



Dairy Goat Society of Australia
Tasmania Branch

Husbandry

Owning dairy goats comes with its own set of commitments and challenges. If you have fallen in love with these animals however the rewards greatly outweigh the work involved. There are several tasks which must be performed to ensure the ongoing health of your goats. This includes:

Milking: if you have a doe in milk she *must* be milked twice daily every day. This does not change until she is dried off in preparation for kidding again (ideally at least six weeks before her due date) or her production drops enough for once a day milkings to suffice. Milking should be done in a hygienic environment, with particular care paid to the health and cleanliness of your doe's udder.

Daily Feeding: your dairy herd will need to be fed twice daily as well as their hay and water checked and topped up as needed.

Hoof Trimming: goat hooves grow continually and therefore require trimming regularly. The recommended interval between hoof trims is six to eight weeks.

Parasite Control: as with all livestock, goats can have issues with both internal and external parasites. Internal parasites are controlled through the use of drenches. It's important to understand what you are drenching for and which product you should use. Regular FECs (Fecal Egg Counts) help greatly with this. These can be organised by your vet or through independent service providers.

Issues with external parasites are minimal on clean healthy animals, but regular inspections of their coats and skin will help you to keep on top of any outbreaks.

Rugging: goats have thin skin and can expend a lot of energy on trying to stay warm. This is especially a problem in our cool Tassie climate. One way of combating this problem is through the use of rugs. Goat rugs can be purchased ready made, adapted from other types of animal rugs or custom made by you or a saddlery. In Tasmania dairy goats are often rugged from early Autumn through to late Spring depending on location and weather conditions. Rugs can be taken off on warm sunny days so your goats can have a scratch. This is also a good time to check their skin and give them a good brush.

Cleaning: the goat shed should be cleaned regularly. It is important to keep an eye out for foreign objects, damaged equipment and other hazards. Soiled bedding is brilliant when composted for the garden.

If you need a practical demonstration or lesson contact a DGSA Tasmania Branch member or ask the breeder you are purchasing your goats from.