

ADJUSTMENT FACTORS FOR MILK RECORDS

1 Lactation records of milk and fat production provide important information for managing a dairy goatherd and for breeding better goats. Environmental factors such as length of lactation, age of doe, and season of kidding should be standardized through appropriate adjustment factors to make genetic evaluations more accurate.

2 Length of Lactation

A lactation length of 305 days has been defined as the standard for dairy cattle and also is used for goats. This standard assumes a 365-day interval between parturitions, which includes a 60-day dry period. However, many goats do not milk 305 days. A recent study shows that only one-third of all does with official records ending with a dry date milked 305 days. One reason for shorter records is that production of many does declines sharply with the onset of seasonal estrus and the does then are dried off. A standard lactation length of less than 305 days might be more useful for comparisons among does; however, the 305-day standard allows for reduced computing costs because doe and cow records can be computed the same way.

3 If a doe's lactation ends on or before 305 days because her production declined to the point at which continued milking was not worthwhile, then her record is considered complete. Such records are not projected to 305 days but are treated as complete 305-day records.

If a lactation ends before 305 days for any reason other than going dry, such as the doe's being sold or the herd's discontinuing testing, the record is considered incomplete and is adjusted. If a doe is still milking and has fewer than 305 days in milk, the record is considered incomplete, adjusted, and referred to as a record in progress. If a doe milks for more than 305 days, the production for only the first 305 days is included in the 305-day record.

4 A method to adjust incomplete records and records in progress uses the USDA projection factors in Table 1. Different categories of factors are required to adjust records because of variations in the lactation curve, particularly in the rate of decline of production after the peak and the number of days milked. To select the appropriate factor, the following information is necessary: breed, herd average production, month of kidding, days in milk, and age of doe at kidding.

5 An adjusted or projected record is the incomplete record plus an estimate of production for the rest of the lactation. That estimate is the projection factor times the last sample-day production times the number of days from the end of the incomplete record through 305 days.

6 Suppose a Nubian doe freshens in March at 25 months of age. She has an incomplete record at 130 days of 800 lb milk and 27 lb fat. Her last sample day production is 5 lb milk with 3.4 the herd average is with 64.74 TD () Tj0.4 Her averagel as