

How to Manage a Goat Farm Successfully in 2023

Their diet can consist of dry and green fodder, tree leaves, shrubs, leguminous water grass, kitchen waste, agricultural byproducts, and crop residues. The choice of feed depends on availability and cost. Goats should be fed three to four times a day, with a mixture of dry and green fodder, typically in a 60:40 ratio. Green fodder options include sweet sorghum, maize, sugar cane tops, Napier grass, Guinea grass, mulatto grass, or leguminous water sources like Lucerne, shivery, cesbania, Stylo, and subable. Dry fodder may include dried stalks of sorghum, maize, bajra, wheat, rice straw, dried groundnut tops, chickpea, and pigeon pea husk. Ensure that the fodder fed to goats is clean and free from mold and fungus.

Feeding Goats

A 30-kilogram goat requires approximately 2-3 kilograms of green fodder and 1-2 kilograms of dry fodder on a dry matter basis, totaling about 1.2 kilograms of dry matter per day. Additionally, goats should receive a concentrate mixture containing grains, oil cakes, bran, husk, and minerals, which can be in pellet or mash form. The daily amount of concentrate varies based on the goat's condition: less than 200 grams for empty goats, 300-500 grams for pregnant goats, and 800-1000 grams for milking goats. Hang three leaves or branches from trees like suable, neem, or Banyan in bundles in the goat pen, especially for milking goats and growing kids.

Ensure that fresh, cold water and mineral licks are available to goats at all times. Well-managed pregnant does will produce healthy kids. Pregnant does require additional concentrate mixture starting from the fourth month of pregnancy, gradually increasing from 400 grams to 600-800 grams per day until kidding and continuing after kidding until the kids are

weaned. Observe pregnant does daily, as the first three days of their milk (colostrum) are rich in antibodies crucial for the kids' health.

Management of Goats

Management of the goat shed is essential to prevent diarrhea and infections. Protect kids from wind and cold while maintaining good ventilation. If some does cannot produce enough milk, consider finding a suitable foster mother or bottle-feeding the kids. Keep feeding bottles and nipples clean and sterilized. Starting from the fourth week, introduce protein-rich wilted or semi-dried fodder for kids like Lucerne, suable, or des mantis. Gradually transition to groundnut cake and maize grains at around four weeks of age. Avoid giving water to kids for the first 30 days, as it may reduce their milk intake. After one month, provide clean water and mineral licks for the kids.

Wean the kids when they are 90-100 days old, separating males and females. Weaned kids should receive 200 grams of concentrate per day initially, gradually increasing by 50 grams each week until reaching 500-600 grams per day, based on breed and weight.

Vaccination

To maintain goat health, regularly vaccinate against diseases like PPR, enterotoxaemia, foot and mouth disease, goat pox, and black quarter. Consult a local veterinarian for vaccination schedules and information. Deworm goats when there is a worm infestation, and treat external parasites like ticks, mites, and fleas with appropriate ectoparasiticides. Hoof trimming is necessary, especially for goats kept under stall-fed conditions, though it may be required less frequently for goats under a grazing system.