



# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SHEEP AND GOATS!

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**SIMPLE IDEAS ON WHAT YOU NEED  
TO KNOW BEFORE YOU PURCHASE A  
TRUCKLOAD OF SMALL RUMINANTS!**

**OR, HOW TO BEST AVOID FAILURE AS A  
NEW SHEEP/GOAT PRODUCER**

# WHAT IS A SMALL RUMINANT???

SHEEP AND GOATS  
OR  
LITTLE COWS???



Ruminants include cattle, sheep, goats, buffalo, deer, elk, and camels. These animals have a digestive system that is uniquely different from our own. Instead of one compartment to the stomach they have four.





# **SHEEP AND GOATS ARE SMALL RUMINANTS!**

**REMEMBER-There is as much difference within  
breeds/species as between breeds/species.**

**HOWEVER, MOST INFORMATION ON SHEEP AND  
GOATS IS RELATIVE TO BOTH SPECIES.**

# MAJOR DIFFERENCES:

SHEEP GRAZE.

GOATS BROWSE.

GOATS REQUIRE COPPER IN THE DIET.

SHEEP TOLERATE LITTLE COPPER IN THE DIET.

(AS A RULE OF THUMB SHEEP NEED NO MORE  
THAN 4-8 PPM IN THE DIET)

# SHEEP, GOATS, AND COPPER


GOATS REQUIRE SOME COPPER IN THEIR DIET, THEREFORE!

ALWAYS USE A SHEEP MINERAL FOR SHEEP AND A GOAT MINERAL FOR GOATS

IF SHEEP AND GOATS ARE RUNNING TOGETHER, USE SHEEP MINERAL TO BE SAFE

SHEEP AND GOATS DO REQUIRE MINERALS

KEEP A GOOD QUALITY MINERAL OUT FULL TIME FOR OPTIMUM REPRODUCTIVE AND NUTRITIONAL HEALTH IN SHEEP AND GOATS



SO, SHEEP AND GOATS ARE PRETTY MUCH THE SAME ANIMAL WITH BOTH BEING SMALL RUMINANTS, AND THEREFORE CAN BE MANAGED IN PRETTY MUCH THE SAME FASHION. THERE ARE DIFFERENCES IN COPPER LEVELS, AS WELL AS GRAZING AND BROWZING PREFERENCES.



# WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE BUYING SHEEP/GOATS?

Figure out your market!

How will you sell your production?

**DO NOT BUY A SHEEP OR GOAT UNTIL  
YOU HAVE A MARKETING PLAN!**

# Marketing Options...

- ❖ Direct to Consumers
  - ❖ Live Off the Farm
- ❖ Through Marketing Channels
  - ❖ Special Registered Sales
  - ❖ Traders
  - ❖ Local Sale Barn
  - ❖ Local Processing
  - ❖ Marketing Cooperative
  - ❖ Licensed Inspected Plant



***Identify a market and know you will be able to sell your production at a profit before purchasing animals!!!!***

# WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE BUYING SHEEP/GOATS?

Have proper facilities for sheep/goats!  
What is needed?

DO NOT BUY AN ANIMAL UNTIL YOU  
HAVE PROPER FACILITIES FOR SHEEP  
AND/OR GOATS!

# FACILITIES..

## ❖ FENCING

### ❖ Net Wire

- ❖ At least 48" tall
- ❖ Barbed wire top/ bottom
- ❖ Proper wire spacing

### ❖ Electric Fencing

- ❖ High maintenance
- ❖ Good temporary/rotation usage

## ❖ Combinations of net and electric are best



**If you can throw water through it, they can go through it!**  
**Never discount good fencing systems!**



# Facilities..

## ❖ Corrals

- ❖ 5-6 feet tall

- ❖ Use heavy net wire or 4 X 4 welded wire

## ❖ Chutes

- ❖ 12" wide, smooth sides, slightly curved

- ❖ Well lighted

- ❖ Movement uphill

## ❖ Sheds

- ❖ 5 sq. ft. per animal

- ❖ Two sides minimum





# WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE BUYING SHEEP/GOATS?

Learn basic animal husbandry skills!  
Can you keep your animals alive?

DO NOT BUY A SHEEP OR GOAT UNTIL  
YOU KNOW YOU CAN MANAGE  
SHEEP AND/OR GOATS!

# KEEPING THEM ALIVE...

- ❖ Nutrition/Feeding
- ❖ Health Program
- ❖ Disease Management
- ❖ Breeding/Reproduction
- ❖ Forages/Pastures



# WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE BUYING SHEEP/GOATS?

Know the type/kind of sheep/goat  
that's best for you!

What breed of sheep/goat do you  
need?

DO NOT BUY ANY SHEEP OR GOATS  
UNTIL YOU HAVE A PRODUCTION  
DIRECTION!

**SHEEP BREEDS CAN BE  
WOOL OR HAIR, DAIRY, ETC.  
GOAT BREEDS CAN BE  
MEAT OR FIBER, DAIRY, ETC.**





# WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE BUYING SHEEP/GOATS?

Find a reputable breeder to  
deal with on buying animals!

DO NOT BUY SHEEP OR GOATS FROM  
TRADERS OR PROCREATORS IF AT ALL  
POSSIBLE!



# BUYING SHEEP/GOATS...

- ❖ Research breeders and operations
- ❖ Contact breeders and ask questions
- ❖ Find breeders located in your area
  - ❖ Will they or can they assist you with problems?
  - ❖ How long have they had animals?
  - ❖ Do they offer any guarantee on their sheep or goats?



# WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE BUYING SHEEP/GOATS?

Have a financial plan!

How do you pay for your animals?

**DO NOT BUY AN ANIMAL WITHOUT  
REASONABLE ASSURANCE THEY WILL  
PAY FOR THEMSELVES!**



# BUYING SHEEP/GOATS...

- ❖ Review and establish a real time budget for your operation
- ❖ Place limitations on your investment
- ❖ Secure cash rather than borrowed money if at all possible
  - ❖ Lending institutions are not favorable to loaning money for sheep or goat operations
  - ❖ Losses are a real possibility in the industry



# WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE BUYING SHEEP/GOATS?

Know your limitations!

Can you manage a lot of animals?

DO NOT BUY A LOAD OF SHEEP OR  
GOATS UNTIL YOU FIRST MANAGE A  
FEW SHEEP OR GOATS!

# LIMITS YOU MUST CONSIDER...

- ❖ Your age, health, and longevity
- ❖ Proper land and facilities on hand or attainable
- ❖ Labor availability or need
- ❖ Sustainable forage systems
- ❖ Control of parasites
- ❖ Other resources available

***CAN YOU KEEP 'EM ALIVE?***





# THE BOTTOM LINE...

- Identify and Secure a Market-
- Build Adequate Facilities-
- Develop proper husbandry skills-
- Identify the type and kind of sheep or goats to raise-
- Deal with reputable breeders-
- Secure All Funding (Cash Preferred)-
- Start small and grow your operation to match your skill set and time constraints-

## BEFORE BUYING THE FIRST ANIMAL!

# Always Cover Your Backside!

Know how to recognize if things start going wrong...have a plan to recover or bail out.

*Know your limits...*

***HOW DO I SURVIVE?***





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