



# Goat Rearing



Rearing an animal is a big responsibility which must be taken seriously, but is very rewarding once it is completed. You can find detailed instructions below to help you rear your goat from the first few weeks until the day of your Calf Club event.

Your kid (baby goat) may have to be born between a certain date which should be given to you by your school (Usually this would be between 1<sup>st</sup> June and 16<sup>th</sup> September). Goats are very different from sheep so they need to be handled and reared differently. You will need to sort out if you will keep your kid for a pet after Calf Club or if you will return it to its breeder (make sure everyone is completely sure of what is happening).

**\*Remember to ask what breed your kid is and what date it was born so you can record these details in your Progress Diary.**

## Feeding

Your kid should be selected no sooner than 5 days after birth, after it has received the very important colostrum which is high in both vitamins and protein to fight infection. If you select a buck kid (male) you will need to whether him (castrate) when he is less than 4 weeks old, otherwise he will become smelly and aggressive.



Check with the breeder what to get to feed your kid before you collect it. You will have to purchase some milk powder from your local farm store and follow the instructions of how to mix it with water. Young kids need small feeds, little and often, it is important not to overfeed at this stage.

You need to feed your kid with a bottle and teat but your kid may not be used to this so be patient for a few days. If your kid has been well fed before you get it, it may not drink from the bottle till it is really thirsty – **up to 24 hours – no longer.**

### **Approximate Feeding Quantities:**

1 -2 days old	150 mls 6 times per day
3 – 7 days	300 mls 4 times per day
1 -3 weeks	350 mls 4 times per day
4 – 6 weeks	450 - 500 mls 3 times per day

**Hint** – your kid will love climbing on top of things, so put it in a paddock with some bales etc, so it can have fun (don't put anything harmful in its area).

Your parents may need to feed your kid when you are at school and it is VERY important that they don't miss feeds.

When your kid roughly reaches 10 kg it can be weaned off milk. Start by reducing the amounts of feeds per day and encourage it to nibble on hay, pellets or meal. Your kid should have fresh grass and water available at all times to help its digestive system.

**Note - Many plants including *lawn mowing clippings* are poisonous to kids so don't let them roam free into your mum's garden or climb trees.**

## Housing

Your kid will need a warm and dry house to sleep in at nights. Goats are very clean animals so you will need to keep its bedding clean and dry. Straw and hay are very good bedding materials as you can keep putting fresh stuff on top of the old stuff.

Your kid may need to be tied up so it doesn't get into any mischief, so you may need to buy a collar and a light chain that is long enough for it to have food, water and shelter (it is important to make sure it doesn't get tangled up in the chain so you should check this regularly). Also be sure to move its house around so it has enough to eat all the time.

## Preparation and Caring

It is important to spend a lot of time with your kid to create that friendship between the two of you; this also helps the training process. Remember to use your kid's name all the time so it becomes familiar with it so you can call it (should be done before you feed it). Try to only reward your kid with cuddles when training it, not food.

Your kid needs to be groomed regularly to keep it tangle free if it has a lot of wool. Its hooves may also need to be trimmed but this is best left to your parents or a neighbour to help you do this. Don't bath your kid unless it is absolutely necessary and then dry it thoroughly.

### **Animal Health**

Constantly checking that your kid is healthy is very important as they can become sick very quickly and if they are not treated fast they may not recover. If you don't wash your feeding equipment probably or over feed your kid it can become sick with scours and will need water and a vet's advice (usually involves feeding them electrolytes). Make sure that anything that your goat may chew is not in near reach as it may choke on something. You also need to check your goat for lice every week and if any are found, your kid should be treated in the form of sprays or powders.

Hooves need to be kept flat so trimming them may have to occur. As goats like to climb things they may fall and break bones, vet attention is essential.

Goats can get colic (too much gas forms in its stomach) just like humans which is very painful for them. They will throw themselves around, their legs will buckle from under them and they squeal like crazy. A vet needs to be contacted immediately as it can kill them.

### **Judging Classes:**

#### **Rearing / Effort**

In the rearing/ effort class your kid will be assessed on care, cleanliness and condition. The judge may ask you questions such as what breed your kid is, when it was born, weight at birth, its purpose and other related care questions. The judge will give their own personal assessment on the conformation, size, shape and other characteristics that make the animal outstanding in its breed.

#### **Calling**

You should be training your kid by using its name all the time when you are with it so it knows to come to you when its name is called. You may have to begin training it by standing about 9 meters away from it with a bottle of milk behind your back and call its name. When it comes to you, it gets a pat. As your kid begins to trust you more you should be able to go anywhere and your kid should follow without having its bottle.

On the day of Calf Club the judge will ask you to call your kid from across the other side of the ring. The kid is then expected to follow you across to the opposite side. Act as naturally as possible on the day to not upset your kid and use a loud clear voice to call.

**\* Remember that you cannot have food or a bottle in your hands when calling your kid on day of Calf Club.**

#### **Leading and Stopping**

Daily practice can result in a perfect lead on Calf Club day! A collar should be fitted to your kid in the first few weeks of having it and the best time to fit it is just before it feeds so it forgets it is wearing something 'strange'. Remember to loosen the collar as it gets older and make sure that you can always fit two fingers in between the collar and the kid's skin. Leave the collar on for roughly one hour a day and remember to take it off when you are not around. Always try to lead it to its feed so it knows that there is a reward at the end of it. Once your calf is leading without struggle you can become adventurous and take it around your yard so it becomes use to strange places.

The judge may ask you to lead your kid through a weaving section, stop for a count of 3 - 4, lead on again and step over a log.

*When leading:*

1. Your right hand should be your leading hand (steering hand), leaving a loop 10 -20cm from the collar.
2. The left hand should grip the rope, palm upwards, leaving a loop of slack between the hands, reaching to the knees.
3. You should make your kid walk beside you (you should be at its shoulder) at a good pace without pulling it or touching it. You should walk straight and facing forward without pulling your kid.

**\* Remember to listen to what the judge tells you to do and remain calm.**

#### **After Calf Club**

Once the day is over your kid will be tired and will need a good feed and sleep. Give it a nice pat and if you did well at Calf Club there may be talk that you will now enter in a Group Day. If so, you will need to continue looking after your kid by feeding and training it. If you need to return your kid back to the breeder this should be done after that, you should be proud of yourself and the goat will always remember you. If you are you keeping your kid forever, you have made a lovely friend.

