



## ANIMAL WELL-BEING

# Goats

### Quick Goat Facts

- Goats are excellent at climbing.
- Goats have one stomach with four chambers (rumen, reticulum, omasum, and abomasum).
- A female goat is called a doe or nanny.
- A male goat is called a buck, billy goat or he-goat.
- Goats have a strong social hierarchy and will fight to determine who is dominant.

### What is Animal Well-Being?

Animal well-being, or animal welfare, is the ability of an animal to cope with its environment and living conditions. Well-being is more than simply being healthy; animal well-being includes:

- An animal's feelings or emotions, such as contentment.

- An animal's ability to perform natural behavior, such as grooming, stretching and turning around fully.
- An animal's health and biological functioning, such as not having injuries or disease.

### Important Goat Behavior

- **Feeding and drinking:** It is necessary for a goat's health and proper biological functioning. For example, lambs need colostrum after birth.
- **Grazing and ruminating:** Goats spend a large proportion of the day browsing, grazing, ruminating and resting. Ruminating is important for health.
- **Grooming:** This keeps the coat in good condition and reduces disease and parasites.

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## Caring for Goats

- Provide fresh, clean water. Water should never be frozen.
- Goats are social animals that become distressed when isolated from the group; house goats together.
- Provide shelter for does that are about to kid.
  - Goat kids born outdoors are at a high risk of dying when weather conditions are bad.
  - Goat kids need clean, dry bedding.
- Provide high-quality feed.
  - Do not give goats moldy feed.
  - Provide roughage.
  - Energy and nutritional requirements are higher for 1) pregnant animals, 2) animals that are producing milk and 3) animals that are growing. These animals may need supplemental feed.
  - Consult a nutritionist for proper feed practices.
- Trim hooves as needed.
- Check goats often for diseases, parasites, and injuries.
  - Contact your local veterinarian if you detect these problems.

## Causes of Poor Goat Well-Being

The following situations or conditions can compromise animal well-being and cause suffering:

- Cruelty: causing physical harm, mental harm, pain, or suffering to an animal.
- Neglect: failing to care for an animal. Examples include endangering an animal's health by not providing adequate food or water and restraining an animal in a way that causes pain or jeopardizes animal health.
- Abuse: causing physical harm and/or pain to an animal.
- Abandonment: deserting an animal or leaving an animal without making provisions for the animal's long term care.

- Causing negative feelings such as pain, fear, frustration and distress
- Prolonged periods of thirst or hunger
- Prolonged periods of restraint and immobility
- Ignoring illness, injury, or disease
- Crowding animals together

## Signs of Poor Goat Well-Being

- Goats are prey animals and may not show obvious signs of pain, injury or disease; however, goats that are sick or in pain may display some of the following behaviors or signs:
  - Being less active than typical
  - Being less social than typical
  - Isolating itself from the rest of the group
  - Having its tail down and hunching its back
  - Eating and drinking less than typical
  - Grooming less than typical
  - Hair coat is dull, dirty, or looks rough
  - Difficulty walking
  - Signs of swelling or injuries
  - Discharge from the eyes, nose, or other areas
  - Swollen, red, or discolored udder
  - Sick animals may be attacked by other, healthy animals
  - Goat weighs less than it should for its particular stage of production

## Do You Have an Animal Well-Being Concern?

- Call your local police department.
- Contact the Indiana State Board of Animal Health (BOAH) for livestock and poultry concerns at <http://www.in.gov/boah/>.

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