



Bar O Bar Livestock owners Ethan and Faith George, with daughter, dogs, and goat herd in the background.



Bar O Bar Livestock

FARMER FEATURE

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From Drought to Discovery: How Bar O Bar Livestock is Redefining Rangeland Management

Rooted in Thorp, Washington, Bar O Bar Livestock is a family operation built on generations of agricultural knowledge and a genuine love for the land. Run by Ethan and Faith George, the operation raises meat goats and offers contract grazing services, a fairly new concept which is reshaping how landowners and conservation organizations think about vegetation management.

Ethan's family has farmed this land since 1923, and he holds a degree in animal science and range management that he's put to work every step of the way. When drought years began cutting into hay production income, Ethan and Faith looked at what they already had — a growing herd of goats — and saw an opportunity. Faith listed the business online almost as an experiment. The inquiries came back faster than expected, and Bar O Bar's contract grazing operation has been growing ever since.

Their two largest customer types reflect a broader conservation mission: agencies and landowners working to restore native plant communities by eliminating invasive species, and those focused



on reducing wildfire fuel loads. One of their most notable partnerships is with The Nature Conservancy on an eight-acre site that had gone untouched since 1960 with vegetation grown to eight feet or higher.

Bar O Bar brought in close to 500 goats for an initial 10-day treatment, earned a return invitation, and now manages grazing the site seasonally, strategically splitting grazing days between spring and fall to maximize impact within the organization's budget.

What makes the goats so effective goes beyond appetite. As browsers by nature, they seek out broadleaf plants, shrubs, and woody growth before turning to grass – making them remarkably well-suited for targeted vegetation work. They also graze with surprising strategy, timing their return to certain plants precisely when the stressed plant surges sugars to recover. It's a level of ecological intelligence that consistently surprises clients.



None of this works without the right help – and that means two kinds of dogs. Border Collies Hank and Annie move the herd on command, through training, instinct and focus. The livestock guardian dogs have a different role: they live with the goats full-time, protecting them from predators around the clock. Marley, their 13-year-old guardian, has been with the herd for nine years and, as Faith puts it, "thinks she's a goat." It's a reminder that a working operation like this runs on many moving parts – family, knowledge, animals, and trust built over years.

On the farm, the meat side of the operation runs alongside the grazing work. Kids are born in January and marketed in the fall, primarily to ethnic community buyers who purchase for holidays and year-round consumption. Ethan is quick to note that goat is the most widely consumed red meat in the world – a fact that surprises most Americans.



Looking ahead, Ethan and Faith are focused on scaling up – taking on more conservation projects and eventually bringing on help so the operation can grow. With deep roots and a herd that earns its keep twice over, Bar O Bar is one to watch.

Reach out through their website to inquire about contract grazing services for properties one acre and larger across Washington State: www.barobarlivestock.com. Follow on social media to see what's next for this family: @barobar_livestock