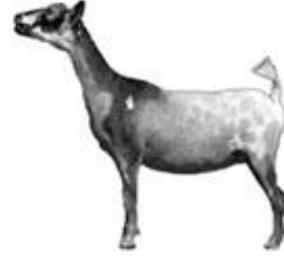




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GOAT CARE

Welcome to the World of Nigerian Dwarf Goats!

A Nigerian Dwarf goat is a small breed of dairy goat, and should have the graceful, refined, proportions of the dairy goat at about 1/3 the size. They produce large amounts of milk for their size, and food consumption. Unlike other domestic goats, they frequently will breed year round. Their care mainly involves taking care of their food, shelter and hygiene.

The following measures can be included for taking care of your goats. The care of your Nigerian is similar to the care of other goats. Good management (selection, nutrition, parasite control, health care, housing and responsible breeding) is the foundation of your herd and this will determine the ultimate condition and conformation of your stock. Goats are herd animals, so depend on the companionship of other goats. Two goats make a herd. A single goat is a miserable goat, and will make you a miserable goat owner.

Feeding

The daily diet must include protein-rich foods like fresh green leafy alfalfa. Having a goat mineral block for the goats is also a good practice in goat care. As ruminants, they depend on a diet primarily of hay. Sweet smelling, non dusty, hay is ideal. Goats also love browse like brushes, blackberry, rabbit brush, weeds, etc. The two essential vitamins required by goats are Vitamin A and Vitamin D. Foods rich in Vitamin A include green pasture, and green hay. Exposure to the sun is enough to provide the goats with Vitamin D. An adequate supply of fresh clean water should be maintained for the goats. Be careful to avoid mold! Goats are very susceptible to mold toxins. Avoid toxic plants!: Rhododendron, azalea, yew(looks like spruce but no scent), laurel, loco weed, cherry...these can kill in very small doses.

Never change the diet suddenly, always introduce new or extras in small quantities. If your goat over eats or gets into something he shouldn't, watch it carefully for signs of illness.

It's not a good idea to let the goats suck on your fingers! Their back teeth are razor sharp and can even bite through you fingernail. Also this can introduce foreign bacteria into their systems that can be harmful.

Shelter

Shelter is the other important aspect of goat care. The fencing should be built tall enough to keep animals like dogs, or coyotes from straying into the vicinity of the goats. Construct a pen with the fence so the goats can move about freely. Barbed wire is not advisable for building a fence, as there are high chances of the goats getting injured. The shelter should provide a dry place to sleep. Dog houses, open front barrels, and sheds all work fine to keep the goats dry.

Trimming and Worming

Hooves should have trimmed as needed, usually every 6-8 weeks; the bottom of the hoof should be flat without edges curling under. Scissors type garden pruning shears work well. You can also use a 6" door plane to rasp the bottoms of their hooves.

Worming of goats can be done about three times annually. You can use a small amount of Ivermectin (used for cattle and horses) or Safeguard wormer (available for goats).

General

Goats are sociable, playful creatures. They enjoy gentle attention; do not play aggressively with them or they will become aggressive. They enjoy climbing and jumping on rocks, stumps, and platforms made for their pleasure (and your entertainment).

When you bring your goat home, expect that they will be frightened and nervous until they get used to their new home. They may be a bit noisy, may act shy, and will need TLC and reassurance that their new home is a safe, comfortable, happy place. It usually takes less than a week to settle in.

A healthy goat appears contented, alert, has an appetite and chews its cud. Its coat is smooth and glossy, skin is clean and pliable. One can feel the ribs under the skin but bones do not appear to jut out. The manure consists of formed, slightly moist pellets which, with the urine should be passed without effort.

I guarantee my goats are healthy at the time they leave here. Since I have no control over what happens once they leave, I can not be held responsible once they leave the premises. If you are not sure about the health of your goat, call a vet. It is best to have one lined up before you need one. Most vets don't care for goats, so you will need to check around in order to find one in your area.

Feeding Goats

As a general rule, we feed good quality alfalfa hay, water, Sweetlix Loose Minerals for Goats or Purina Goat Mineral Block. Our milkers receive about a cup of rolled barley while they are being milked. We also put about a tablespoon of blackoil sunflower seeds and flaxseed in with the barley. After milking the does, we give them one animal cracker (the kind that comes in a circus box for children) as a treat.

Bottle Feeding Nigerian Dwarfs

As for feeding I don't think there is anything better than goat milk to feed them but if you don't have it, cow milk can be used. We use a Pritchard nipple (yellow screw cap and red nipple) on water or soda bottles to feed the babies.

If you have goat milk use it. Put the milk in a bottle and heat it in a container with hot water until warm just like you would for a human baby.

This works for my herd:

Newborn - 1 week:	Up to 4 oz	4 times per day.
Weeks 1 - 4:	Up to 6-8 oz	3 times per day.
Weeks 4 - 8:	Up to 8-10 oz	2 times per day.
Weeks 8 - 12:	Up to 10 oz	1 time per day.

I wean between 8 and 12 weeks depending on how much the babies are eating.

Baby goats are also fed the same feed as the rest of the goats while taking a bottle.

Miscellaneous

We do not, as a general rule, vaccinate our goats. At time of disbudding we give a tetanus antitoxin injection. If you want to vaccinate your animals you can give them a CD+T injection after they have been weaned and then again in 3-4 weeks and once a year after that.

Baking soda can be put out with minerals to help prevent bloat.

If a goat develops a mild diarrhea we give them about 3cc of liquid Pepto Bismol.

For constipation you can give the goat an enema with a syringe (without a needle) and also 3cc Milk of Magnesia.

A wonderful source of information for goats is:

<http://fiascofarm.com/goats/index.htm>

Normal Goat Health Information

- **Temperature** = 102.5 - 104 - This varies depending on the temperature of the goat's surroundings.
- **Pulse rate** = 70 - 80 beats per minute
- **Respiration** = 15 to 30 per minute
- **Rumen (stomach) movements** = 1 - 1.5 per minute
- **Puberty** = 7 weeks - 8 months (separate bucks from does at 2 month)
- **Estrus/Heat Cycle** = 17 to 23 days
- **Gestation** = 143 to 155 days
- **Life span:**
 - o **Does** = 11-12 years average age, but... usually the death in does is kidding related. Does that are "retired" from breeding around age 10 live longer: 16-18 years (and I just recently found a doe who was 24; she was retired from kidding at age 10).
 - o **Wethers** = 11-16 years average age
 - o **Bucks** = 8-10 average age - bucks usually live shorter lives than does and wethers due to the stresses of going into rut each year.
- **Full growth size:** Most goats do not reach their full size until they are about three years of age. (They keep growing for about three years)

We sincerely hope you enjoy your new family member,

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