



## The Goat Section

I took over the Goat Section 5 years ago, having previously shown my Pygmy goats at Stithians Show for 16 years. When I took the section on I dealt with the Pygmy and Dairy sections which was quite an eye opener. With Geoff Munson, the Treasurer and Editor of Cornwall Goatkeepers Association, Neil Munson, Sue Smith and several others I had a good support network around me.

The normal running of the goat section involves – registering the Dairy milking competition with the British Goat Society, booking A list judges from the BGS and also the Pygmy Goat Club, booking accommodation for both judges, ordering rosettes and prize money, setting the schedule and posting them out to prospective exhibitors, collating the entries when they arrive after checking all goats and owners are registered with the relevant goat society, sending off the entries to the catalogue printer, sending out gate tickets to those who need them, booking up stewards for both sections. Then come the day before show day I need to have pens erected and labelled, straw available, exhibitors' numbers, rosettes and prize money ready for the judges, judges books entered up for both judges, present for the judges to thank them for travelling to judge for us. When the exhibitors arrive – show them to their pens, receive and check movement forms, and ensure everyone is settled ready for show time. The Dairy section require bucket labels for milking, stripping labels to ensure the goats are stripped 12 hours before the milking competition, the scales set up for weighing the milk, a clock (with battery) to check the permitted time allowance for milking.



*A Goat Steward taking selfies!*

Show day starts at 5.30am checking that all exhibitors have their paperwork ready to start milking, all milking buckets are on the stewards table, greet the judge and introduce him to his stewards for the day. 6.30am dairy goats in the ring for “full udder inspection”, then into the milking session. During milking no-one in the tent is permitted to carry any water (just in case it gets poured into the milking buckets!) the goats are brought out of their pens and milked, watched by sufficient stewards to ensure no “errors” are made. When each goat is milked the exhibitor brings the bucket to the table to be weighed and

checked by the steward and judge. 8.30am (approximately) everyone takes a deep breath and rushes off for breakfast.

9.30am both judges should be in the ring ready for the main judging. So - water, soap and towel needs to be provided along with hand sanitiser. Table stewards all present with relevant paperwork and rosettes. Ring stewards in ring ready to place the goats in the correct order and support the judge if needed (normally with the male Pygmy goats who are very strong even though they appear



small). With luck both judges break for lunch at the same time and we all get a well deserved break and sit down for lunch. Often we have finished showing by lunch time which gives everyone, including the judges, the opportunity to have a look around the showground before loading up and driving home again. After the judging we have a presentation in both rings of rosettes for Best in Show, presentation to the judge and an opportunity for exhibitors to ask for advice from the judge regarding the best billy to use on their nannies, how has the judge got on showing his/her own goats, and a general gossip session.

Once the judging is over you can often find exhibitors collapsed on the ground behind the tent having a well deserved cup of tea and mulling over the views of the judge and how their goats have performed.

The best part of the day is when the President or Chairman arrives in the ring around 4pm to present the trophies to the various prize winners.

After the show the results need to be typed up for the Pygmy Goat Club and the British Goat Society, reports to receive from the judges, milking samples to be sent off for analysis, milking reports to be registered. So, even though the show might have been over a few days before, the Section Secretaries cannot rest until all of the loose ends are tied up.



With the Coronavirus pandemic hitting us all in 2020, all of the shows had to be cancelled which was a huge blow to everyone. It was thought that 2021 was going to be fine and back to normal – we were all wrong there!!! Stithians Show came up with the idea of running a photo/virtual show which at first I was not convinced would work. However, after setting the reduced schedule, advertising in the British Goat Society and Pygmy Goat Club web sites and Facebook, I was amazed how many enquiries I received for schedules. So again, the judges were booked, schedules sent out, rosettes ordered and off we go. I received nearly 100 entries from as far afield as Mid Wales, Anglesey and even Stoke on Trent. An absolutely brilliant result. The judges have now received the photos and both the Dairy and Pygmy sections have been judged. The photo/virtual show has given exhibitors the opportunity to show case their goats without having to load trailers and travel for many hours.

Since Stithians announced their photo/virtual show several other shows have taken up the reins and have organised their own. This form of show keeps the interest going and gives exhibitors the opportunity to enter shows that they would not normally have travelled to.

So “good on you Stithians” – we look forward to being back on the showground next year.

**Julia Clarke – Goat Section Secretary**

