

Keeping Goats

Basic Requirements

BRITISH GOAT SOCIETY
INFORMATION LEAFLET

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR GOATS

This leaflet is not a treatise on how to keep goats properly, but a list of that animal's *basic needs* and is for the use of officials when investigating cases of neglect, etc. Animals subject to conditions poorer than those listed below can be said to be suffering from neglect in some degree according to the case in question.

HOUSING All goats should have access to adequate shelter at all times. Dairy goats should be housed at night all year round and also in bad weather. These animals suffer acutely in wind, incessant rain, hot sunshine and from flies. All breeds have very little oil in their coats and can soon get soaked to the skin, leading to a risk of pneumonia and associated illnesses.

The house should have a suitably situated window, adequate ventilation but be free from draughts. There must be a hayrack high enough for the goat to reach in comfort, but not less than one metre (for an adult) so that the hay will not be soiled by the goat. There must be a daily supply of fresh, clean water. Goats will starve to death rather than eat food trampled underfoot and they will become dehydrated rather than drink fouled water.

The space allowance for each animal should be calculated in relation to the age, size, and class of stock. At least 2 ½ square metres (25 sq. ft) of floor space is required for an adult female dairy goat in a single pen. Horned and hornless goats must NEVER be penned together. Since goats are very active animals they should never be tied when housed.

There must be adequate dry bedding of either straw, shavings or other suitable material.

FEEDING Providing that fresh, clean pasture and browsings are available a non-productive goat can maintain itself without discomfort from May to August, with hay at night and on wet days. After that palatable hay should be available ad lib. A concentrated ration, such as a ready mixed goat mix should be fed to all productive (milk producing) animals as well as those in the last two months of pregnancy, those still growing and active stud males.

Mineral licks must be available at all times.

Kids should have milk for at least four months and longer if they are not fed supplementary concentrates. Goat milk substitute is available, but calf or lamb milk powder can be used.

CONTROL

The best method is adequate fencing to allow free range grazing.

The worst method of controlling goats is tethering since this is seldom done adequately. A light chain not less than 3 ½ metres long, with at least two swivels and a light strong leather collar must be used. This must be moved *at least* twice daily. The goat must have access to shelter when tethered if the owner cannot move them when the weather turns, and it must have a supply of clean water too. If tethering is practiced during the day the goat must be free in its house at night. It is most important that the goat should be tethered on suitable grazing. It is not advisable to tether goats when browsing due to danger from entanglement. Supervision is necessary as tethered goats often become strangled and die.

GENERAL

When in milk the goat should either suckle a kid or have the milk removed from the udder at least once daily and twice for the first six weeks after kidding.

- The feet must be regularly trimmed.
- It is recommended that a suitable pour-on should be applied to prevent and eradicate lice, if necessary.
- Goats should be regularly dosed with a suitable preparation against internal parasites.
- If a goat is sick or injured the law requires that it shall have skilled attention.
- The sale of young kids on the open market is not recommended.
- **If a person cannot or will not provide at least the above maintenance for their goats they should not keep such animals.**

UNWANTED ANIMALS

If a goat is no longer wanted, is surplus to requirements or is old or ailing, it should be humanely destroyed by either a licensed slaughter man or a veterinary surgeon.

Goats sold in markets may be subject to further markets, long journeys and ritual slaughter.

There are a number of books on goat keeping.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

You are required to have a holding number for your premises.

All goats must by law have identification marks in the form of ear tags or one tag and a tattoo.

FURTHER READING

All persons keeping goats should read *Codes of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock –Goats* Ref PB9733 and PB0081 available from the DEFRA website.

Anyone in charge of your goats should also read it.

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/food-farm/animals/sheep-goats/>

Goat Husbandry, by David Mackenzie published by Faber & Faber

All About Goats. by Lois Hetherington published by Farming Press Books.

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