



GOAT TALK--Nannies and their kids share a little goat talk before going in for the day.

It's Not Just Any Ole One-Goat Farm

By Sherry Matthews

The car replaced the horse and buggy and now it looks like the goat may very well replace the cow, at least in Ann Wright's family.

Mrs. Wright and her family have been raising goats for about seven years now and presently keep 15 to 20 on their farm.

"We bought our first goat to help us clear the land; it seemed much cheaper than trying to mow all those acres," said Mrs. Wright.

Now the goats serve more varied purposes than just keeping the farmland cleared. For one thing, the Wrights raise Nubian goats (milk goats) and milk them

themselves. They use this milk like most of us use cow's milk.

"Most people have the wrong impression about the milk's flavor and odor," said Mrs. Wright.

Apparently, many think that goats milk not only tastes "strong", but also smells like they believe the goats smell.

"If this is the case, something is very wrong; either the bucket is dirty or the goat has not been properly taken care of," said Mrs. Wright.

Mrs. Wright also thinks that the beliefs that goats have a bad smell and are nasty are way off base.

The billie only has an odor for two months out of the year and the nanny, if taken care of, will not have a distinct odor, she says.

The odor is not the only misleading myth about a goat.

There is the old wives tale that goats will eat anything from a tin can to an old shoe.

Not true says Mrs. Wright. "Most goats tend to be picky eaters. They will taste everything, but usually won't eat it."

All these false impressions about goats seem to be changing or at least slacking off, she said.

According to Mrs. Wright, there is a possibility that the goat will be making a strong comeback.

The reason seems to be that "times are tough", and the goat is more economical than a cow.

"Cows are larger than goats, eat a lot more, won't mow your lawn and don't make very good pets; all

of which goats will do," said Mrs. Wright.

In years past, families were larger so a cow was needed, but today most families are small and a cow gives much more milk than a family of four can use.

Mrs. Wright believes that goats supply the right amount of milk for most families today.

"The only problem is getting people to try the milk. Their prejudice always gets in the way," said Mrs. Wright.

Goats are not the dumb animals people think them to be, in fact Mrs. Wright believes they are "domesticated deer" with minds very much their own.

During the mating season, goats

show how very smart they can be. For instance, the strongest and largest billies will fight it out to see who will be "king of the mountain".

They butt heads to determine the winner. This action causes an imbalance in the musk gland of the billie which causes him to have a distinct odor.

Even this odor serves a purpose. The winning billie will mark his females by rubbing his head along the side of the nanny's body, leaving his musk smell.

The female goats also have a leader. After the mating season, the billie will have nothing to do with the female, so he is usually put in a separate field.

When the goats are separated,

the nannies choose a leader of their own. The others follow her.

"On rainy days, the other goats will not go out until the leader does," said Mrs. Wright.

For Mrs. Wright and her family, goats are a way of life. They raise them, breed them, drink their milk and occasionally humor them by allowing a newborn to be brought in the house.

One can easily grow attached to a goat if they let down their defenses and open up their minds.

"They can get to be real pets if you let them," said Mrs. Wright.

Goats may never actually take the place of the "fashionable cow", but they may give them a run for their milk.



MID-MORNING EXERCISE--Nannies gather their kids together for some mid-morning exercise with a little help from Ann Wright.



MOTHERLY ATTENTION--Nanny keeping a watchful eye on her newborns.