

A Guide to Rearing Your Goat

Goats for Agricultural Day must be born after 1 June and must be more than six weeks old on the day. It is best to obtain a goat that is at least 3 days old after birth, this allows the kid to have its mother's colostrum, which gives protection against diseases and is high in both vitamins and minerals. Goats which have been orphaned or rejected by their mother may not have had colostrum. A colostrum substitute is available from the vets or recipes are available on the internet. These substitutes are beneficial but do not carry the antibodies which give protection against diseases.

Healthy kids should have dry small navels, clear bright eyes and have lively movements. Take note of your kid's birthdate as this is required on the entry form.

If a buck (male) is chosen he should be wethered with a rubber ring from 1 week old, otherwise he will become smelly and possibly aggressive as he reaches maturity.

Approximate Rearing Needs

2 x 10kgs of milk powder

2 x lamb teats* (it always pays to have a spare as they get chewed) or a complete bottle and teat set plus spare teat

Pellets or meal (from approximately 3-4 weeks)

Collar and lead

Brush

Drench

Vaccine

Cover (optional)

Teats can be screwed on to a coke bottle

Feeding

Lamb milk powders are specially formulated to meet the needs of your kid goat. Mixing and feeding instructions are clearly written on the bag. Avoid sudden changes in the type (brand), quantity or temperature of milk or milk powder.

When feeding your kid in the first 5 days, watch that its tummy doesn't get over distended. As a guide, feed 20% of body weight daily split in to 5 small feeds. For example – a 3kg kid needs 600mls per day fed at 120 mls per feed. Thoroughly clean bottles and teats after each feed.

When your kid gets older supplement the milk with lamb or multifeed pellets. If your goat is tethered keep moving it regularly so that it has access to fresh grass.

Scours

Stop feeding it milk immediately and keep it off milk for 24 hours.

Feed it an electrolyte mix to keep it hydrated. (Electrolyte mix is available in small pack sizes from your local farm store or vet and are always good to have on hand when rearing a goat).

Continue electrolytes with four to six feeds of 120ml by bottle or tube feeder.

Keep your kid in a clean, dry draught free environment and keep it warm.

Vaccinations and Drenching

If the mother of your goat was not vaccinated with a 5 in 1 one month prior to being born or if you do not know if it was vaccinated, it should be vaccinated with a lamb vaccine or PK/Antitet from 1 week old. If the kid has come from a vaccinated mother and has had adequate colostrum in the first day of its life it will have protection for about 3 months.

Your kid should be vaccinated with a 5 in 1 vaccine at weaning (or 3 months) and then given a booster shot 1 month later and thereafter once a year. This vaccine prevents pulpy kidney, tetanus, black disease, malignant odema and blackleg. These diseases can kill the healthiest and largest of kids.

Drench at about 4 weeks old and again at 10 weeks, an oral lamb drench is suitable for goats.

Lice Control

Lice are a common problem. Wash with Asuntol at twice weekly intervals and brush daily to remove dead lice eggs. If your kid gets lice you also need to wash its cover and brush in Asuntol. Keep infected kids and gear away from other kids.

Housing and Requirements

A dry draught free house or kennel is required. Goats do not like wet or cold. You may even want to cover your kid goat. It will grow better if it is not using energy to keep warm. A dog cover is ideal while it is small.

Poisonous Plants

Goats have a love of garden plants, however they are not able to determine which ones are poisonous. There are potentially many poisonous plants in the home garden. Some examples are (but not limited to) – plants of the erica and rhododendron family, camellia, daphne, azalea, daffodils, snowdrops, hyacinths, hemlock, cress, red maple, oak, oleander, arums, ivy, five finger, lillies, poppies, poinsettia, titoki, foxgloves, snap dragons and rhubarb leaves.

Daily Care

Regular feeding

Wash its face to remove any milk residue

Walk it on a lead and play with it

Brush it at least once a day

Practice calling your goat before each feed.

Points to Remember

Hooves should be trimmed and clean

Hair around the hooves should be clipped.

Make sure your kid's face and ears are clean

Trim long hair under its tail

Brush it often to get a nice finish on the coat and to remove loose hair

Ensure the collar is loosened regularly so it is not too tight otherwise it will wear the hair off around its neck.

On Agricultural Day

Wash your kid on or before Ag Day but be very careful to keep it warm as they can easily get a chill and get sick. Take a bucket and brushes, an old towel to clean it if it is dirty when you arrive. Take its food and water requirements for the day.

Depending on the number of entries and at the discretion of the animal committee, children will be grouped in three age groups – senior 11, 12 & 13 year olds, intermediate 8, 9 & 10 year olds and junior 5, 6 & 7 year olds. Goats will be judged on leading, calling and rearing.

The leading course is the same one used at the Franklin Central Group Day. It is advisable not to start using the leading course until closer to Agricultural Day as your kid may become bored and uncooperative.

When leading your kid you should stand on the left shoulder of the kid. The right hand should grip the lead palm upwards and be approximately 10cm from the collar. The left hand should grip the lead, knuckles upward.

Actions which could incur penalties are – pushing your kid with your hand, jerking on the lead, allowing the end of the rope to trail on the ground, buffeting your kid with your leg.

Try to lead your kid at a reasonable pace ensuring that you walk at the same pace as your kid without dragging or pushing it.

When calling your kid – it needs to come directly to you. The distance the kid is called from will be determined by the judge on the day. Ensure you call in a clear loud voice so it can hear you. You must be able to hook your lead back on your kid's collar.

Rearing is judged on general appearance, condition, size with the kid's age taken in to consideration.

Tips for Success

Your child should always feed the kid whenever possible. Kids fed by parents usually do not perform well on Agricultural Day.

Ensure you practice leading and calling your goat over a fence post.

Spend lots of time playing with your lamb so you build a bond and it will come when called.

Give your lamb a treat when leading and calling. You may use pellets – even a hug, pat and a few kind words are beneficial. (Remember don't use the pellets in the ring on Ag Day.)