

MANAGING YOUR CLUB GOAT PROJECT AND PREPARING FOR THE SHOW RING

SELECTING YOUR PROSPECT

- ◆ Go to a reputable club goat producer to purchase your goat. There are many individuals that raise meat goats, but few that will produce club goats. Legitimate club goat producers sell prospects that are the proper age, have been disbudded, properly weaned, vaccinated and castrated. These individuals can be a great resource for managing your goats and can save you time and money when dealing with any problems.
- ◆ Avoid buying a wether that was castrated prior to 8 weeks of age as they will be more susceptible to urinary calculi problems. Waiting to castrate allows growth of the urethra which helps to pass stones through the tract, thus preventing blockage and possible death of the goat in the event of an attack.
- ◆ Purchase your goats prior to the ownership deadline and at least 160 days prior to your primary show. Buy a goat that will be 10-12 months old by the final show to realize maximum genetic potential. You will want your market goat to weigh anywhere from 80-100 pounds at his final show to be competitive, depending on frame size.
- ◆ Select goats in their natural environment if possible. Try to watch them move around with their mother or if at a sale, take them out of the pen and analyze them for desirable traits.
- ◆ Take time to handle the goat prior to purchasing. You will want a goat with a long, wide loin, a full, muscular leg, and firm, tight skin.
- ◆ Select goats that are long and level hipped and possess a high percentage of hind saddle.
- ◆ View the goat while standing and on the move to evaluate structure. You will want a goat with adequate bone and one that stands and moves correctly on the feet and legs.
- ◆ Select goats that you like first, then if you know who will be judging the show, select goats for that particular judge. Selection factors to consider in order of importance are:
 - A. Attractiveness
 - B. Length of body
 - C. Height
 - D. Structural correctness: Legs, feet, neck set and straightness of top, width of pin bones.
 - E. Muscle: Loin eye, depth of twist, shape down the top.
 - F. Width
 - G. Firmness of Muscle
 - H. Depth of body
 - I. Front end
 - J. Shape of loin
 - K. Rib shape

If one or more of these factors are not acceptable to your standards, look for another goat.

MANAGING YOUR GOAT

Goats are generally hardy and seldom get sick if managed properly. Several things can help eliminate major health problems and allow your goat to develop to his maximum potential.

- ◆ Give a vaccination of CD/T for over-eating disease and a booster shot two weeks later. For internal parasites, deworm your goat with Ivomec goat drench (4cc per 20#) or obtain a cattle product from your veterinarian for off label use. Remember to use any cattle dewormer at 2.5 times the cattle rate on a goat. Follow-up by deworming every 30 days thereafter. Alternate dewormers only when the present dewormer becomes ineffective.
- ◆ If your goats are not already shorn when you purchase them, shear them as soon as possible. Your goats will grow better in the summer months without the extra hair and will be less likely to overheat. Be careful to keep shorn goats out of direct sunlight as they can sunburn.
- ◆ After each show, give antibiotics to keep goats from getting a cold or pneumonia. Give 3 cc of penicillin under the skin behind the forearm. If you are within 60 days of a terminal show, use Naxcel or other antibiotic that will fall within approved withdrawal times.
- ◆ To help prevent fungus (club lamb/goat fungus) use a fungal shampoo each time the goat is washed. Spray all barns and equipment with a good disinfectant after each use. A mix of 1 part Clorox to 6 parts water makes a good disinfectant.
- ◆ To prevent Coccidia, which can be a major problem in goats, feed a ration with Decox in the mix. Treatment can be as simple as adding CORID in the water for a minimum of 5 days. Albon or SMZ pills will help with treatment and should be used a minimum of 5 days in a row also. Some symptoms of Coccidia include; unthriftiness, lethargic, or gauntness, and may or may not be associated with scours. Use sulfur drugs with caution as drug residue may remain long past the labeled withdrawal time period.
- ◆ Trim feet at least two months prior to any shows and then again a week before. It normally takes about a week for goats to adjust to having their hooves trimmed and to walk naturally and comfortably.

EXERCISING YOUR GOAT

All show goats must be exercised in order to be competitive. Anyone who has been very successful for any period of time has some sort of exercise program. There are many different ways to exercise. Treadmills, hurdles or jumps, chariots, walkers or dogs are all different methods used to firm and tone muscle in club goats. Don't start your exercise program too early. A good rule of thumb for starting an exercise program is at around 60 pounds for most goats. Make sure the goat is fat enough (around .2 fat cover at the last rib) before starting an exercise program. Thin goats should not be exercised. Exercise will not create muscle, but will firm and tone the muscle that your goat is capable of producing. Exercise also will increase feed intake and improve the overall health of your goat. DO NOT exercise your goat too much as over working the goat will decrease muscle tone. When your goat starts to pant it is time to stop.

- ◆ Halter break your goat as soon as possible. Never leave a goat unattended while tied on a halter. Start working with your goat once halter broken. Teach the goat to brace and walk under your direction. This will teach you how to handle the goat and the goat will learn what is expected to respond properly in the show ring.
- ◆ Walk and work your goat daily as this will teach consistency and pay off later in the show ring. Proper exercise will allow your goat to express more muscle, stay fit and firm, and ultimately handle better for the judge. Walking will train the goat to show properly in the ring while running will tone muscle and make the goat handle firmer.
- ◆ Jumps will build and tone muscle. You can add this to your walking routine or add small jumps to your pen set-up. Jumps should be the same height as the goat's chest, slightly higher than he can walk over. If used in your pen set-up, place them in high traffic areas, such as between feed and water areas.
- ◆ Treadmills and chariots are intended to build muscle and a walker will help tone muscle.
- ◆ Dogs or intense running are both very effective in building muscle and tone. Running is the most effective way to build and tone muscle in your goat. Using a dog will trigger an adrenalin release in the goat as a flight response reaction takes place.
- ◆ Do not overheat your goat. Fans are very handy in the summer months or during high humidity and temperature periods. Cooler goats will maintain a better growth rate.
- ◆ Do not over exercise, pay attention to the amount of fat and bloom the goat is carrying and don't lose it by over exercising.

FEEDING TIPS

Start out with a good quality 16%-18% protein ration with at least 10%-14% fiber. Feed goats all they will eat (a creep works great) each day until they reach 80 pounds. After they reach 80 pounds, you should start handling finish daily and feed goats accordingly. Purchase a good set of barn scales in order to know how much you are feeding your goats. A good rule of thumb would be to feed around 1 ½ pounds of feed twice per day. You should be able to maintain growth and condition at this rate until the end.

- ◆ When feeding your goat, place the feed source at shoulder height for the goat to eat. Many people build feeders that allow the goat to place their front feet on a step to reach the feeding trough. This can help to build muscle in the rear legs and loin at an early age, but may actually decrease muscle shape as the goat matures.
- ◆ Most any pelleted goat ration will work to feed your goat. Be sure to use a balanced mix that contains ammonium chloride or other source to prevent urinary calculi. An 18% protein feed is best for growing goats and a 16% protein, higher energy feed is preferred to finish the goat. Always remember that high protein grows, high energy finishes.
- ◆ Handle finish at every chance. This provides an indicator in determining whether the goat is too fat or too thin. Remember that goats will deposit internal fat at a higher rate than other livestock. Ideally .2 inch of fat cover at the last rib is all the cover a goat needs to carry. If the goat is too fat, cut the amount of feed down and increase protein. If the goat is too thin, decrease the amount of protein and increase the amount of fat. Don't increase the amount of feed unless absolutely necessary to make the goat gain weight.

- ◆ Weighing the goat weekly will tell you how much your goat is gaining or losing and allow you to calculate the end weight for your goat. Use the livestock weight calculator provided on the msucares website to calculate weight gain and project end weights.
- ◆ Maintain a good source of fresh, clean water for your goats at all times. This means to change the water daily! If you wouldn't drink it, change it.
- ◆ Supplement your ration with a little quality alfalfa hay as needed. A little hay once or twice a week will help to keep the rumen (stomach) working properly. Holding hay prior to a show is recommended, as hay tends to blow out the stomach and gives the appearance of an overfilled goat.
- ◆ Goats should be fed at least twice a day once they come off the creep feeder. It is very important to feed on a regular time schedule. Be sure to feed as close as possible to the same times each and every day.

SHOW MANAGEMENT FEEDING SCHEDULE

Leave goats on full water until just days prior to the show, but limit the feed and water from this point until after the show. Be sure that any water they receive while at the show contains good quality electrolytes. Following is a feed and water schedule to regulate intake prior to the show:

Show Schedule	While at Home	While at Show	
		Water	Feed
A next day show	½ of normal feed	½ can*	½ can*
2 days from the show	normal feeding	¾ can 1 st day ½ can 2 nd day	¾ can 1 st day ½ can 2 nd day
3 days from the show	normal feeding	normal 1 st day ¾ can 2 nd day ½ can 3 rd day	normal 1 st day ¾ can 2 nd day ½ can 3 rd day

*Can referenced is a 1 pound coffee can.

The morning of the show, if within 4 hours of showing, do not feed or water. If the wait is going to be more than 5 hours, feed ½ can each of water and feed. If you need more fill, feed alfalfa hay approximately 1 hour before the show.

Enjoy your goat project and use it as a learning experience. There are many lessons to be learned from successfully managing a goat project. Remember to keep these ideas in mind as you work to be the best you can be in making the best better!

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