

Goat Project Help List for New Feeders

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In my opinion these six things are essential to having a successful goat project

- **Goals-** exhibitors need to determine a goal before a goat is purchased.
- **Selection-** if you start with a common goat you will end with a common goat
- **Feeding-** the key to feeding is purchasing fresh quality GOAT feed and learning how to feed it.
- **Exercise-** you need to treat your goat like an athlete.
- **Showmanship-** proper presentation of the goat is crucial.
- **Luck-** you can do everything right and still not win without a little luck.

Goals

A parent's definition of success usually differs from the exhibitor's definition. Sometimes we as parents relate our placing to success, while our kids may feel successful with simple things like not letting the goat go while they are showing in the arena. The exhibitor's goal will determine what show you will attend the quality of the goat you need purchase, the age and size of goat to purchase.

Selection

You must select a goat that is structurally correct and has the genetic potential to develop muscle. If you do not do this it does not matter what you feed or how much you exercise- he will not be a good one. In general, you would like the goat's age to range between 9-12 months of age at show time. You should select a goat to fit the exhibitor. A 50 lb. exhibitor does not need to show a 110 lb. goat.

Feeding

Contrary to popular belief, there is no such thing as a "magic" ration that will make your goat a champion. There are many good quality feeds and additives available. The key to feeding is purchasing a fresh quality GOAT feed and learning how to feed it.

When you purchase your goat try to find out what he is being fed. You should either purchase a sack of this feed or get some from the breeder. Mix this feed with your feed until the goat is accustomed to your feed. This will get them on feed quicker and lessen the stress for the new goat.

Start feeding the new goat one pound of feed in the morning and one pound in the evening. If the goat cannot consume that much you may need to back off the amount you are feeding.

I like to feed our goats a hand full of hay after every feeding. If you feed the hay before the feed sometimes they will only eat the hay and not the feed.

Water

Clean, fresh water is a daily necessity because water composes more than 70 percent of lean tissue and all body fluids must be replenished regularly. Never deprive your goat of water because water regulates the amount of feed a goat will consume. However, reduced water intake at certain periods during the program can reduce feed intake and reduce the size of the rumen for improved appearance.

Health

The key to a healthy goat is the development of a preventive health program. Most goats purchased for club projects are on a health maintenance program and have had a variety of vaccinations. However, you should assume that the goat you have purchased has had no treatments. These are the most common health issues in show goats:

Enterotoxemia

A major cause of death in club goats is enterotoxemia or overeating disease. Goats that have their feeding schedule abruptly changed or consume large amounts of grain are subject to enterotoxemia types C and D. All club goats should be vaccinated with a combination (types C and D) vaccine immediately after purchase. At least one booster vaccination is recommended.

Internal parasites

Internal parasites are a continual problem. Newly purchased goats should be drenched immediately for internal parasites and a second drenching should follow about 3 weeks later.

Urinary calculi

Urinary calculi is a metabolic disease of male goats characterized by the formation of calculi or stones in the urinary tract. The first sign of calculi is a goat's inability to pass urine. The goat will be restless, kick at its belly, stretch and attempt to urinate. The common cause of calculi formation in wether goats is feed rations with high phosphorus levels and an imbalance of calcium and phosphorus. Provide plenty of clean, fresh drinking water and feed a balanced feed made for goats.

Ringworm

Ringworm has become a serious problem in the goat industry. Ringworm is contagious and can be transmitted from goat to goat, from goat to human or from infected equipment to goat. A good prevention program is necessary. I recommend spraying your goats with a anti fungus spray before they enter the ring and again after they exit the ring being sure to brush the goat to make sure the spray contacts the skin and not just the hair.

Exercise

Goats are very active animals. If given the space they will play and exercise on their own. However, in order to get the most out of the genetics you purchased, goats need to be made to exercise. Goats can be exercised several ways, such as with a dog and treadmill. Any type of exercise is better than no exercise. Remember to treat your goat like an "athlete" in training.

Showmanship

I don't recommend working with the new goats for at least two weeks after they have been purchased. Once the goats are comfortable with their new surroundings and are eating well then we start working with them. I like using a chain to show goats. A dog collar can be used for younger kids if the chain hurts their hand. We begin by setting the goat up every day to teach them how to brace. The best way to teach a goat to brace is by pushing them backwards until they give you resistance. It is important to let the goat win when he resists going backwards; otherwise he will learn that you are stronger and he will not attempt to brace against you. Once they are taught to brace we make them hold the brace for about 15 seconds, while increasing the time they hold the brace every time they are set up. This will condition both the exhibitor and the goat to show for longer times when they are exhibiting at the show. I do not recommend using a hotshot or pushing them off a trim table to teach them to brace. Once the goat learns to brace, then we work on walking. The time spent by the exhibitor bracing the goat will create a bond with the goat and make him much easier to teach how to lead. Do not leave tied goats unattended. Each goat has a different personality- some will take to showing right away and some may never learn to show.

Luck

-“I'm a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work the more I have of it” Thomas Jefferson.

Meat Goat Resources and Activities:

- 4-H Meat Goat Guide https://agrilifebookstore.org/publications_details.cfm?whichpublication=975
- Howard College Goat Camp in Big Spring (June)
- Aggieland Goat Camp in College Station (July)
- Stock Shows (Local, County, Fairs and Majors)
- Livestock Judging
- Quality Counts
- Record Book