



Dairy Goat Society of Australia  
Tasmania Branch

## Feeding

When planning for your goats, allow a budget of at least \$2.00 per head per day for feed costs alone.

Dairy goats are bred for performance and must be fed accordingly. You would not expect a Ferrari to run on water, likewise you shouldn't expect a dairy goat to thrive on poor quality or insufficient feed.

A dairy goat's diet has four main components:

**Hay:** Your goats should have free and constant access to good quality, well made hay. Some suitable varieties of hay include grass, clover, lucerne, cereal or any combination of those. Hay is important because it provides vital roughage and nutrition.

**Concentrates:** Grains and mineral supplements fall under this category. When choosing a grain mix for your goats it's important to pay attention to the nutritional analysis of the grains. The amount of grain fed is determined on a case-by-case basis, but as a minimum a milking doe should be fed 1kg dry weight for the first 3ltrs of milk produced and then an additional 500gms dry weight for every additional litre or part thereof. For example, a doe giving 5.5ltrs should receive 2.5kgs of grain per day, divided over two or three feeds. Maintenance rations for dry or growing animals are considerably less, depending on age, pregnancy and other factors.

Mineral supplementation should be given in some form whether added to the grain ration or offered separately. Never offer lick blocks containing urea, and always make sure the supplement you provide has been safely formulated for use in goats.

**Browse and greens:** Goats enjoy a wide variety of green feed. Always make sure any plant material offered is non-toxic and unsprayed. Quality pasture and green feed is essential as it provides vitamins and minerals not available through any other means.

**Water:** fresh, clean water must always be accessible to your animals. Goats are fussy about cleanliness and quality and will not drink fouled water. Milk is comprised largely of water and milking does need to drink accordingly.

**Any changes to a goats diet should be made gradually.** Sudden changes can cause major health complications. Speak to the breeder and learn what any goats you purchase are accustomed to eating.