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Dairy Goats

Starter Guide.

Overview:

Preparing for and showing livestock can be an extremely rewarding and educational experience for youth. The lessons learned in showing and raising livestock are invaluable. However, it can feel very intimidating to begin. This guide is a broad overview at how to prepare for showing dairy goats. All exhibitors are encouraged to ask questions as they grow through the program.

Manuals can be purchased at the SLV Extension Office
Record Books-

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/159S3N4U071Y8Ns-oIQwPHzt6jSbJzTYU/view>

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Q8nQYAHnuBpVLY-o18Ph6nNICFq4kARf/view>

How to prepare for purchasing your animal:

Before purchasing an animal and bringing it home, it is important to consider the needs of that animal. Firstly, do you have a well fenced area? It is recommended to have at least a 10-15 square feet foot space for each goat. This will give ample room for them to exercise. It is also important to consider feeders and waterers. When considering a feeder, remember to make it a goal to eliminate waste and protect your goats from consuming debris like rocks. For waterers, make sure whatever is used is big enough to hold the water the animal needs in a day and is heavy enough they cannot tip or easily break it.

Your market goats will also need a wind or snow break or some sort of shelter for them to escape the snow, rain, wind, hail, and other weather that frequently impacts San Luis Valley. Goats may need heat lamps in the winters and they must stay dry and protected from the weather. In the summer, goats do well in the heat and do not need fans or misters. In some instances, existing shelters can be made to use for goats.

Purchasing your animal:



Purchasing dairy goats will depend on what you want to show. Whether you want to show a kid, dry yearling or milker. Keep in mind when purchasing a dairy goat you will have to have the time to milk that animal twice a day while it's in lactation. Breed might also take part in deciding what animal to purchase. For example: Nubian's produce less milk but have butterfat and protein making them ideal for cheese making. Alpine's normally produce the most milk. These animals can be purchased through a dispersal sale, reduction sale or a consignment sale.



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Feeding your animal:

There are many feeds available for your dairy goats. You can do your research to determine which you feel most confident about. You can ask your breeder and other livestock exhibitors for advice on what to feed. You will want to consider the breed of your animal when selecting a feed.

If you have purchased a kid, it's important to know that kid has an adequate amount of colostrum. (mother's first milk with in the first 24 hours). After they receive colostrum, they need to receive milk or milk replacer. Offering starter grain is also highly recommended. At weaning age (4-6 weeks) milk can be slowly replaced with more starter feed and roughage. A balanced ration of forage and concentrates will be needed for a doe in lactation depending on what period of lactation that animal is in at the time.



Halter Breaking:

Halter breaking is all about patience and practice. Go slow and don't rush the process. You never want to hit your animal. Your goal is to earn the animal's trust and respect. You're building a relationship with your animal and that takes time, plain and simple. Have a gentle, compassionate hand and be willing to devote time to the worthwhile effort of teaching your animal to respect the halter. When you are getting ready to lead, have a helper encourage your goat either in front with feed in a bucket, or from behind by clapping your hands or pinching above the tail head. Reward your goat by relieving the pressure for every step in the right direction. Your goat should willingly step out and walk next to you without fighting. If you are going to be showing in a collar, begin using it as soon as your goat is used to walking by your side in a halter.



Teaching to Lead

When showing a dairy goat, walk holding the chain in one hand and leading the goat beside you. Always make sure the goat is between you and the judge. If the judge walks around to the opposite side, stop and walk around the front of your goat and switch the chain to the other hand. When setting up your goat make sure legs are squared up and the back legs expose the udder in 3rds. The first 3rd in front of the legs, 2nd portion behind the legs and the 3rd portion behind the legs. Pinch the topline to flatten the topline.



Supplies for show preparation

- Hoof Trimming: One month before County Fair, you will want to get your animals hooves trimmed. This allows for an even walking surface and allows for more comfort
- Cattle Clippers, large & small clippers with multiple attachments. Small clippers with short attachments help you groom hard-to-reach places like inside ears
- Blade Lubricant, WD-40 works, but the manufacturer will likely have a product designed especially for your clippers
- Livestock Blower, A blow dryer will help the hair to stand up & make clipping easier and will generally help fluff the coat
- Extension Cord, you will need it to power the clippers & any necessary lights you might bring. It doesn't hurt to have a light for clipping to make sure your clipping area is as visible as possible. Make sure your cord is plenty long as you won't know how close you'll be to a power source before you get to the show



Common Health Concerns

- Bloat: Bloat is indigestion that shows in the form of excessive gas build up in the rumen. Managing bloat in a pasture setting is hard. You can make an effort to feed dry hay and avoid turning hungry cattle out on pasture so they don't graze too fast. Feedlot bloat can be prevented by making sure 10-15% of the ration fed contains roughage.
- Acidosis: Ruminal Acidosis occurs when the pH of the rumen falls below 5.5 (normal range is 6.5-7.0). In most cases this happens when cattle consume too much of a highly digestible carbohydrate such as barley. Treatment includes feeding long-stem dry hay, free-choice or force-fed baking soda (sodium bicarbonate), and rumen probiotics to repopulate the rumen with "good bugs."
- Ringworm: Ringworm is caused by many types of fungus. It causes circular lesions in the skin and hair loss. Prevent by sanitizing combs, halters and other items frequently and washing animals with Ring Out (or similar product) after shows. Treat with topical creams obtained from a veterinarian
- Mastitis: Inflammation in the mammary tissue due to an infection.



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What will my Project Cost?

Livestock projects can really add up in cost. It is important to ensure that you can afford your project before buying animals. It also is important to consider what you are likely to make from your project to offset the cost. Below is a breakdown:

Cost of purchasing your animal: \$300-1,000

Cost of feed:

of Bags of Feed Needed= (Pounds of Gain Needed*Feed Conversion Ratio)/50 lbs
(26 lbs*5 lbs)=130 130/50=2.6 bags (round up to 3 bags)

3 bags of feed* \$33.00 (National Brand Show Ration)= \$99.00/goat

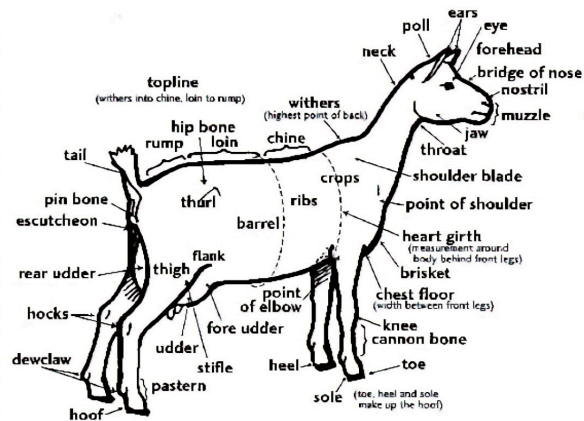
Cost of vet/health: \$200/goat (estimation but should be budgeted into figure)

Supplies: \$200/head (Estimation but should be budgeted into figure)

Total Cost: \$799-1,499/goat



Parts of Dairy Goat



Sources and Resources

- <https://extensionpubs.osu.edu/dairy-resource-handbook/>
- <https://adga.org/>

Produced by Mollie Wells SLV 4-H Specialist

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