are coyotes and stray dogs. To protect the goats, Brenda got a dog that guards them. This breed of dog is a Maremma. This breed is 2000 years old and originated in Italy as a sheep guard dog. Her dog's name is Jasper and he has done well to protect the goats of Peaceful Mountain. He uses different barks for different warnings. The goats have gotten used to these warnings and when they hear a high pitched bark, they run for the barn. Since Jasper has been there, there haven't been any attacks.

Raising goats and running Peaceful Mountains seems like an arduous task but Brenda enjoys it. She does a fantastic job keeping up with the chores and maintaining good health in her goats and she shows a great passion for her work. I respect her for all the laborious tasks that she does. The Applegate is lucky to have a hardworking woman like Brenda running this goat dairy operation to provide us with a healthier choice in milk and cheese.

Tasha Knowlton
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Valley Solar Tour looking for homes

EarthAdvantage and the Greater Applegate Community Development Corporation is teaming up again to sponsor an Applegate Valley Green + Solar Tour this year.

If you own a home or business in the Applegate/Williams Valleys that takes advantage of energy-saving construction techniques or uses solar power, you could help educate the public and homebuilders on the advantages of these technologies. Let me know if you'd like to put your home or business on display for a couple of hours for one Saturday this coming October.

Last year's tour sold out quickly and was a big success. We'll help you prepare and conduct this tightly organized event.

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