

Goat Basic Care Sheet

Nutrition

- Horse quality, clean, dry coastal bermuda hay, free choice (keep the hay feeder full)
- Grain mix for goats, such as New Country Organics goat feed, Dumor goat pellets, Purina. Make sure it is specifically formulated for goats and has a calcium to phosphorus ratio of 2:1. Start with ½ to 1 cup 2x per day for month old kids. This amount can be gradually increased to 1-2 cups per day as they grow.
- Loose minerals for goats, such as New Country Organic, Manna Pro Goat Minerals, Purina goat minerals, Sweetlix, or TruCare by Zinpro. This can be offered by hand, sprinkled on grains or put out in a feed bowl to access free choice. I prefer to feed daily with grains.
- Treats such as berries, carrots, raisins, or animal crackers can be offered sparingly, to avoid unbalancing the rumen
- Fresh water available at all times
- Bottle fed kids should get whole, pasteurized cow milk. I do not recommend milk replacers for kids, as it can cause scouring, floppy kid syndrome, bloat and fatalities.

Vet care

- Coccidia - If your goat 6 months of age or younger has scours (poop that is anything other than dry pellets), have a fecal test done right away. If you cannot get to a vet or have the test done that day or next to confirm, but you have a kid with watery poop, go ahead and treat for coccidia while you are waiting. It will skew the results, but it is better than waiting while they multiply and cause more damage. Tultrazuril 5% is available from horseprerace.com. It is a single dose medicine. Sulfamed is more widely available and less expensive, but is a five day course. I get it from valleyvet.com.
- Barber pole worms – check eyelids weekly during warm months. Monthly during cool months if previous check looks fine. Use the 4 step method to expose the inner eyelid tissue (I have a video of this on my youtube channel and also a link to the class I learned from). It should be deep pink. If pale, treat for barber pole worm. Effective treatment for this changes as worms become resistant over time. Treating only when needed helps slow the development of resistant worms. Currently, I treat with dectomax orally (.5 cc for kids, 1.5 cc for adults), and triple the bottle dosage of safeguard for goats on day one. Days 2 and 3 repeat the safeguard only. I also give red cell iron supplement daily until the eyelids return to deep pink, 1 to 3 cc for kids and 6 cc for adults.
- Vaccines – CD/T vaccine is given twice initially and then annually. This vaccine helps prevent enterotoxaemia infection and tetanus.
- Probios, a probiotic supplement, is good to have on hand for times of stress or other illness, to help bring the rumen flora back in balance.
- Goat lice – This mainly cold weather pest is species specific. It is not contagious to humans or other animals. However, it is unpleasant to your goats and a heavy infestation can be harmful to goat kids.

Goat lice can be treated with topical ivermectin, cyence, livestock dust or a permethrin spray such as equisect.

- Mites cannot be seen without a microscope. Missing fur on the nose, ears, feet and parts of intact males can be a sign of mites. Mites can be treated by ivermectin (burns terribly) or dectomax (doesn't burn) given subcutaneously. Mite infestations often go hand in hand with zinc deficiency. If you see missing fur, make sure you are also providing a goat mineral with sufficient quantity of absorbable zinc, or supplement with another source such as zinpro.

Grooming

- Hoof trimming – Hooves should be trimmed every 6 – 8 weeks. The outer edges should be trimmed even with the soft center of the hoof. The bottom edge of the trimmed hoof should be parallel to the fur line above the hoof. Watching a goat mentor do this and/or a few youtube videos before trimming the first time is a good idea. Trim conservatively until you get the hang of it and keep quick stop handy in case you accidentally trim too much.
- Brushing – not everyone brushes goats on a regular basis, but brushing is good for them and they like it.

Housing

- Goats require a secure fence. Typical goat fence is four feet high woven (not welded) wire fence with 4x4 inch spacing. That is fine for an interior fence. 2x4 spacing is better for containing small goat kids. That is usually labeled as no-climb horse fence. A perimeter fence should be taller, stretched tight, attached to sturdy wood posts, and reinforced with hot wire top and bottom, and/or other additional methods to keep predators out, and goats in.
- Goats need protection from rain, wind, extreme cold and extreme heat. For dwarf goats, a barn is nice but not required. Mine have igloo dog houses, a resin shed and a covered kennel to choose from. Do not put goat houses, climbing toys or anything else they could jump on near the fence, to prevent curious goats from jumping over.
- Rake up fallen hay and as much of the goat pellets as you can rake up with it, as often as you can. This will help reduce coccidia and worm infections, as well as reduce the risk of listeriosis from eating moldy hay.

Other things to watch out for

- Predators – the most common predator here is loose, domestic dogs whose humans do not properly restrain them. Ideally, all goat families should include working livestock guardian dogs (LGDs). There is no fence that is completely predator proof. If you do not have LGDs, your goats should sleep inside at night or in a locked barn or welded wire kennel with predator top and fence panel at the bottom to prevent digging.
- Poisonous Plants – a few common types are azaleas, wild cherry, and holly. There are many others. Contact your county agricultural extension agency for a complete list of poisonous plants in your area