

Angora Goat Raising in America



not, of course, the product of ordinary commercial conditions. It implies a considerable amount of care and personal attention.

High Birth Rate.

The birth rate is approximately 65 per cent, but in well managed flocks this has risen on occasions as high as 120 per cent. Since the kids are not hardy, it is obvious that this means skill and industry during the breeding season. The best methods of caring for the flock at this time are discussed in some detail in the new bulletin. Otherwise the management of Angoras does not differ greatly from that of sheep.

While the Angora goat needs attention, it is adaptable and as far as temperature is concerned should flourish in any part of the United States. In Montana the flocks face the heavy snowfalls with equanimity as long as a dry place is provided for them at night, and though the heat in the Southwest frequently makes it necessary to shear them twice a year in order to prevent shedding, it does not otherwise affect the health of the flocks. Dampness, however, is more injurious than either cold or heat. High lands is the native home of all goats, and they invariably seek it when left to themselves. Pure water is also an essential.

Otherwise the Angora is not particular. It will feed with cattle also. As a matter of fact, however, the goat prefers a certain amount of rough pasture and is particularly happy when cleaning

up brush land. There is one instance of a flock of 600 being allowed free grazing in a California forest reserve in order to keep the strips of cleared land, known as fire-breaks, free from weeds and vegetation. Settlers in the Northwest find the Angora most serviceable in browsing off the brush on their new lands, and one railway company purchased a flock to keep its right-of-way clear and attractive. On very rough land the danger of injury to the fleece must, however, be kept in mind.

Importations Not Needed.

As has already been said, the Angora can be bred sufficiently pure for practical purposes from the stock already in this country, and there is no need of further importations for breeding purposes. Some years ago, however, this was not believed to be the case, and in 1881 the Sultan of Turkey endeavored to preserve for his dominion the monopoly of the mohair trade by prohibiting the exportation of the live animal. His example was followed by South Africa, but it was too late. Some of the best blood was already in America and today other countries are buying of us, flocks having been shipped recently to Brazil and the Argentine.

Various associations have already been formed for the development of the industry in this country, and the quantity of the annual product is increasing rapidly.

Never work a team of colts together until they are thoroughly broken, as they will worry each other.

THE raising of Angora goats in the United States is now a demonstrated success, according to a report just published by the United States Department of Agriculture, under the title, "The Angora Goat," Farmers' Bulletin 573. The industry, says the bulletin, is indeed so well established here that growers need not be inconvenienced by the action of South America in prohibiting the exportation of Angoras, for the quantity of good blood in this country is already sufficient to meet all requirements. In the opinion of experts the best American fleeces now equal any grown in South Africa or Asia Minor, the original home of the Angora.

Although nearly every state in the Union now possesses its flocks, the Southwest and the Northwest are especially well adapted to the industry, in particular the large areas recently logged off in the Northwest. There the Angora not only thrives himself, but helps to clear away the brush which, if allowed to grow unchecked, might easily become a dangerous fire trap. Thus it is often said that the Angora works and pays for its board at the same time.

Value of Fleece Increasing.

It is paying more and more, for the value of the fleece or mohair is increasing steadily. Formerly the use of mohair depended so largely upon the prevailing fashion that its price varied widely from year to year. This condition, however, is rapidly changing as new uses for mohair are continually found, from automobile tops and table covers, to dress goods and curled false hair, and today the grower is assured of a reasonably steady market. The price, of course, varies with the quality, the very best fleeces bringing on an average from 42 to 55 cents a pound. The weight of a fleece has a very wide range, in 1909 the average for Oregon was found to be 3.7 pounds and for Texas 1.85. On account of the greater heat, however, and the damage of shedding, Angoras in the Southwest are frequently shorn twice a year—a fact which must be taken into consideration in all calculations.

This practice of clipping twice a year is in many ways a drawback to the industry, since it tends to lower the average grade of American mohair. Mohair as good as any can be and is grown in this country, but the average quality is not today considered to be as good as the foreign. About 2,000,000 pounds are annually imported. Ordinarily this is blended and spun with the domestic product. Six inches is the shortest length of fleece usually desired, and because of shearing twice a year, much Texas and New Mexico mohair falls below this standard. Where the fleece is allowed to grow for twelve months, the average length is 10 inches, and in the best flocks it is not unusual to get 15 to 20 inches. Romeo, the sweepstakes buck at the El Paso show in 1910, is an example of what is possible. His fleece weighed eighteen pounds, measured twenty and three-fourths inches in length and sold for \$115. Such fleeces



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