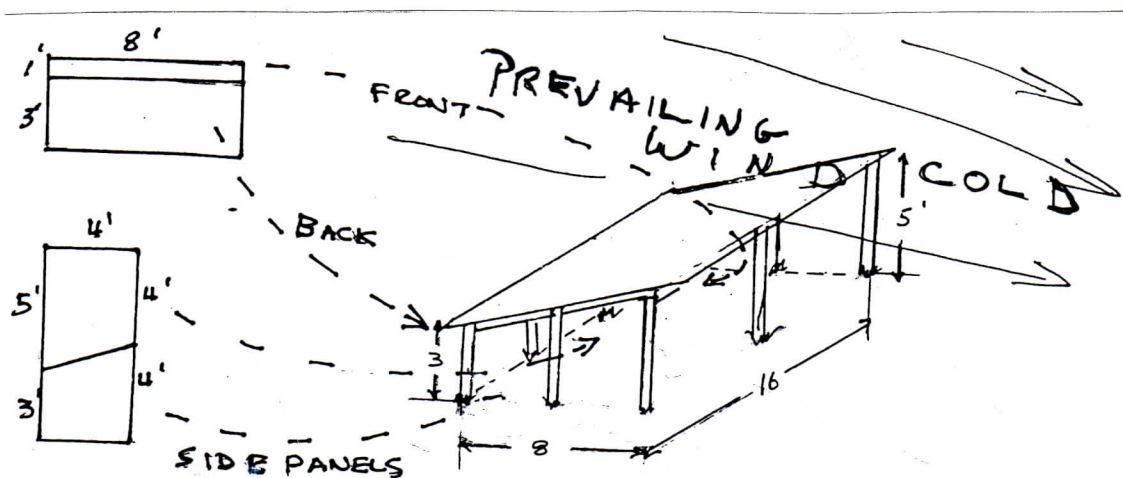


A Plan for a Goat Shelter

Stolen from Tom Dooling
Pioneer Mountain Farm



**This 3-sided shed works well as a shelter for goats.
You can build it in a weekend!**

This plan and article are an excerpt from a paper entitled "Fencing, Handling and Shearing Systems," which was presented by Tom at the 1995 Business of Cashmere Conference.

As a general rule, cashmere goats do not need to be kept in animal barns for shelter. There are three circumstances in which shelter is needed, namely particularly severe wet windy weather, cold rain or wet snow conditions just after shearing, and cold rain, wet snow conditions at kidding. In most circumstances, a simple three-sided shelter with its back to prevailing cold winds is sufficient.

In our operation, each paddock has an 8'x16' pole shelter with its high open long side pointing approximately 15° west of due south. These shelters are 3' high on the back, north wall, sloping up to 5' in the front, with tin roofing. We build them on driven fence posts, walled with chipboard or blow plywood. They can be cleaned out with a small backhoe periodically, and

bedded with straw. We do not recommend the use of wood shavings, since we have found that the cleaned-out straw and manure makes excellent composting material, which shavings don't, and shavings also tangle in fleece badly.

The only difficulty we have had has been in occasional severe winter weather, younger kids (the previous spring's drop) may occasionally crowd in too tightly, resulting in animal losses due to suffocation. Under most circumstances, however, an 8'x16' shelter is sufficient for 30 to 40 animals. (See figure above)

Spring snowstorms coinciding with kidding can present problems with younger does dropping kids in unsheltered areas. Generally, moving the newborn into the shelter will encourage the dam to follow along, and the only weather losses of kids we have experienced have been of newborns that didn't get thoroughly dried out because of maternal inexperience.

Finally, it must be noted that recently-sheared animals are highly stressed, and cold, wet weather just after shearing can present serious problems. As a management precaution, we generally provide a high-energy feed supplement in conjunction with shearing, and have found that if stock can keep dry for 3-4 days after shearing, inclement weather thereafter does not present a problem.

A good, tight, concrete-floored barn is a necessity for a herd of commercial size—it doesn't have to be big enough to shelter the entire herd. We have found it helpful to have an open-plan barn with a good supply of modular 4'X 8' fencing panels, fabricated on the ranch from tube steel and hog panel. This system allows flexibility to construct pens for sheltering occasional sick animals, containing off-season and bottle kids, quarantining, holding animals pending off-farm shipment, fiber storage, supplement feed and equipment storage and, last but not most important, shearing.