FACTORS AFFECTING DRESSING PERCENTAGE

Dressing percentages (calculated as (hot carcass weight / liveweight) * 100) can vary widely for goat kids from about 35% to 55% with 45% being average. Kids with higher fat scores generally have higher dressing percentages than kids of the same liveweight with lower fat scores.

Dressing percentage is affected by:

- **liveweight,**
- **fatness** -an increase in one fat score will increase dressing percentage by about 2.5%, fatter kids also suffer less live weight and carcass weight loss from fasting prior to slaughter than do leaner kids,
- **time off feed and water** - this affects gut fill and therefore live weight. Live weight percentage losses average 2, 2.5, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10, and 12% for goats off feed 2, 4, 6, 8, 12, 24, 48, and 72 hours respectively. Goats coming off lush pastures will generally have a higher dressing percentage than goats on drier feeds if live weight is calculated only a short time after animals are off feed because lush feed passes through the gut faster),
- **pre-slaughter fasting and stress** - affects dressing percentage because of its influence on gut fill and carcass weight loss. If animals are deprived of feed for 6 or more hours, carcass weight will start to decrease and dressing percentage will actually drop even though the goat's live weight is also decreasing. Carcass weight loss is 2-2.5%, 3-4%, and 6-7% after a 12, 24, 48 hour fast, respectively. Deprivation of water results in another 2% loss in carcass weight ,
- **skin weight -** determined by type of goat and shearing. Skin weight generally averages about 9% of the live weight for a short-haired or shorn goat kid, but can be as high as 15% for an unshorn angora kid,
- **sex -** doe kids tend to be slightly fatter than buck kids of the same weight in the same herd. However, this difference is so slight it rarely affects dressing percentage noticeably,
- **breed**
- **weaning -** weaned kids tend to have a lower dressing percentage than suckling kids of similar fatness and liveweight.