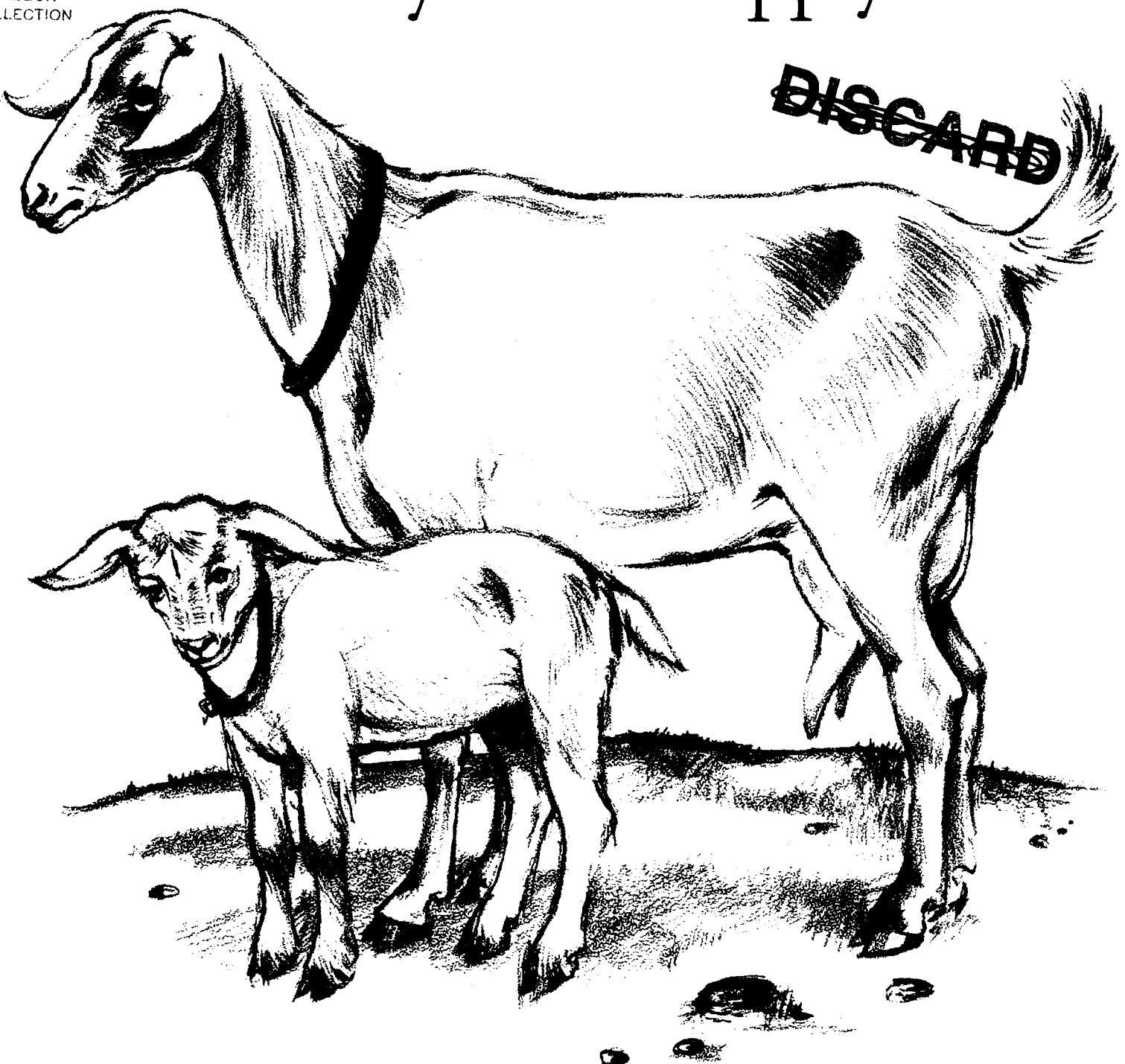


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Dairy Goats for Family Milk Supply

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The goat is a friendly animal, easy to keep. With proper attention, goats are generally healthy and relatively free from some of the troubles that affect other domestic animals.

One or two goats can furnish fresh milk for a family on a year-around basis. Surplus milk can be used for butter or cheese or to raise other young animals. Goat's milk is sometimes recommended for infants or elderly persons with an intolerance for cow's milk.

To protect yourself and your family, if you plan to keep a dairy goat for family milk you should be certain the animal is tested and is free of brucellosis. A local veterinarian must take a blood sample and forward it to the State Department of Agriculture's laboratory. When possible, buy animals that have been tested previously, and obtain a certificate from the seller, showing them to have been tested and with a negative reading. If you move a goat into the state you must have it tested if it is 6 months of age. (This applies also to cows and pigs.)

Some communities have zoning laws or ordinances that prohibit goats or other animals in urban areas without special permits. Local health officers and police can advise you on any such limitations.

Buying a goat

Since most people want only one or two animals to supply family milk, good-grade non-registered goats may serve the purpose. For a variety of reasons you may prefer to buy registered, pedigreed animals, but the cost will be higher. If your chief goal is milk, pedigrees may be unimportant and your chief concern will be the milking ability of the goat. Total milk production depends on amount of milk daily and how long the doe will produce before going dry.

A good milker will produce an average of 2½ to 3 quarts daily, over a period of 9 to 10 months. Such goats may produce up to 10 to 12 pounds daily during the peak period of lactation. Two goats, bred to freshen three to four months apart, should assure some milk every day of the year.

Goat breeds

There are five main breeds of dairy goats. They are Toggenburg, Saanen, Nubian, Alpine, and American La Mancha. All breeds do well in Oregon and possess good-quality milking ability.

Prepared by D. E. Anderson, Area Extension Dairy Specialist, Oregon State University

The author acknowledges assistance of members of the Oregon Dairy Goat Council, who reviewed and offered suggestions for this publication.

Certain characteristics are stronger in some breeds than others. Toggenburgs are recognized for long lactations, with fat content of milk averaging 3.8 percent. Saanens are larger goats and are recognized for being heavy milkers, with 3.5 percent fat average. Nubians are noted for higher fat percent than the other breeds. Alpines are recognized as a hardy breed, with good milk-producing capacity of about 3.5 percent fat. A characteristic of the La Mancha breed is no visible external ears. They are large animals, good milkers, with milk at about 4 percent fat.

You should consider getting a breed for which you can obtain breeding service from a breeder in your community.

Angora goats are *not* good milk animals.

In Oregon and the Northwest there are a number of goat breeders of all the breeds. The names and addresses of different state and area breeder organizations are listed here. Write these organizations for names of breeders in your community and for the breed you want.

Area Dairy Goat Associations

- Capitol City D.G.A., 2861 Bunker Hill Rd. South, Salem, OR 97302
- Central Oregon D.G.A., P. O. Box 452, Redmond, OR 97756
- Clark County D.G.A., 4703 N.W. 199th St., Ridgefield, WA 98642
- Emerald D.G.A., Rt. 1, Box 501, Junction City, OR 97448
- Evergreen D.G.A., Rt. 1, Box 41, Oakland, OR 97462
- Myrtlewood Dairy Goat Club, South Coos River Rt., Box 186, Coos Bay, OR 97420
- Northwest Dairy Goat DHIA, Rt. 2, Box 754, Beaverton, OR 97005
- Northwest Oregon D.G.A., 16520 S. Bradley Rd., Oregon City, OR 97045
- Southern Oregon D.G.A., P. O. Box 720, Eagle Point, OR 97524
- Southwest Washington D.G.A., Rt. 1, Box 128A, Rochester, WA 98579
- Oregon Dairy Goat Council, Rt. 2, Box 754, Beaverton, OR 97005

National Associations

- Alpines International, 10370 Wise Rd., Auburn, CA 95603
- American Dairy Goat Assoc., P. O. Box 186, Spindale, NC 28160
- American Goat Society, 1606 Colorado St., Manhattan, KS 66502
- American LaMancha Club, 120 Basking Ridge Rd., Millington, NJ 07946
- National Nubian Club, Rt. 1, Box 416, Glen Gardner, NJ 08826
- National Saanen Club, 9132 Hastings Blvd., Riverside, CA 92509
- National Toggenburg Club, Rt. 1, Box 177A, Pattenburg, Asbury, NJ 08802

Housing, equipment, and fencing

Housing and fencing for goats should be planned and ready for use before buying the animals. Either pens or stalls may be used, but each type should have a rack for hay, trough or box for grain, and a water pail holder. Partitions should be four feet high.

Stalls for tying or confining the goats should be four and one-half feet long by two feet wide. Pens should be a minimum of five feet by five feet. Temporary kidding pens can be formed with moveable panels.

Designs and plans for feed racks, panels, milking stand, and other equipment are available from Farm Building Plan Service, 228 Gilmore Hall, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon 97331.

Yard and pasture fences should be tight and in good repair. Woven wire fencing at least four feet high is best. The spacings on the lower portion should be small enough to keep young animals from getting through. Keep wooden braces on posts at a low level. Most goat raisers find all barbed wire fencing to be hazardous and injurious to goats. Some operators have success with a two-wire electric fence with mature animals.

Tethering goats is not satisfactory, but may be unavoidable. The tether must be long enough to allow the goat to get plenty of feed and drinking water. Change the location daily. Tethered goats should have access to shade or movable shelter for protection from storms.

Provide dry, well-ventilated shelters, free of drafts. Avoid swampy land for goats.

Feeding

Goats are ruminants, like cows and sheep. Thus the principles of feeding are similar. Large amounts of good forages are required. Forage may be supplied by hay, browse from brush and shrubbery, and pasture. Like cows, goats need good-quality feed to maintain their bodies and to provide nutrients for milk production. Keep a block of trace mineralized salt available to the goats, along with plenty of fresh, clean drinking water.

In the summer, pasture and browse can supply most of the forage ration, and may reduce the grain needed for milking animals by up to one-half, depending on the body condition of the animals.

A ration for a milking doe should include up to two or three pounds per day of grain or commercial concentrate feed and when pasture and browse are not available, three or more pounds of good clover or alfalfa hay, available on a free-choice basis.

If only fair-quality grass hay is available, the amount of grain or concentrate mix should be in-

creased about one-fourth. To insure that each animal gets its share of grain, feed animals in separate stalls or tie them individually, with their own ration.

Some goat raisers feed grain at the rate of one-half pound grain daily for each quart of milk produced. This practice assumes the goats also get their proper share of hay or other roughage. Dry does in the winter should get about one-half pound grain daily plus all the hay they want and plenty of fresh water. Dry does in summer, with good pasture and browse, can get all their needs from these forage sources.

The ingredients of most feeds normally furnish adequate nutrients at the suggested feeding levels, so there is no distinct advantage from using special stock tonics. Do not delay calling your veterinarian in extreme situations of illness or infection.

If you expect goats to clean up your weeds, remember that some of those plants can give an off-flavor to the milk. Goats generally are "dainty" feeders, so keep their feed clean. Prevent puddles and stagnant pools of water where goats are kept or fed in corrals and pens.

Age to breed young does

When a doe is nine months old or weighs 80 to 95 pounds, it is time to consider breeding. Locate a registered buck of the breed desired well ahead of time. Most breeders will require a health certificate for your doe.

Does begin to cycle and show signs of heat (estrus) for two or three days every three weeks (21 days) until the spring season. Visible signs are restlessness, bleating, frequent urinating, swollen and reddened vulva, and a flagging or twitching tail. After breeding, make a record of the service date. Watch for signs of heat again three weeks later, and if none are observed, the doe is probably pregnant.

Count 21 weeks ahead on the calendar from the breeding date, and mark as the date due. Does will kid 145 to 150 days after conception.

Kidding

Ordinarily a doe gives birth quickly and often with no one present. For this reason, a few days ahead of date due, put the doe in a clean, freshly bedded pen. Be sure she has a supply of clean water to drink and a box for feed. Early signs of labor include lying down and standing frequently, bleating, or pawing the floor.

If the doe seems to have trouble or labors more than two hours, call a veterinarian or someone familiar with goat or sheep births.

As soon as possible after a kid is born, clear its nose of membranes or mucous to prevent suffocation. Disinfect the navel cord with iodine, dry the kid and put it in a bedded box free from drafts.

Be sure the doe's teats are functional by gently milking a stream from each teat. Clear wet bedding and afterbirth from the pen. Return the kid(s) to the pen to be with the doe to nurse.

The first milk of a fresh animal is called colostrum. It is valuable and necessary for all newborn animals to have colostrum as their first feed. Do not milk the doe completely for the first 24 hours after kidding, so the newborn kids get this colostrum.

Any colostrum not needed for the kids can be frozen in small containers for future use and for kids that may be weak, sick, or off-feed.

If kids are to be bottle or hand-fed, milk out one-half cup for each kid, and keep the milk at 95° to 100°F. when fed to the kids. Be patient in teaching young animals to drink.

Milking the doe

Does should be fed their grain as they are milked. A milking stand or platform is convenient. Milk your goats regularly, every 12 hours, and on schedule. Generally, goats are milked at the right side, but they can be trained to milk from either side.

After the fourth day following freshening, goat milk may be used for human food. It is just as important to produce clean, high-quality milk for use at home as when producing milk for sale to others.

One minute before milking, wash the udder with warm water, then dry it. This stimulates milk letdown and helps assure sanitation.

The first squirt drawn from each teat should be discarded, but not milked onto the floor. To complete the milking be sure both sides of the udder are thoroughly milked out. Incomplete milking leaves the higher fat milk in the udder. In addition, the doe will adjust to less milk yield and she may go dry earlier than she would otherwise.

Care of the milk

Rapid cooling is necessary for high-quality and good-flavored milk. Protect the milk container from foreign material and upon completion of the milk-

ing set the container into a large pan of cold water for 15 to 20 minutes, stirring occasionally to hasten the cooling. Water cooling removes heat from the milk faster than just setting the container of warm milk into the refrigerator for the same length of time. After the milk has been cooled in water it can be put into the refrigerator.

Stop milking and allow goats to turn dry six to eight weeks before they again are due to kid. To turn dry, simply reduce the feed and quit milking the doe. The udder may become slightly congested for a few days, but soon the milk will be reabsorbed into the body.

Raising kids

Some goat raisers find it more convenient in raising kids to teach them to drink from a pan rather than from a bottle. Teaching a young animal to drink can be frustrating, but be patient. It may be easier if the kid never suckles the doe. *Remember that newborn kids must have colostrum milk the first two feedings at least*, regardless of the method of milk feeding.

Warmed milk (95° to 100°F.) should be fed to kids three times daily for the first two weeks, using one cup (one-half pint) milk per feeding. At two weeks of age have some grain or calf meal and some good leafy hay available for the kids to eat. Milk can be discontinued at three to four months of age, if kids are eating a high-protein concentrate mix and appear to be growing normally.

Allow adequate space for kids to exercise, run, and play. Play becomes part of their growing requirements.

Dairy goat literature

Countryside Small Stock Journal, Countryside Publications, Rt. 1, Box 239, Waterloo, Wisconsin 53594.

Dairy Goat Journal, P. O. Box 1908, Scottsdale, Arizona 85252.

Dairy Goat Feeding, Breeding and Management, ADGA, P. O. Box 186, Spindale, North Carolina 28160.

Milk Goats—Why? What? and How? ADGA, P. O. Box 186, Spindale, North Carolina 28160.

Raising Livestock on Small Farms, Farmers' Bulletin 2224, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington D. C. 20402.



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