

# Caring for your Goats

Raising goats can be very rewarding. Here's our best recommendations to keep your goats happy and healthy!

**Lifespan:** 10-13 years

**Vital Signs:** Temperature = 101.5-104°F  
Pulse = 70-90 bpm  
Respirations = 10-40 rpm



**Environment:** Goats need room to grow and play. Depending on the quality of pasture available for browsing/grazing and nutritional needs of the goats, generally 2-6 goats per acre of fenced pasture is acceptable. These master escape artists require good fencing, ideally no bigger than 4-inch squares to prevent getting a head stuck through the fence, and 4-6 feet high to prevent jumping out. Goats are herd animals, so they do best in groups. Goats do not like to be alone. Adequate shelter is important as well, to give your goats a way to get out of inclement weather.

**Diet:** Fresh water should be available to your goats at all times. Goats are ruminants, meaning their compartmentalized digestive tract is adept at turning forage into protein. Forage, such as grass and hay, should make up the bulk of a goat's diet. If you desire to supplement with a vitamin and mineral mix, choose one that is specifically labeled for goats. Certain life stages, such as pregnancy, lactation, or growth, may necessitate supplementing a goat's diet with grain. If necessary, a small amount of goat-specific grain can be fed. Talk to your veterinarian about the right amount for your goats and avoiding grain-related illnesses such as bloat and urinary obstruction.

**Deworming:** Goats are extremely sensitive to internal parasites. To avoid the development of dewormer resistance in parasites, we recommend an annual fecal egg count for all goats and base our deworming recommendations on those results. Consult with your veterinarian about the right parasite management strategy for your farm.

**Vaccines:** Our current recommendation is that all goats be vaccinated for *Clostridium perfringens* types C & D as well as Tetanus. These vaccines are available in combination. Animals with unknown vaccine history should receive two injections 3-4 weeks apart, followed by an annual booster. This vaccine prevents against infection with these common soil-borne bacteria.

**Hoof Trimming:** Goats hooves need trimmed regularly, every 6-8 weeks depending on wear and weather. Your veterinarian can trim the hooves for you and go over the appropriate tools and technique.

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