

Sheep and Goat Care Basics

AN INFOGRAPHIC FOR SHEEP AND GOAT OWNERS

Vital Signs

Sheep Goat

Temperature:

102-103°F 102-104°F

Resting Heart Rate:

70 - 90 70-80

Beats Per Minute

Resting Respiration Rate:

10-20 12-15

Breaths Per Minute

Stocking Rates:

Sheep

5-6 head per acre

Goats

6-8 head per acre

****Based on Excellent Pasture Source****



Ruminant Digestion

Sheep and goats are ruminants, which means the majority of their diet should be forage like grass and hay.

Goats need browse and forbs as part of their diet as well.

Supplementation through feed, grain, and concentrates can be provided as needed.

Body Condition Scores

Score		Description	
1		Spine sharp, back muscle shallow,	Lean
2		Spine sharp, back muscle full, no fat	
3		Spine can be felt, back muscle full, some fat cover	Good Condition
4		Spine barely felt, muscle very full, thick fat cover	Fat
5		Spine impossible to feel, very thick fat cover, fat deposits over tail and rump	

Nutritional Requirements

Nutrients requirements will vary based on species, stage of production, and age among other factors. These are some basic guidelines.

- Feed animals 1.5-2% of their bodyweight daily, with the majority of the diet being forages.
- Growth and lactation requires require higher crude protein levels.
- Make any changes to a diet slowly and avoid increasing concentrate amounts too quickly to avoid issues with enterotoxemia (overeating disease)

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Reproduction:

Sheep

Goat

Age At First Breeding:

7-9 months

7-10 months

Breeding Season:

August - January

Average Gestation Length:

147 Days

150 days

Number of Young Per Breeding:

1-2 lambs

2-3 kids

Weaning Age:

Approximately 3 months of age

Management:

- Copper is toxic to sheep at low levels. Check feed and mineral sources to ensure copper is at safe levels.
- Sheep and goats will need appropriate protection from predators.
- Parasite control will be a major management concern with sheep and goats. They are incredibly susceptible to internal parasites which can lead to reduced production and death.
- Wool sheep will require additional labor for shearing

Marketing:

Sheep and goats can be sold in multiple ways. It may take more time and effort to market these animals as they are more of a niche market.

- General Livestock Sales
- Graded Sales (Price Premium)
- Private Treaty/On-Farm Sales- Breeding Animals or Live Animals for Processing
- Selling Meat Cuts- Retail or Wholesale

Since sheep and goat meat is used in many ethnic holidays, consider timing production to match demand with these holidays.

For certain breeds of wool sheep, there is a market for the fiber. Look for wool pools or other marketing opportunities.