

# GOATS-THINGS TO KNOW

For Jill, Ryan & Paisley

By: "Crapa"

1. Goats are GRAZERS not BROWSERS. Unlike sheep and cattle goats are more like deer. They instinctively do not want to eat off the ground. This is good as it helps prevent ingesting parasites and larvae. It is bad in that they become known as hay wasters. On the plus side they will eat most any plant down to within a few inches of the ground. This really helps with weed control as they eat the tops (flowers) off. They do not have upper teeth. They have a bony upper plate and lower teeth allowing them to eat thorny plants like wild roses and black berry bushes. They will eat the bark off of trees. They love pine needles and things that sheep and cattle won't touch. There are a few plants that are poisonous to them. <https://poisonousplants.ansci.cornell.edu/goatlist.html>. Thistles are actually more nutritious than alfalfa. Cattle can be trained to eat thistles, goats just like them. White clover can be toxic but not red clover (I plant red clover for them). They love dandelions and they are very healthy (goats and humans).
2. Goats love to climb on things. I have found mine up in trees. If you can provide boulders or other toys like old tires or tree stumps they will play games on them. This helps keep their hooves in better shape and requires fewer hoof trimmings.
3. Goats are prey animals. They need protection from predators. More goats are lost to dogs than coyotes. The only dogs they are safe with are LGD's (Livestock Guardian Dogs). LGD's have been bred for thousands of years to protect livestock, particularly sheep and goats. Anatolians, Great Pyrenees and a few others. Mingo is Newfoundland (a water rescue dog) and Great Pyrenees. He does a great job. Kona loves his goats.
4. **Diet.** Goats can do quite well on good quality grass hay and free feed minerals. They need minerals made for goats as they need selenium which sheep do not. We live in a selenium deficient area in the Northwest. I give loose minerals as they will wear their teeth down on mineral blocks. A bred female will need to have alfalfa added to her diet in her 3<sup>rd</sup> month of pregnancy for the added calcium. I give all of mine about ½ cup of sweet grain mixed with alfalfa pellets once a day in the morning. It's a treat but I also don't think our hay is very good so I supplement. You may hear that you should give free feed baking soda. DO NOT! Goats make their own sodium bicarb.
5. **Health.** Generally goats are pretty healthy. They need to be vaccinated once a year for CDT ( CLOSTRIDIUM PERFRINGINS TYPE C AND D (OVEREATING DISEASE) AND CLOSTRIDIUM TETANI (TETANUS). They get 2 ml injected subcutaneously. Cheap and easy to give. Coccidiosis is the most common parasite infection and baby goats are most susceptible. It can kill quickly and

needs to be treated. People routinely treated their herds for parasites for decades without knowing what for or even if their herds needed treatment. This has led to parasite resistance to drugs and now there are only a few drugs that can treat. Do NOT treat for parasites without having a fecal exam done to know exactly what you are treating for. Fecals are easy to collect and sent to a lab for examination. About \$5/sample so no big deal. If the goat has diarrhea or other odd poop think parasites. If a goat seems ill check temp.. Normal is 101-103 rectal. Check FAMACHA (lower membrane in eye) for color. The redder the better. See attached. Our goats are all tested for CAE, CL, Johnes (pronounced "yonees"). Due to diligent efforts by goat owners these diseases are much less common now. <https://salecreek.vet/three-diseases-all-goats-owners-should-be-aware-of-test-for-and-work-to-prevent/> . Do not allow untested goats near your goats.

6. **Goat poop!** Great stuff. Can go directly on plants. Unlike chicken or cow manure which can burn plants. Some people collect a pail of poop and grind it up using a paint mixer. We just shovel all the straw, hay, poop, etc. into a compost heap and turn it over occasionally with the tractor and then spread it on the garden.
7. **Shelter.** Goats have hollow hair which provides great insulation. They grow longer hair as winter approaches and shed in the spring. They need to have some kind of protection from the wind and rain and ideally a place to get up off the ground. A piece of plywood laid on some pallets works.
8. **Bedding.** Straw makes good bedding because it is hollow and provides good insulation. Since ours are bedded on concrete I put down some hydrated lime (Stall Fresh or whatever) and then a thin layer of wood chips and then straw. They waste a lot of hay so I let that accumulate to make deep bedding. In the winter I let it get pretty deep, the composting generates heat and the top stays dry.
9. **Water.** Goats can be fussy about clean water. Ours have buckets and troughs but they also have learned to drink from a Licks-It device. The Licks-It really helps in the winter when pipes and troughs freeze. Water should be placed high enough so they can drink it without pooping in it. Baby goats get their water from nursing mama. Babies can drown in a bucket or trough so take precautions. Some people put a ramp in the trough so if a baby falls in it can get out.
10. **Fencing.** Goats hollow hair makes them more resistant to electrical shock so fence chargers should indicate they are good for goats (look at the symbols on most chargers to see what they are rated for). A 5' fence is ideal. 4' is OK but put a strand of hot wire on the top (this also helps deter predators from climbing over). I put 1 strand of hot wire on the inside about 8-10" off the ground. This keeps them from getting close to the fence. I also attach the ground wire to the actual fence which helps deliver a good shock when the ground gets dry. No-Climb is good. I like welded wire panels.
11. **Training.** Goats are considered as intelligent as dogs. They don't think or act like dogs but they are not stupid. A goat remembers it's owner for life. Once you have bonded with a goat it will always remember you. Goats are herd animals so you need to establish yourself as herd leader. This usually happens because you feed and water them and generally take care of them. Baby goats are easy. Put them on a leash once or twice and take them for a walk. They will quickly bond to you and stay with you off leash. Paisley has already done this with me and it is fun to



watch them run and play and come racing back to you. Older goats take a little more patience but with very little effort you can train to follow, pack, pull a cart, etc. If you want you can ring a little bell every time you feed or have a treat for them. If they wander off just ring the bell, then look out! Goats can be affectionate, especially if hand raised/bottle fed. When petting them pet their neck, under their chin, behind their ears but do not touch the top of their head as this stimulates their head butting reflex. If they get too friendly such as putting their feet on you just spray them in the face with water. Keep a spray bottle of water handy for this purpose. They will learn quickly not to do that.

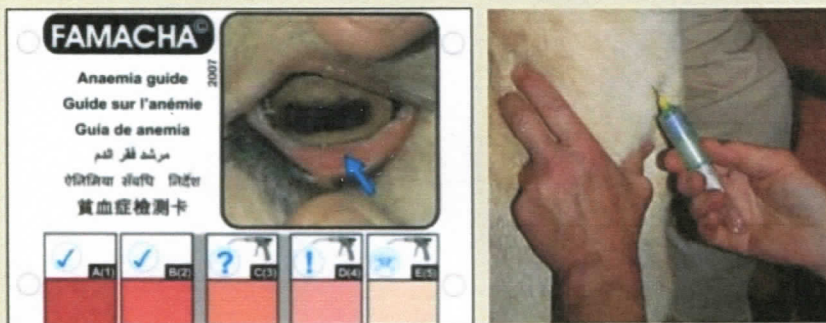
12. **Head Butting.** Goats head butt each other for play or to establish dominance. Horns or scurs can break and bleed profusely. One reason I prefer to disbud mine.
13. **First Aid.** For most minor cuts or scrapes I clean the wound and apply BluKote. BluKote comes in a spray bottle and you need to put on a glove as it stains and is hard to wash off. Keep a digital thermometer handy to check temp if you suspect something is wrong. I keep an old ammo box filled with needles, syringes, suction bulb, and miscellaneous things like vet wrap, blood stop, clean rag, nipples, etc. If you have to look in their mouth be careful of not getting your fingers under their back teeth. They use their back teeth for grinding up tough stuff.
14. **Breeding.** Most breeds of goats come into season in the fall, usually late September or early October thru February. They come into heat for 2-3 days every 18-21 days. You may see some stringy mucous and swollen vagina when doe is in heat. Mark your calendar and then watch for heat again in 3 weeks. They most commonly get bred at night (so chances are you won't see the actual deed). Actual breeding is a quicky by any standards, about 10 seconds. Gestation is 150 days, + or -5 days. Signs of imminent delivery are bagging up of udder and rear tendons (just in front of tail) relaxing. A doe should have her own private place to kid. A special breeding harness can be put on the buck that has a "Crayola" attached to it that marks the does back when he mounts her. I have one. To verify pregnancy you need to send a blood sample for testing 30 days post breeding. Doe should get a booster CDT shot 30 days prior to kidding to pass on antibodies to kids. Kids should be vaccinated at 1 month and again at 2 months and then once a year. Always breed doe to the same size or smaller buck to avoid birthing problems due to large kids. Bucks can breed as early as 3 months, does a little longer. Does should never be bred before 8 months and ideally a year or more.
15. **Kidding.** It's pretty common to go out to feed and find baby goats. Unfortunately sometimes things don't go well so I have a camera and baby monitor set up and I always try to be present to help if necessary. Babies need to get moms colostrum ASAP (usually within the first 30-60 minutes after birth). Babies lose the ability to utilize the colostrum after 24 hours. I always milk some and keep it frozen for emergencies. If mom is a first timer her teats may have a waxy plug that you may need to express in order for the kid(s) to nurse. If you are present at birth have a clean rag or towel to clean off the membrane over the kids face and make sure the airway is open and the kid can breathe. A bulb suction is sometimes handy to have for clearing the nose and mouth. I keep some iodine in a pill bottle and dip the umbilical cord in it. You can trim the cord to about 1" with sharp/clean scissors before dipping. If a kid is weak and won't nurse you may have to bottle feed some colostrum. DO NOT feed unless temp. is 101.5 deg. or greater. If the temp. is low put the baby in a plastic garbage bag with his head out and put him in a sink full

of 103 deg. water for 30 minutes. Follow up with a hair dryer to completely dry and warm kid. Re-take temp. and if O.K. feed colostrum warmed to 101 deg. or place on mom.

**SUMMARY:** With any new animal there is always new things to learn. I have tried to provide you with one quick, easy reference to get you started. Hopefully if you ever have a question this reference will either provide the answer or give you the basics to search further. There are tons of resources but it helps to know what to look for and I hope I have done that. Goats are just fun animals and I hope Paisely grows to enjoy them for more than roping practice. I hope Ryan can get years of enjoyment from having hunting partners. I hope Jill can enjoy them as pets as well as livestock. I personally miss taking care of babies but I get a lot of pleasure from these 4 legged ones.

# FAMACHA® System

Clinical category	Color	PCV	Tx recommendation
1	Red	$\geq 28$	No
2	Red-pink	23-27	No
3	Pink	18-22	?
4	Pink-white	13-17	Yes
5	White	$\leq 12$	Yes



## FAMACHA® System

Look inside bottom eyelid

Clinical Category	Eye Lid Color	Packed Cell Volume/PCV	Treatment recommendation
1	Red	$\geq 28$	No
2	Red-Pink	23-27	No
3	Pink	18-22	?
4	Pink-White	13-17	Yes
5	White	$\leq 12$	Yes



# GET A FECAL BEFORE GIVING!

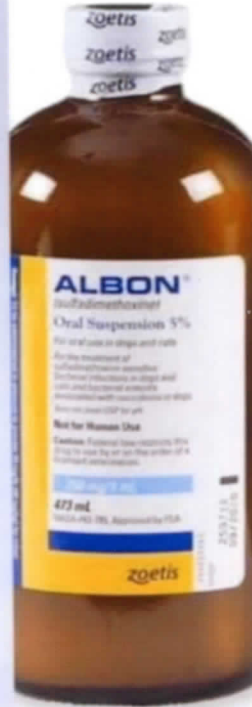
**PREVENTION OPTIONS (USE ONE)**  
**START AT 3 WEEKS OLD AND REPEAT**  
**EVERY 3 WEEKS UNTIL 4-6 MONTHS**



1CC/5# DAY 1  
1CC/10# DAYS 2-5  
**ORALLY**



1CC/5#  
ONE DOSE  
**ORALLY**



8CC/5# DAY 1  
8CC/10# DAYS 2-5  
**ORALLY**