

# The Goat Guide

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This program is to give you a working knowledge of how to properly care for goats. This outline is by no means exhaustive and should not be relied upon to answer all questions. If you have questions on any section of this outline, please contact [topdoc@uahzoo.com](mailto:topdoc@uahzoo.com) for additional information.

## NUTRITION

### A. Pasture

1. A pasture that has been sown for use as a pasture and that has been well fertilized will support goats quite well without much grain.
2. A pasture that is just growing wild should only be counted on to furnish roughage and not much nourishment.
3. Be careful not to overgraze pasture. A good pasture will support only 10-15 goats per acre. If more goats per acre are present, supplemental feeds will be required.

### B. Hay

1. Hay should comprise 1/2 of daily intake of the feedstuffs when goats are kept in confinement or when pasture is gone.
2. Hay should be of good quality or more grain will be required.

### C. Grains

1. Grain is recommended to be fed at the rate of 1/2 to 1 pound per day for an average 50 pound goat. More or less feed will be needed depending on how well the goat maintains or loses weight.
2. If a good pasture is available, a reduced amount of grain will be required.
3. Thin animals or pregnant animals require greater amounts of grain than the other goats. Quantities will approach as much as twice the above amounts.
4. Choices of grain
  - a. Goat chow - This feed is commercially prepared and formulated for a goats' needs.

b. Horse sweet feed - This is a mixed ration that works quite well for goats.

c. Custom prepared feed - Some area feed mills will grind and prepare this type of feed for you. It should consist of at least 1/10 pound of soybean oil meal, 1/2 pound of corn and 1/4 pound of whole oats per goat per day. Therefore, a ration must contain 1 part soybean oil meal, 5 parts corn and 2 1/2 parts whole oats. Vitamins and minerals may also be added.

d. Do not use dairy feeds with urea in it because it can cause illness and sometimes death of a goat.

## **PARASITES (WORMS)**

### **A. Magnitude of the worm problem**

1. Soils in Florida are highly infested with worm eggs and larvae.
2. Life cycle of worms may be as short as 6-8 weeks, therefore goats must be wormed every 6-8 weeks.
3. Worms kill more goats in Florida than any other disease of goats.

### **B. Types of wormers**

1. Tramisole - one of the best wormers for goats and is supplied in tablet or feed form. In the injectable form it is call Ripercol and is most effective.
2. TBZ - not a good goat wormer but may be used every third or fourth time.
3. Panacur - a liquid wormer given by mouth that does a good job. This product is available thru your veterinarian.
4. Yomesan - this medication is for tapeworms. Because of its expense, it is only used when the problem of tapeworm exists.
5. Ivomec - This is a very effective injectable wormer and can be used in rotation with Ripercol and Panacur.

### **C. When to worm**

1. All goats should be wormed every 6-8 weeks as indicated above, alternating regularly each time with the above wormers.
2. In herds with a high infestation, worming every 2 weeks for three times may be required to break the worm life cycle.

## **DISEASE CONTROL**

### **A. Pinkeye**

1. This is a disease of the eyes causing watering, blinking, redness, ulceration and loss of vision.
2. At the first sign of this problem, your veterinarian should be consulted regarding proper treatment guidelines.
3. Usually treatment consists of ointments in the eye, isolation of affected animals and affected animals kept out of the sun. Some more stubborn cases require injections in the eye and simultaneously intramuscular.
4. Treatment may take a long time so don't give up before the eye is healed.

### **B. Encephalitis**

1. This is a virus disease of goats causing blindness, poor coordination, weakness and loss of appetite.
2. There is no treatment for this condition, therefore, a severely affected animal should be put to sleep. Very few animals recover from this disease.
3. A Thiamine deficiency can also be confused with this condition, therefore consult your veterinarian because it is treatable.

### **C. Tetanus**

1. Goats are significantly susceptible to tetanus. Signs of this disease are observed as a rigid body, staring into space, poor coordination and death.
2. Most animals do not respond to treatment and will die.
3. This disease is prevented by a tetanus vaccine.

### **D. Enterotoxemia**

1. This is a disease of rapid onset causing intestinal upset, pain in the abdominal area, bloating, diarrhea and death.
2. Treatment is usually unsuccessful.
3. Prevention is by vaccine.

## **DEHORNING**

A. Most kids are dehorned from 1 to 2 weeks of age with a hot iron. This must be done by a veterinarian or someone very experienced in goat dehorning to properly burn the horns without getting the brain too hot yet hot enough to prevent scurs (ragged looking horns) from growing.

B. Goats that are allowed to grow horns before dehorning is selected, will require general anesthesia and surgery done expressly by a veterinarian to remove them.

C. Descending of the male goat will be done at the time of either procedure by removing the gland located near the base of both horns. If you do wish to use the buck for breeding this gland must NOT be removed.

## **CASTRATION**

A. Routine castration on a buck should be done when he is around 4 weeks old. At this time he is old enough to take it well and young enough to not let it set him back. It should be done by a veterinarian.

B. Castration of larger bucks requires deep sedation and proper ligatures around the vessels. It is a necessity that this procedure be done by a veterinarian.

## **FOOT CARE**

A. Goats require routine care of the feet to prevent lameness, infection and foot deformities.

B. Feet must be trimmed close to the sole (bottom) of the foot so that the sole is parallel to the hair line at the top of the wall. An experienced person should show you the proper technique before attempting this procedure yourself.

C. Frequency of trimming will be according to hoof growth but usually twice a year.

D. Equipment needed to perform proper trimming is a hoof knife and heavy scissors.

## **GESTATION AND KIDDING**

A. The average length of pregnancy for a doe is 5 months. This may vary a few days in either direction.

B. Kidding should be an uneventful action by the doe and will normally not require any assistance by the owner. Normal delivery is seen as two feet coming together with the nose lying between the legs at the level of the knees.

C. If any of the following trouble signs are seen the veterinarian should be called.

1. Only one foot protruding.
2. Two feet and no nose.
3. Only one foot and a nose.
4. Straining over an hour without anything presenting.
5. A lot of mucous discharge, loss of appetite, and weakness.

D. The new kid should nurse within an hour. If he has not nursed at all after 2 hours, your assistance will be required. Just hold the doe and gently direct the kid's mouth to the teat.

E. If the udder of the doe looks flabby or if the sides are uneven in size, milk some liquid out to see if it looks white or whitish yellow. If it looks any other color, call your veterinarian because you may have a case of mastitis.

Raising goats can be rewarding and enjoyable but it does require some good management and attention to detail to gain the proper result from your goats.