



Showing Market Goats Starter Guide.




Overview:

Preparing for and showing livestock can be an extremely rewarding and educational experience for youth. The lessons learned in showing and raising livestock are invaluable. However, it can feel very intimidating to begin. This guide is a broad overview at how to prepare for showing market goats. All exhibitors are encouraged to ask questions as they grow through the program.



How to prepare for purchasing your animal:

Before purchasing an animal and bringing it home, it is important to consider the needs of that animal. Firstly, do you have a well fenced area? It is recommended to have at least a 10-15 square feet foot space for each goat. This will give ample room for them to exercise. It is also important to consider feeders and waterers. When considering a feeder, remember to make it a goal to eliminate waste and protect your goats from consuming debris like rocks. For waterers, make sure whatever is used is big enough to hold the water the animal needs in a day and is heavy enough they cannot tip or easily break it.

Your market goats will also need a wind or snow break or some sort of shelter for them to escape the snow, rain, wind, hail, and other weather that frequently impacts Phillips County. Goats may need heat lamps in the winters and they must stay dry and protected from the weather. In the summer, goats do well in the heat and do not need fans or misters. In some instances, existing shelters can be made to use for goats.



Purchasing your animal:

The majority of market goats are purchased in the month of April if they are being shown at Phillips County Fair in July. You can buy them slightly earlier than that, but it is important to consider what weight they are when you buy them. A few things to consider for this are: average daily gain and the number of days you will have them on feed. Also remember the ownership deadline for Market Goats is April 26th. The weight requirement at the Garfield County Fair is 60lbs. Average Daily Gain for goats is 0.25-0.3 lbs. Below is how to calculate the weight your animal needs to be at time of purchase:

Calculate # of days on feed:

Purchase date to Fair Check-in
date= total days on feed

April 11-July 24= 104 days

Calculate Pounds to be gained:

Total days on feed * Average
Daily Gain=
Pounds to be gained
104 days*.25 lbs ADG=26 lbs

Find start weight:

Target weight- total pounds to be gained
= Target starting weight

95 lbs-26 lbs= 69 lbs



Feeding your animal:

There are many feeds available for your market goats. You can do your research to determine which you feel most confident about. You can ask your breeder and other livestock exhibitors for advice on what to feed. You will want to consider the breed of your animal when selecting a feed.

Nutrients for Market Goats:

Protein: 16-18%

Total Digestible Nutrients: 65-70%

As a general rule of thumb, goats will consume 2 to 4 percent of their body weight on a dry matter basis in feed. This means you will need to periodically weigh your animal to estimate what to feed. Kitchen food scales can be helpful in weighing feed. Feed conversion ratios are the amount of feed it takes to achieve one pound of gain. It takes 4.5-5.5 pounds of feed to achieve one pound of weight gain in goats.

Cost of feed= (Pounds of Gain needed*Feed Conversion Ratio)*Cost of 1 lb of feed
(26 lbs*5 lbs)*(\$33.00/50lbs) 130* \$0.66= \$85.80

of Bags of Feed Needed= (Pounds of Gain Needed*Feed Conversion Ratio)/50 lbs
(26 lbs*5 lbs)=130 130/50=2.6 bags



Halter Breaking:

Halter breaking is all about patience and practice. Go slow and don't rush the process. You never want to hit your animal. Your goal is to earn the animal's trust and respect. You're building a relationship with your animal and that takes time, plain and simple. Have a gentle, compassionate hand and be willing to devote time to the worthwhile effort of teaching your animal to respect the halter. When you are getting ready to lead, have a helper encourage your goat either in front with feed in a bucket, or from behind by clapping your hands or pinching above the tail head. Reward your goat by relieving the pressure for every step in the right direction. Your goat should willingly step out and walk next to you without fighting. If you are going to be showing in a collar, begin using it as soon as your goat is used to walking by your side in a halter.



Teaching to Brace

Once you have accomplished walking with your goat, you can start working on bracing. To brace, you will want to set their legs square, not stretching them out to far. Make sure the goat's neck is at a 90 degree angle. To brace, the goat should be pushing against your body, not being pulled on by their head, ears or neck. Keep your hands soft and cradle the jaw and ear and encourage the goat to push against your inner thigh. If the goat tries to back up instead of pushing, you can turn them to where their hocks are against a fence or wall. Just do not take frustrations out on your animal. Try to work with a parent, sibling, or friend so they can give feedback on leg placement. Or, you can use a large mirror to watch yourself. Practice daily so this becomes a habit for the animal and for yourself.



Setting up in the show ring

In the show ring, you will follow a line of goats. There are a variety of patterns a judge can do so pay attention. When stopping, make sure to give enough space to the people in front of or behind you. You will want to brace your goat when the judge comes to handle. Make sure to maintain good eye contact with the judge. Don't try to fix your goat's legs when the judge is handling your goat. Also make sure the goat's front feet are on the ground.

Clipping your Goat before a Show

- To make shearing your goat easier, you will likely want a shearing stand. Adjust the stand to where the animals head is held at a 90 degree angle
- You will want to wash your goat very well. Dirt and debris left behind are very hard on clippers and will make your clipping less smooth.
- To clip the belly, keep the skin stretched. This will allow the clippers to obtain a smoother job and prevent nicking or cutting the goat. Pay close attention not to cut or nick the sheath (penis), teats, or neck and rear flanks.
- Begin clipping the body by making two upward strokes per strip from the base of the foreleg over the top of the shoulder and back. Upward strokes will make the goat look taller and trimmer. You will want to clip only from the knee and hock up.
- The strokes on the neck should be lengthwise to emphasize the length and trimness of the goat. To shear the region at the base of the neck and shoulders, remove goat's head from the stand and hold the head. Again pull the skin tight to obtain a smooth and uniform clip.
- For the legs, sheer above the knee and hock and leave hair longer below. Longer leg hair should be carded and trimmed to create an over-all appearance of balance.
- Try to watch a few goats being clipped and ask questions on products.



Common Health Concerns

- **Urinary Calculi:** Urinary Calculi is similar to kidney stones in humans. It is most common in wether goats (castrated males). Risk in males can be reduced by delaying castration as long as possible: giving the diameter of the urethra time to grow. The addition of hay or some other type of long fiber to the animal's diet is absolutely critical to help avoid Urinary Calculi.
- **Ringworm:** Ringworm is caused by many types of fungus. It causes circular lesions in the skin and hair loss. Prevent by sanitizing combs, halters and other items frequently and washing animals with Ring Out (or similar product) after shows. Treat with topical creams obtained from a veterinarian.
- **Orf Virus (Sore Mouth):** Sore mouth presents with sores on the lips, nose and inside of the mouth. They resolve after 3-4 weeks. You may see lowered feed intake during an outbreak. They can spread to humans so wash hands, halters, and muzzles.



Photo by Integrity Stock Shots

What will my Project Cost?

Livestock projects can really add up in cost. It is important to ensure that you can afford your project before buying animals. It also is important to consider what you are likely to make from your project to offset the cost. Below is a breakdown:

Cost of purchasing your animal: \$300-1,000

Cost of feed:

of Bags of Feed Needed= (Pounds of Gain Needed*Feed Conversion Ratio)/50 lbs
(26 lbs*5 lbs)=130 130/50=2.6 bags (round up to 3 bags)

3 bags of feed* \$33.00 (National Brand Show Ration)= \$99.00/goat

Cost of vet/health: \$200/goat (estimation but should be budgeted into figure)

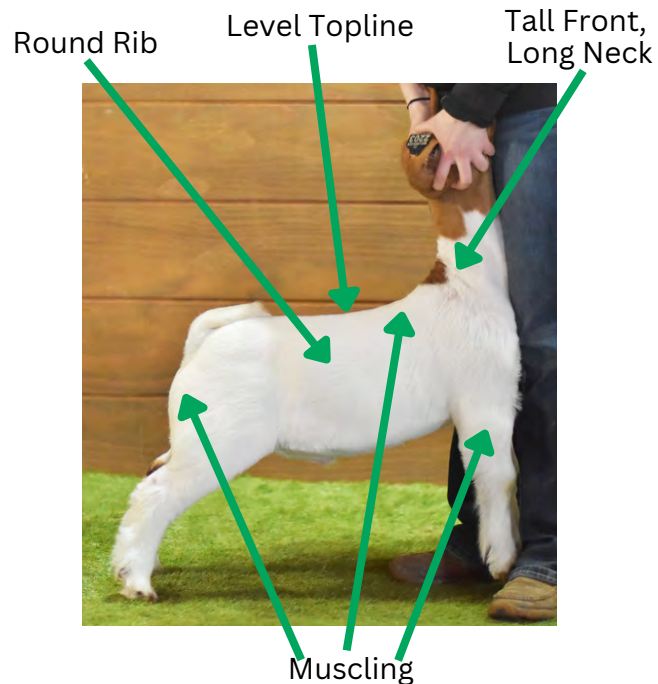
Supplies: \$200/head (Estimation but should be budgeted into figure)

Total Cost: \$799-1,499/goat

Estimated Average Sale Price at 2023 Garfield County Fair: \$3,300

Selecting Market Goats

You want your goats to be wide constructed with good muscling behind their shoulders, down their spine, and through their leg and forearm. Good goats will also be able to move unrestricted and have a 45 degree angle at their shoulder. You also want them to 'balance' well. This means that the front 1/3 matches the middle and end 1/3's. Basically, all the pieces fit together. They will be tall fronted and shallow chested and have a long neck. They should look like a wedge made from the side. Meaning, they will get deeper from their chest to their flank.



Sources and Resources

- <https://extension.usu.edu/utah/4h/files/marketgoatfirststepfactsheet.pdf>
- <https://extension.psu.edu/feeding-market-goats-for-show>
- https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/urinary_calculi_in_sheep_and_goats

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