

## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A GOAT AT TEACHER'S FOLLY FARM

Our goats are fed twice a day. They can do okay on once a day feeding if weight is monitored to be sure they're getting enough. They are given approximately ½ pound of orchard grass pellets (the small ones) and a very small handful of black oil sunflower seeds (helps keep the coat from drying out) at each feeding morning and evening. In the summer, we feed by 8AM and after dark. When goats are fed, they generate a lot of internal heat which can cause problems on hot summer days if they are fed and digesting during the heat of the day. Pregnant goats, does in milk, and kids for the first year also get goat grain added to their ration for the extra vitamins, minerals, protein etc. they need during these times.

In the mid-afternoon around 3 to 4 PM, they are either put out to forage in our pasture or given hay for fiber. If your goats have extra weight, you can feed timothy, but if not, there are more calories and nutrition in orchard grass which is what I use and they need less of it for their ration.

Goats are browsers, not grazers, so they love to clean up tree branches, dead leaves, weeds, wild rose bushes (leaves only but then the bush will die), and even poison ivy. They will graze on grass if that's all there is, but prefer the browsing forage. Be careful with trees you like, goats will browse on the leaves and strip the bark which is likely to kill your tree. We have a fence around the ones in the pasture that we want to keep for shade. Also certain plants are toxic to goats as they are to many animals. Azaleas is an example. Please google for plants toxic to goats to review what they should not eat that may be in your pasture.

Goats should have free choice goat minerals and also baking soda. Goats have particular copper requirements which is available in minerals made for goats. The baking soda helps the pH of their rumen (one of their stomachs) maintain properly. For wethers, I stir ammonium chloride into their minerals to help prevent kidney stones which they can be susceptible to. If wethers are sharing a pen with does, the ammonium chloride doesn't hurt the girls.

Our goats love goat treats, low salt wheat thins, other low salt crackers, animal crackers, and best of all Honey Nut Cheerios as treats. We don't feed them treats too often or they become pests every time you walk out to the barn. But we do it to encourage them to come, especially for meds, blankets, the vet, etc. You have

to teach goats to like treats so feed them as you get to know them so they want them when you need them to. Goats learn to eat by watching others.

Goats must have shelter from wind and rain. They ***hate*** getting wet backs and even hooves. They are susceptible to pneumonia if they get too wet and cold. We do blanket our goats with goat blankets when it's less than 30 at night in the winter, but most people don't. Extra hay at bedtime when it's really cold at night serves the same purpose, firing up the heater from the inside rather than the outside. We have bucket heaters in our buckets in the winter. Sufficient water is necessary for goats and they won't drink cold or dirty water. In hot Virginia summers, we keep a fan blowing in the stalls if it's over 90 degrees. Our goats always have shade available. Goats are susceptible to heat stroke when it's really hot and humid.

Goats need ***good*** strong fencing. If they can fit through it or get over it, they will go wandering. They are curious animals. We use goat panels that are 48" high with a 4x4 grid put in with T-posts. We have occasionally had a goat jump this but only rarely and only when they're young. If you have a young kid (baby goat) the 4x4 grid is not small enough to keep them in, they will go right through it or get their heads stuck when they grow a little. I have read that some people train their goats with electric fencing, but I would only use this inside a good perimeter fence to partition your space, not for your perimeter fencing.

Goats need to see a vet annually for shots – tetanus, rabies, etc. must be maintained to protect their health. Their hoofs need trimming about every 3-4 months or they become overgrown and misshapen which can even deform the feet permanently. This makes it easy to develop rot or infections and uncomfortable for the goat to walk. This is easy to learn to do, but our vet and our horse blacksmith both are willing to provide this service for us. Check with yours to see if they can do this for you. There are also directions for how to shape the hoof on the internet and in goat care books.

Products from Tractor Supply that we use:

**Standlee Premium Western Forage Premium Orchard Grass Pellets, 40 lb. Bag**

SKU: 512180199

**Manna Pro Goat Mineral Supplement, 8 lb., 1000325**

SKU: 509943699

**Royal Wing Black Oil Sunflower, 20 lb.**

SKU: 685884199

Ammonium Chloride for goats is available at CFC Farm Supply.

We get our hay currently at TriCounty in Marshall but have often gotten our hay at CFC also. We were feeding timothy then so I don't know if they have orchard grass available.

Our Vet: Margi Dunlap 703-254-4475 She is the BEST!! Referred to by us as "The modern day James Herriot"!!!!

Check the spelling of Herriot above.