

CATTLE SYSTEMS

BULL AND GOATS COMPLIMENTARITY

- Adding goats to bulls at sufficiently high stocking rates can improve pastures and net profit through more income and less costs.
- They can have a quieting effect on bull behavior and electric fences are good controllers of trained bulls and goats.
- Adding goats at bull stocking rates lower than the equivalent of the higher than standard commercial rate of 3 bulls per ha. used in the research below is likely to have greater positive profit effects through more significant pasture improvement and utilization and earlier cattle finishing in summer with clover-enhanced pastures.
- Running cashmere wethers as bought-in slaughter goats instead of breeding goats as in the trial could simplify goat and grazing management, and recognize that goat liveweight gain has a constant value through export carcass weight ranges.
- The mind-set acceptance of Friesian bulls as valid beef producers is the same as accepting that skinny-looking goats are worth more than bulls per kg. Buying in yearling goats to grow on is an obvious option. Adding cashmere revenue makes returns even better

WHY WOULD YOU NOT ADD GOATS TO BULLS?

AGRESEARCH - FLOCK HOUSE 3 YEAR STUDY BULLS AND GOATS ON IMPROVED PASTURE SUMMARY OF 3 YEAR

LAYOUT

Bulls alone at various stocking rates per ha. were compared with bulls at one rate of 3 per ha. plus breeding does at various rates per ha. Angora goats were used, but results have been adapted to pastoral/meat goats with simpler lower inputs.

MANAGEMENT

July/August born calves came onto the farm in November and were run through to January - April according to weight and feed (on farm 14-16 months to reach average 465kgs LW) so there were two ages of cattle overlapping on the farm during spring/summer. Goat numbers were constant, kidding in October, weaning in February when kids removed.

ROTATIONAL GRAZING

Winter - goats ahead of cattle

Spring - goats spread, cattle rotated 100-120 days

Late Spring/Summer - calves ahead of adults + goats on 70-30-40 days

Autumn - calves ahead of goats (adult cattle and kids gone) 40-50 days

EFFECTS OF ADDING GOATS TO BASIC CATTLE STOCKING OF AVERAGE 700KGS LW per ha.

- Adding 25% extra LW as goats increased clover content by 25% (from 20 to 25%) of total pasture mass, reduced bare ground by 50% and eliminated the need for Californian and Wing thistle control costing \$25 per ha, and added about \$100 per ha net goat income
- Adding up to 36% LW per ha. as goats had no significant effect on adult bull LW carried at 3 bulls per ha, OR average bull LW at sale
- Adding up to 36% LW per ha. as goats reduced bull net income because more cattle drenches were needed. But goat income more than compensated by increasing total net income per ha. by 10%
- There was no effect on pasture production, composition, or per ha cattle profit from adding 14% extra LW per ha. as goats
- Increasing goat stocking rate from 14 to 25% of total LW per ha. reduced kidding rate significantly