Improving Weight Gain in Goats grazing Cover Crops
Selected through Soil Health Samples

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Introduction
Cover crops improve soil health, is it possible to improve weight gain in goats by broadcasting cover crop seeds into perennial pastures? Goals set for selecting cover crops: A. must improve soil via performance B. must be leafy/tall variety allowing goats to eat with head up.

Methods
Soil health analysis: soil samples were collected prior to each planting with a final sample at conclusion of project. Cover crop seeds were planted using four different styles of broadcasting. Cover crops and grass was measured using a grazing stick, grazing days were calculated prior to each grazing period for each treatment on all 3 farms. Ten goats were selected and weighed at each farm. Five goats were placed in cover crop pen, five goats in grass pen. Following 3-5 days of grazing, goats were removed from pens and weighed again to determine rate of gain. Four replications per farm.

Results
AVERAGE GAIN per GOAT per Graze:
On Cover Crops 1.509090909 pounds/period
On Grass -0.009090909 pounds/period

Average Days of Forage/Grazing Days
Cover Crops 7.924545 days
Grass 4.427455 days

Conclusion
Adding cover crops, such as winter annuals or summer annuals onto perennial pastures, nearly doubles grazing days on same amount of space, plus goats gain weight, soil is healthy.

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