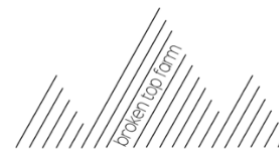


# So You Want a Goat?



## 1. Legalities and Technicalities

Be sure you have checked with your local laws and ensure that you are allowed to have goats where you reside. All too often, people get pet goats, only to have to give them up due to not realizing they weren't allowed to. Specifics may be around how close they can be to property boundaries or dwellings. You also may want to ensure your neighbors will be okay with the noise. Goats simply make noise when they're hungry, happy, silly, or just on your average Monday. As a breeder, we love every one of our kids and want to ensure they are finding their forever homes.

## 2. Fencing

The fence should be 4 feet at a very minimum for dwarf and pygmies and 5 feet tall for full size goats. If the minimum is your situation, will you be able to raise it or modify if your goats are able to jump or escape? Miniature goats require an average of 200 square feet of room to roam – per goat. For full size breeds, double that. Keep in mind if you have a smaller pen as this, you will need to ensure your goats are taken out to play or go on walks.

## 3. Housing

Even if just a hut, tarped lean to, or a nice cozy dog house will do, but make sure there is approximately 20 square feet per goat in a shelter. Also consider if your planned shelter will be adequate for any extreme weather in your area. Goats generally need a shelter with minimal drafts and deep, dry bedding. If it rains, will they be protected? If it snows, will the shelter hold up? In windy conditions, will they be safe? The good news is that goats are very hardy once acclimated and can adjust for colder or warmer weather. However, there may be steps you need to take (fans, cold water, electrolytes, deep bedding, etc) for certain extreme conditions. Don't forget you'll need to get rid of that dirty bedding somewhere. This seems minute, but it piles up quickly and can be considered a public nuisance in some areas.

## 4. Shapes and Sizes

Goats come in a variety of breeds. This means there are various sizes, temperaments, and characteristics. Consider your goals and amenities. If you have a small area and a shorter fence, you most likely will want dwarfs or pygmies – or a cross with them. If you have more room and your neighbors are nearby, maybe pass on a Nubian (quite loud) but look more into another full size breed. Wanting to make butter or have creamy milk? Nubians and Nigerian Dwarfs have the highest butterfat content and makes for great milk products! Hoping to raise for meat, then maybe a boer is better for you. I highly recommend joining a goat Facebook group or finding a local goat mentor to make sure you pick the perfect goat.

## 5. Dedication

Goats live on average of 10 years, give or take. You also will need two goats, as they are social creatures and solo life is nothing short of cruel. Most breeders will not sell single kids without proof of having more goats. Goats also require daily care and affection. If you like to travel, have active lifestyles, or are constantly running around for other hobbies – maybe now isn't the time. Finding a "goat sitter" isn't easy or cheap. They will nibble, jump, and get you dirty. If you think yours won't... maybe try a cat?

## 6. Veterinary Care

Your goats will inevitably need health care. First is regular care. Things like worming, vaccinations, and needed mineral supplements are always expected. What about if your goat gets sick? You'll need to locate a vet that handles goats (far and few) or have a veteran mentor to help in emergencies. Expect all medications and treatments to be costly. One bottle of medicine can easily be over \$30 and the fee for a vet to just step foot on your farm is usually over \$100. You'll also need to trim hooves regularly and may need to shave them for health reasons (lice). If you expect to raise kids, you'll need to wether them (banding the testicles) and disbud them (burning the horn bus off at a few days old). While you may find a mentor or vet to do these things, the tools and fees are easily over the hundreds of dollars.

## 7. Nutrition

Goats are actually quite sensitive animals. They require certain feeds that work in a healthy way with their body. Wethers, especially, are prone to urinary calculi. Bloat is also common if some things are ingested in excess. Based on location, goats require different loose minerals. They can certainly browse your yard or pasture, but they still may need hay and grain supplemented based on their needs. Milking does especially require grains and extra nutrients. Many ornamental and favorite plants are toxic to goats. Hope you don't like your Rhododendron bush and azaleas that much!

## 8. Production

Goats make milk, this we know. But did you know that you must breed a goat (need a buck and doe), have kids (usually 1-4 at a time), and then regularly milk them to actually use or drink that milk? That often means ensuring kids get adequate milk via bottle feeding – which is easier said than done for a bit) You'll need to make sure your buck is housed separately (but remember he needs a friend because they're social). Now you need to sell the kids too! Goats intended to have a purpose outside of friendship require a lot more effort and husbandry.

## 9. Lifelong Best Friends

Goats are exceptional pets. They will grow a very unique bond with you, play and grow with you, and make your day a little brighter with every quirk. Some folks even train their goats to walk around with them off leash or even potty train them (although we've definitely never had luck with that). Expect nibbles and jumping – but always be alert in case it turns into a jealous nip of the finger!

## 10. Opportunities for More

If you're truly enjoying the hard work that comes with goats, maybe you're interested in diving deeper into the "goat world". There are organizations to register your goat, such as the American Dairy Goat Association. They offer programs like showing, milk production testing, and appraisals of body condition and quality. You can learn what an "ideal" goat should be and strive to breed your very own - to create a herd and make your name known in the goat world.

## Still want a goat? Use this checklist to ensure you're ready!

- Research local laws and talk to neighbors
- Find a mentor and dip your toes  
search Google for "goat farms -your location-" or Facebook for goat pages or groups
- Build a fenced area  
miniatures: 200 square feet per goat and 4 feet, full size: 400 square feet per goat and 5 feet
- Ensure your fenced area is free of toxic plants  
ask your mentor or group to help identify unknown plants
- Build or Buy a shelter  
20 square feet per goat, no drafts, 3 sides minimum, sturdy against weather
- Find a Vet  
see if your mentor knows of anyone
- Plan for bedding/manure disposal
- Research breeds  
consider how vocal they are, size, temperament, local availability, intended purpose, health problems, and preference of breed
- Have funds set aside for feed (if needed), hay, straw, minerals, syringes, needles, and basic medications  
ask your mentor or check out our "goat health" booklet for a list
- Do your research on how much these things cost locally and plan how much it will cost monthly
- Find a reputable breeder to buy from  
ensure they are health checked, blood tested, and fit your needs – always ask your mentor for help or recommendations
- As the day nears closer to your goats arriving, ensure they are fully bedded, hay full, water fresh, and fence/shelter secured
- Enjoy the most wonderful pet experience you could ever imagine
- Bonus: If you're loving it and would like to be more involved, look into ADGA and the many programs it offers for your goats!

**\*Check with your mentor when you think you're ready to purchase.\***

**\*Go play with their goats and make sure it's for you!\***

**Mentor Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mentor Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Preferred Breed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Why:**

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