



4-H Parent Guide

4-H Goat Project

A Guide for Raising Goats

Selecting a Goat Project:

- **Market Goats.** This project lasts four to five months. Market goats are shown by weight and are evaluated on their muscle, soundness and structural correctness, degree of finish, volume, balance, style and freshness.
- **Breeding Goats.** These can be shown as a registered goat or a commercial doe. Breeding goats are evaluated on structural soundness, skeletal dimension, muscle and eye appeal.

General Care and Management

Health Care

Sanitation

- Clean and disinfect housing and feeder regularly.
- Remove and replace wet bedding.

Internal Parasites

- Good sanitation prevents and controls worms.
- Deworm upon arrival and one month later until one year of age.

External Parasites

- Watch for lice, flies, mites, fleas and ticks.
- Treat with appropriate insecticide.



When raising goats, it is a good idea to have open communication with your breeder and a veterinarian for proper health management protocols.

Goat Facts

- Female goats are called does and male goats are called bucks.
- Market goats show at a minimum weight of 50 pounds.
- Goat meat is lower in fat and cholesterol than beef, pork or poultry.
- A large group of goats is called a herd.

Exercise

Exercise for show goats improves muscle development and condition. It stimulates the goat's appetite and helps with proper finish. Never allow a goat to get over heated. Begin exercising 45–60 days prior to livestock shows. Walking also helps with training.



Feeding Facts:

- Always keep clean fresh water available.
- Provide fresh food daily.
- Keep a routine schedule (same time every day).
- Use elevated feeders, which are cleaner to use and help build leg and loin muscle.
- Feed 3% of the goat's body weight.
- Introduce grain in small amounts.
- Feed roughage daily to keep rumen and microbes working.
- Avoid feeding copper in rations.

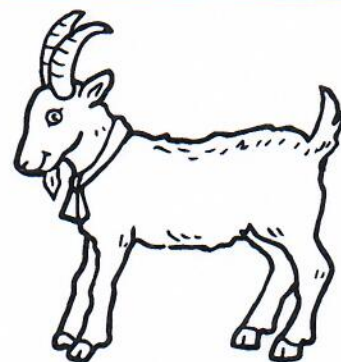
Project Costs

Create a budget and stick to it!

- 1. Goat Cost.** Goats can be purchased from local breeders or at sales. A goat can be bought for as little as \$100, but can get more expensive. A competitive goat usually cost \$250. Medication and deworming costs are about \$50 per goat project.
- 2. Feed Cost.** Each goat will eat approximately 3-4 pounds of feed per day. This will average about \$35 per goat per month. Additional supplements can be added to the goat's diet, which increases overall feed cost.
- 3. Shelter.** Shelter must be provided when raising goats. It must consist of a cover and floor protection (such as shavings) from whipping rain, sun and wind.
- 4. Animal Health.** Maintaining good health is an important part of an overall management plan. 4-H'ers should develop a relationship with their local veterinarian for advice on a health management program that includes recommended vaccinations for the area, and protocol for managing external and internal parasites.

Housing

- Goats need to be protected from the weather.
- Housing does not need to be expensive or elaborate, just comfortable.
- Each goat needs barn space of 15 square feet.
- Each goat needs 40 feet square of pen space.
- The barn needs lighting and plumbing.
- Area should be fenced in to keep predators out.



Selection

- Set goals for the project, and choose an animal to achieve those goals.
- Be familiar with the different goat breeds and their purposes.
- Select goats that are heavy-boned, level-topped and level in the hip.
- Look for width and depth of leg muscle and loin, plus a large forearm muscle.
- Market and breeding goats will have different degrees of muscle. Keep project goals in mind when studying muscle.
- Search for the best goat for your budget. The most expensive goats are not always the best. You will not go out and buy a guaranteed champion. Develop your champion with hard work at home.



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Reference: 2013 LSU AgCenter Livestock Handbook; LSU Livestock Specialist; 4h.tennessee.edu; www.okstate.edu; www.thejudgingconnection.com



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Louisiana 4-H is an educational program of the LSU AgCenter.