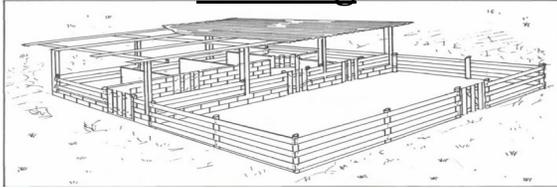


Housing



An important function of housing goats is to protect their health. Goats cannot take damp or draughts well. With the help of a waterproof roof, draught-proof walls, you will avoid having sick goats. Good housing makes it easier to keep an eye on your goats. You can more easily observe and guide phenomena such as coming on heat, mating, pregnancy and kidding when the goats are kept in a pen than wandering around freely outside. Disease symptoms can be observed earlier and you have the advantage of giving each animal individual attention and housing can help prevent theft of your animals.

In general goats are housed as a group because this is less labour intensive and the building costs of the pen are lower. If the goats do not graze, a surface area of 1.5 to 2 square meters of floor space is needed per goat. If they do graze then it should be 1 square meter per goat. Tethering goats is recommended only if you have a few animals, the disadvantage is that goats go around in circles and trample a lot of grass so you must move them often. The rope can also get tangled around the legs and cause severe injury.

Positioning the stall is important. By placing the longitudinal axis of the stall East-West, you can prevent the sun from heating the stall up too much. If, on the other hand you want the sun to shine on the floor so that the floor dries up and parasite die, it is better to build the stall along a North-South axis. The roof is also very important for good temperature regulation. A wide overhang prevents too much sun from shining in. Goats radiate heat when digesting their feed, if an animal cannot get rid of that heat they eat less and therefore produce less. Good ventilation is therefore necessary. Make the stall sufficiently high and make sure there are openings for ventilation in the roof or walls. The floor of the stall must be easy to keep clean and should stay dry as damp and dirty floors stimulates the development of all kinds of germs and worms allowing the goats to be susceptible to disease and produce poorly. It is therefore very important to remove feces on a regular basis before it builds up in and around goat stalls.

Record Keeping

Good record keeping is essential to be able to check the production of any business. Records of your production also enable you, the farmer to select goats properly and thus improve the stock.

In the first place, for good record keeping you must be able to identify your animals. Having a few goats with distinct markings this might prove easy, you should make a sketch of each goat, or contact the Department of Agriculture to install ear tags with a number.

To start with, you must make a servicing list which you should keep in or near the stall and in which you record all data on kidding. In that way you can easily see if the goats kid regularly and if the number of kids born and weaned per goat is what you want. On the basis of this information, you can track down problems and use the differences between animals when selecting animals for breeding purposes.

E.g. of Controlled Servicing list.

Goat No.	Billy goat No.	Date serviced	Date giving birth		Number of kids	Sex of kids	Number weaned	Remarks
			due	real				
23	2	1st: 18/9 2nd: 8/10	4/3	8/3	2	F + F	1	1 died of diarrhoea
15	3	2/11	12/4	15/4	1	M	1	

E.g. of an individual goat card.

Goat no.: 14		date of birth: 15/8/98		Breed: Local	
No. of Father: 3		No. of Mother: 9			
Kids:					
Litter No.	Serviced by billy goat no:	Date littering	Litter size M + F	Weaned M + F	Remarks
1	2	20/7/97	1F	1F	
2	3	30/4/98	2M	1M	1 died of Diarrhoea
3					
Diseases:					
Remarks:					

Although it takes some time to set up and maintain good records, you will notice after a while that you do not feel lost if the production suddenly drops or you want to sell animals. On the basis of your record keeping, you can quickly find out what could be wrong or which animals can best be replaced.



Cayman Islands
Department of
Agriculture

GET THE FACTS!

**Farming Goats in
the
Cayman Islands**



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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
working together, growing together

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General Information

Perhaps the most intelligent—and certainly the most companionable—of backyard livestock animals, goats are highly efficient milk & meat producers. A good doe will yield a gallon of milk each day from a feeding of three to four pounds of grain and a few pounds of hay (the latter helps keep her rumen—part of the animal's digestive system healthy). Meat production: caprine meat (called chevron) is delicious. Goats don't require much space, and basic goat care should include a diet rich in protein, carbohydrates and fiber, along with proper vaccinations and parasite control. If you intend to get the most (and most economical) production from your

Nutrition & Feeding

goat— you must have a good understanding of its nutritional needs especially during lactation and dry periods, and provide good veterinary care. Goats do not thrive under the same conditions as other farm animals, as they are a browsing rather than grazing animal. Goats like to graze good pasture but their diet must also contain ample roughage, some concentrates and a supply of bushes, weeds or rough scrub to give variety.

Roughage forms a large part of the diet. The amount fed and what is fed depends on how much forage is available to the goats and the quality of that forage. The amount and mixture also depends on if the goat is growing (up to a year old), if the goat is pregnant or lactating, or if the goat is just maintaining condition. Pregnant and lactating goats need twice as much energy and protein especially in the last month of pregnancy. Allow goats access to a mineral block. Access to good clean water is essential as all animals need to drink a lot of water each day. You can add unpasteurized cider vinegar to the drinking water. Cider vinegar is meant to help prevent bladder stones in bucks, help with kidding and the general health of the goat.



Health, Disease & Parasites

What is Normal for a Goat?

Goat-care also means understanding basic physiological and biological norms for goats:

Rectal temperature: 30—40 * C
Pulse rate: 70 -80 beats per minute
Respiration: 15 - 30 per minute
Rumen Movement: 1 - 1.5 per minute
Oestrus: 17 - 23 days
Gestation period: 143 - 155 days
Puberty: 4—12 months for bucks
Lifespan Bucks - The average is around 8 years but up to 12 years
Lifespan Does - The average is around 11-12 years and up to 20 years
Growth from Birth to Maturity: 3 years



Parasitic diseases are a constant source of threat to goat herds. Parasites such as intestinal nematodes and tapeworms, cause slow growth, ill thrift and can prove fatal.

Coccidia and intestinal worms have the greatest toll on economic goat-meat production and therefore are central to any goat-care regimen. The key to keeping these under control is good animal husbandry. Close monitoring and sampling with subsequent testing of fecal egg count is necessary. This will lead to optimizing your drenching program for maximum efficiency. Deworm only when necessary. The dewormer you chose should be selected based on the parasites that show up in fecal analysis (contact the Department of Agriculture Veterinary Staff). E.g. There is no need to use a dewormer for tapeworms if the goat has an overload of barber pole worms. By not deworming on a "schedule," the parasites don't develop immunity to the dewormer and by not over-deworming and/or under-dosing, the parasites have less chance of becoming resistant to the medicine. Soon after kids are born you should disinfect navel cord to prevent navel infections by using tincture of iodine.



Hoof Trimming

How often you trim depends on the type of ground you have, goats that live on rocky, hilly properties will need less foot trimming than goats who live on softer ground. You need a good sharp pair of hoof shears and a small wood-workers rasp is a good investment for smoothing off the soles of the feet.

It is a good idea to start trimming the feet of kids at about four weeks of age, they get used to it and you never have any trouble. A good way to learn to trim feet is to contact the Department of Agriculture's animal husbandry officer who is experienced in hoof trimming, to show you how to do it.

First, tie the goat up securely. Start with the front feet, stand at the side of the goat and lift the foot up. This gives you a good position to trim the feet. For the back feet stand at the back of the goat and lift the leg between your legs. Below are some diagrams on how to trim feet.

