

# Online Goat Clinic

## Facilities

- Water availability, clean and cool water, adequate size container dumped, scrubbed daily
- Goats can be effectively raised in fairly simple facilities. Goats need a living arrangement that includes protection from the weather in a barn or shed and a pen for exposure to the sun and exercise. Whether you are using existing facilities or are building a new facility, you will want to consider additional information to include:
  - Project the largest number of goats that you would have on feed at any given time
  - A minimum of 15 square feet of barn space per goat and minimum of 40 square feet of pen space per goat
  - Arrangement of the pens that allows ease in working with the goats on a daily basis
  - Shelter for sun, moisture and extremes
  - The barn should be open to the south and closed to the north
  - Proper ventilation (year round)
  - Feed and equipment storage
  - Washing and grooming facilities
  - Lighting
  - Adequate plumbing
  - Base Material in pens
  - Access to an exercise track or pen
  - Fencing for pens that is predator proof
  - I recommend **visiting a family that is already in the goat business** to look at their facilities and ask for recommendations.
  - Your pens need to be ready to go prior to purchasing your goats.

**PLAN AHEAD!!!!**

## Equipment needed

*Goats can be raised on a minimal amount of equipment. Several required items include:*

- Feeders
- Waterer/water bucket
- Thermometer
- Halter/chain
- Blanket/sock
- Small Drench gun (better for goats)
- Brush
- Syringes/needles-(6 ml/ 18 gauge x 1" for most application)
- Pill gun-small
- Hoof trimmer
- Tools to clean pens

*Additional equipment may include:*

- Blow dryer (not just for show day – daily care and maintenance of leg hair)
- Slicker brush (wool card) and Fluffer Comb for leg hair training
- Clippers/blades
- Show box
- Scale
- Fans
- Trimming table

## **Nutrition and Feeding program**

Goats require six nutrients that include water, protein, fat, carbohydrates, minerals and vitamins.

- Water – Clean and cool
    - Appropriate container
    - Change regularly
    - Clean container regularly
    - Out of direct sunlight
  - Which Feed you select will be based on your own experience or recommendations from an expert. Find a reputable feed dealer that you want to do business with and choose the feed that will work for you. Your local feed dealer can also assist with recommendations and may support their customers at the local livestock show auction sales.
  - Any goat needs 10-14% crude protein
  - Show goats have higher demands 15% CP or above
    - Genetic improvement
    - Faster rate of growth
    - Heavier muscled
  - What to look for in a goat ration-all feeds require the manufacturer to provide information on the feed tag. Look for the following guarantees:
  - **Protein** will range from 15%-18%-protein supplies the essential amino acids for muscle growth and development.
  - **Fat** will range from 2.5%-4%-fats and carbohydrates provide energy. Increased fat may be needed for extra condition when you get closer to showing.
  - **Fiber** will range from 15%-19%-fiber is very important in the diet for rumen function.
  - **Minerals**-calcium, phosphorus, salt and copper should be listed. These will all be included in appropriate levels for optimal use in the goat's diet.
  - **Vitamins**-selenium and Vitamins A, D and E are normally included.
- Goat rations also commonly include a coccidiostat for the prevention of coccidiosis. Common drugs added include decoquinate and monensin.
- Overfeeding of protein will be converted to energy but can be more expensive

- Additional Mineral?
  - All complete feeds balanced
  - Situational
- Supplements/Feed Additives
  - Great to meet additional needs
  - Know their purpose
  - Can do damage to program if used improperly

***There are a variety of feed additives available in the show goat market. Some are practical and economical and some are ridiculously priced. I recommend following these common sense solutions when considering feed additives.***

- If you are feeding a manufactured show feed by a reputable company, the ration is supplying all of the nutritional needs of the show goat.
- If your goat is thin (lacking fat cover), you can add fat and increase muscle.
- If your goat is fat, you can add a protein source to burn fat and increase muscle.
- If you are considering using any other type of feed additive, contact the manufacturer and ask for solid research results that indicate the product provides, the results you seek.
- **DO NOT** feed any type of feed additive that is not labeled for use for market goats. Products like ractopamine hydrochloride are **illegal** to use in feeding goats.
- **DO NOT** try a new feed product for the first time at the stock show. If you are going to feed any additional product when you get to a show, try it at home a month or so in advance to make sure that you get the results that you are looking for and that it does not affect your goat adversely.

## Daily Management

Daily management involves a number of important tasks. Your goat depends on you for proper care. Make it a priority in your schedule to provide the daily nutrition and care needed to **produce a champion**.

**Feeding**- you can feed your goats utilizing a self feeder or you can hand feed your goats.

The **self feeder** is used when the goats are young and growing. This method offers feed to the goats at all times. The positive aspect of a self feeder is that the goats can eat whenever they are hungry, which maximizes gain. A negative aspect to the self feeder is that the goats can overeat using this method, resulting in scours and treatment. In addition, if a goat is off feed and not eating at all, you may not notice until the matter gets complicated.

A self feeder should be checked daily for feed and cleanliness. Goats are very finicky eaters. Just because there is feed in the feeder does not mean that they are eating. If the feed gets contaminated, it must be cleaned and replaced.

**Hand feeding** involves feeding each goat separate. The advantage of this method is that you know exactly how much each goat is eating each day. You can also control the amount of feed that is fed from small amounts to full feed. A disadvantage to hand feeding is that each goat needs a separate pen. If you are hand feeding your goats, you need to be consistent and feed the same time every day with a minimum of two feedings per day.

Full feed for goats is estimated at 3.5% of their body weight daily. Simply multiply the goat's weight by .035 to determine the amount. 2% of the body weight is considered a maintenance ration-this would be used to "hold" the goat and prevent excessive weight gain.

Most goats will benefit from **combining** a self feeding program and hand feeding program during the feeding period.

**Water-** Clean the water bucket and fill with clean water daily.

**Pens-** Clean the pens on a daily basis to improve health conditions and minimize fly problems. The method of cleaning the pens will depend on the type of material you have in your pens.

### **WALKING YOUR GOATS:**

**Halter Breaking/Chain Breaking/Leading-** I like to start by halter breaking the goats. I will halter the goat and tie them to a fence or drop (a chain suspended from the roof with a rubber strap attached). It is very important that you stay with the goats during this procedure. They will usually fight pretty hard which may include jumping and falling. Make sure that there are no objects close by that they can run into and injure themselves. In the beginning-keep it short. After the goat stops fighting the rope and stands still, let them go and repeat the next day. After a few days, the goats will stand tied to the halter without fighting. They are now "Halter Broke".

The next step is to teach them to lead. This can be very frustrating. It usually does not work well to pull on the halter. The goat has a natural reaction to pull back when you pull on his head. It works better to stand beside or behind the goat and let the goat walk forward, controlling him with the end of the halter. It will take several attempts to teach the goat to walk with the halter.

The final step is to "chain break" the goat and teach the goat to lead with a chain. The chain is placed around the goats neck-loose enough so that you can grab the chain and have room to work the chain, but tight enough so that the goat does not easily pull out of the chain. You can purchase a show chain at your local feed dealer or make your own. You can attach a double end chain clip to the chain so that you can secure the goat to the fence.

**Driving the goat-**"driving or bracing" is an accepted practice in showing goats to maximize their muscle expression. The majority of the judges will allow you to drive your goat in competition. If you are unable to drive your goat during competition, you place yourself and your goat in a definite disadvantage.

After the goat has learned to walk, you should start working with the goat to drive. This involves moving to the front of the goat, placing the inside part of your left leg into the front shoulder of the goat and pushing into the goat. The goat "drives" when he learns to push back into you. The proper procedure includes:

- Stop walking your goat with all four feet square.
- Step in front of the goat and control his neck and head holding his head upright and forward while you set his front two feet square and then place his rear legs square
- Step into the goat with your left leg braced into the right shoulder of the goat with the goats neck stretched up your leg and his head held level and looking forward in a comfortable position.
- Slightly push into the front of the goat to make him drive back into your leg. The harder you push, the harder the goat should drive.
- There should be minimal pressure on the goats head and his neck should be straight and in-line with his body.

- It works to take the goat away from the pens/barn when you start teaching him to drive and be headed back to the barn. They usually will drive more effectively because they are headed back to where they want to go.

**Exercise-** An exercise program is important to build muscle. The amount of exercise needed will vary on each animal. I like to start the exercise program about 45 days prior to the show. You need to have some condition on the goats when you start the exercise program because they are going to burn fat with the increased exercise.

Don't confuse the exercise program with walking goats. The goats need to be walked throughout the feeding program for training purposes. The exercise program is designed to trim excess fat and tone muscle. Several methods can be effective:

**Self-Exercise** – Goats are naturally active and with a large enough pen will run and play. Adding obstacles can help in toning goats and keeping active. Obstacles include tractor tires, old cable spools, railroad ties, etc. Be sure no sharp edges or high elements that can cause injury

**Exercise track and dog-** Many feeders use a trained dog to run the goats in an enclosed track. This method is very effective. You will need to consider the cost of exercise track and the cost of owning and maintain an exercise dog. The number of days to run and amount of time to run will all vary depending on each individual goat.

**Treadmill** – Commercially available livestock treadmills work best and hold their value for resale at end of your career. Converted human treadmills will not last for very many goats. Can be used to exercise forward which will enhance athletic look and help maintain appropriate fat cover, and then can be used to exercise backwards to enhance and tone in flank and rear leg area unlike other methods and will assist in bracing your goat.

**Chariot-** You can build or purchase a chariot that pulls behind a lawnmower. I like to use a chariot that has a reversible hitch, when we are training the goats to walk. We use the chariot in the traditional way where the goat's feet are on the chariot base and the goat walks with his rear legs only. When we are using the chariot for exercise, I like to reverse the hitch and have all four feet on the ground.

A chariot works great because the goat is secure to a head piece which makes him keep his head at the correct height for showing. You can also control the speed so that it matches the same speed that you will walk in the show ring. You can also add a harness with weights to increase the amount of the workout. A chariot with four headpieces allows you to work four goats at one time.

**Hand exercise-** No track, no chariot- you can still exercise by devising a harness to put around the goats neck and have the goat pull weights as you walk the goat. I recommend starting at 5lbs and increasing up to as much as 20lbs.

### **Health program**

- As important as selection and feeding
- Develop a veterinary relationship
- See additional handout

**Videos links available at [Corona.nmsu.edu](http://Corona.nmsu.edu)**

**Clipping demo**

**Hoof Trimming demo**

## ***Additional Information***

### **Grooming program**

- Hair maintenance
    - Washing/Rinsing
    - Conditioning
    - Combing
    - Growth
    - Maintaining length and abundance
  - Hide maintenance
    - Goal is to maintain natural, healthy skin oils
    - Washing removes natural oil and must be replaced
  - Hoof maintenance
    - Length
    - Angle
    - Correcting issues
- 

### **Getting ready for the main event - Fitting**

- Adjusting feeding program
    - Few weeks before show develop a plan
      - Getting body/lines right
    - Adjust hay or overall feed intake up or down
  - Drench program
    - Helps when regulating water intake to improve lines
    - Enhance muscle shape and handle
    - Provide energy and/or hydration during lower feed/water consumption
  - Understanding weight and weigh back
    - Most jackpots and county shows simply weight for classification
    - State and Regional shows have declaration of weight and weigh back during show with upper and lower limits
- 

### **Clipping and grooming**

- Always start with clean goat, not necessarily washed, blown and free of stuff
  - Body clip with Lister Covercote or Premeir XtraCover 5-10 days out
  - Trending soon to blending areas of the body
  - Blend legs/knees with #10 wide or blocking blade
  - Trim ears, head and nose with body blade or #10 wide or with guards
  - Tail should be sculpted to enhance levelness and square-ness of hip, as well as, muscle shape/dimension
-

### **Show preparation**

- Starts well before show day
  - Culmination of feeding, training, showmanship, fitting, clipping, etc.
  - Keep body and lines right
  - Don't get lazy and don't do regular routine without looking at goat first
  - Wash or Not
    - Clean with soap
    - Clean with waterless shampoo
  - Blow out
  - Condition hair and hide
  - Comb to perfection
  - Make sure legs and joints are right
  - Dress tail if necessary for holding upright
- 

### **Placing 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> in class**

- Maintain body and lines
- Usually no weigh back so you can freshen with feed and water but watch body and lines
- Keep clean and neat
- Follow same protocol as you did for class

### **What if you make the premium sale**

- Maintain body/lines and adjust feeding program until sale day
  - The picture is for you and the breeder
  - Take a fun picture before or after for parents and grandparents
  - Give pictures to breeders, even if not high placing, makes a difference especially if you show improvement over time
-