



Having a Field Day

Last week I attended the Goat Field Day at Berea College with the intention of filming some video of our Livestock Q&A columnist, veterinarian Dr. Dianne Hellwig.

Karen K. Acevedo

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Photo by Karen K. Acevedo

Livestock Q&A columnist, veterinarian Dr. Dianne Hellwig, left, worked on stitching up a deep wound on her Spanish goat. While Karen took a break from restraining the goat, a Berea College student, shown here, helps. Last week I attended the Goat Field Day at Berea College with the intention of filming some video of our Livestock Q&A columnist, veterinarian Dr. Dianne Hellwig.

After Dianne gave her informative presentation on parasitology (who knew not all strongyles are Haemonchus?) she stayed afterward in the classroom to shoot a video about doing your own fecal exams with a microscope. (Yes, we hobby farmers are a sorry lot when we ask our loved ones for a microscope for Christmas with which to run our own fecals!)

Dianne began by pulling her carefully bagged sheep pellets out of a cooler, mashing them up and mixing them with a little Fecosol solution.

She then poured it in a test tube and placed a glass slide over the top. After waiting 10 minutes for the worm eggs to float to the top and touch the slide, she removed the slide and placed it under the microscope. We were able to view some scattered strongyle eggs on the TV monitor attached to the scope.

Afterward, we headed to the college farm to look in on a Spanish goat doe that had been attacked by coyotes the previous night.

She had a gash in her hind end a few inches deep and Dianne had to clip, clean and stitch up the wound. She asked me to restrain the goat while she did this, and luckily I couldn't see a thing from my perspective. From her winces and sighs I could tell it was not a pretty sight.

I'm not used to handling goats with horns, but I stretched my left arm crosswise in order to prevent her from using her horns on me, which she wanted to do badly.

Even though she was loaded up with Banamine, she cried out in pain as Dianne worked. I remember thinking "I am using muscles I never knew I had," and the next day I felt it sharply in my right shoulder blade.

Dianne inserted a piece of rubber material in the wound to facilitate draining as it healed, and after an hour or so, the doe was all patched up.

Note to self: Keep vigilant with predator fencing. I'd hate to go through that with one of my own goats.

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