

# The Woodlands College Park FFA



## Goat Manual

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this manual is to make raising a market goat in the College Park FFA program as enjoyable and successful as possible for all involved. Many factors will play a role in the success of your project; <sup>1</sup> good **selection**, <sup>2</sup> good **health care**, <sup>3</sup> good **nutritional management**, <sup>4</sup> a good **exercise** program and <sup>5</sup> outstanding **showmanship** are likely the most important!

---

## SELECTION

The selection of your goat is one of the most important decisions you will make. The quality of the goat you select will have a major role in determining the results of your project. Most goats are purchased either at a live auction or private treaty from a breeder. In either case, you will usually have several goats to choose from when selecting your project.

The cost of a market goat varies greatly. Some breeders may sell goats at their farms for as low as \$75 - \$100 and many auctions have a floor price of \$150 or lower. However the cost of competitive show goats is usually higher than this. On the opposite end of the spectrum, many goats sell for several thousand dollars each at auctions we attend.

I would like to average \$350-\$400 on the goats we purchase this year. Some students will want to spend more and some will want to spend less. **The quality of the goat you purchase is much more important than the price you pay for it!**

People differ in their ability to select animals. Some have a natural eye for selecting young animals of high caliber, while others may never develop this ability. Please be certain you have someone assisting you who understands the type of goat which will be competitive in today's show ring. You basically have three choices in the purchase of your goat:

1. You can bring a check made out to College Park FFA in the amount you wish to spend for your goat and I will find a suitable goat for you. We will be attending many sales and viewing goats at many ranches throughout the

summer and early fall. You will be invited to go along on these trips and/or you will be notified when your goat is purchased.

2. Some students have particular breeders they wish to purchase their goats from, but still like to have my help in selecting the goat. In this case we can usually arrange a time to visit the ranch together and I will provide advice and assistance in selecting the goat.

3. Some students purchase their projects on their own, with the assistance of a trusted breeder or with the help of someone else they trust.

This option is perfectly suitable as long as the person helping you is knowledgeable about current market goat trends and understands the type of project you need.

No matter which option you choose, you **must** make sure I am aware of your plans and you have been approved to purchase the project and bring it onto the school farm.

## COSTS

In addition to the initial cost of your market goat, discussed above, you will be required to pay several fees at the beginning of your project. These fees include: **\$100.00 facility use fee** (This fee is used for facility maintenance, equipment purchases, etc.) your goat will incur.)

You will also need to budget money for feed costs, equipment and supplies you will need to purchase and show entry fees. You will be responsible for paying any veterinarian other charges your goat may incur.

## HEALTH CARE

The key to a healthy goat is the development of a good health program. It is a good practice to assume the goat you have purchased has had no treatments. Therefore, the health program should include vaccinations or treatments for a number of potential problems.

### *Vaccination*

All goats should be vaccinated with a type C&D Clostridium Perfringens Vaccine. Goats should also be vaccinated for Tetanus before being castrated or dehorned.

### *Internal Parasites*

Internal parasites (worms) are a continual problem

### *External Parasites*

External parasites include: mites, lice, etc. We have had problems with these in the past. Some of the de-wormers we use for internal parasites will also work against external parasites - others will not. Other approved powders and insecticides can be used for control.

### *Ringworm*

Ringworm is always one of the biggest problems we face in our barn! Ringworm is contagious and can be transmitted from goat to goat, from goat to human, or from equipment to goat. It is imperative that we work as a **group** to help control ringworm in the barn. The following products have been used with varying results:

- . Bleach - 10 percent solution sprayed on goats, equipment and premises.
- . Captan® - 3 level teaspoons per gallon of water used as a spray for animals, equipment and premises.
- . Anti-fungal washes and sprays available at local feed stores

3

Ringworm, mites and what we call "show-ring itch" are all continual problems in our barn. Each is characterized by small round spots or "sores" on the goat where the hair will usually fall off. It is very important to try to determine which condition your goat has and to administer the appropriate treatment until the problem is corrected. Once again, it is crucial that we all act to prevent and treat these conditions as a group if we want to keep them from becoming severe in the barn!

### *Soremouth*

Soremouth is a contagious disease which causes scabs on the lips and around the mouth of the goat. This virus can affect humans so care should be exercised when working with animals with soremouth. We generally treat soremouth by applying iodine to the lesions to help "dry them up". Goats with active sore mouth are not eligible for show.

### *Pinkeye*

This is a contagious disease characterized by excessive watering of the eye and clouding over of the pupil. Goats are susceptible to pinkeye especially after they have been

transported to a new location. Dry, dusty pens and constant exposure to sunlight can be contributing factors. There are several medications on the market for pinkeye.

### *Urinary Calculi*

Urinary calculi is a metabolic disease of male goats characterized by the formation of calculi stones in the urinary tract. The first sign of calculi is a goat's inability to pass urine. The goat will be restless, kick at its belly, stretch and attempt to urinate.

The common cause of calculi formation in wether goats is feed rations with high phosphorus levels and an imbalance of calcium and phosphorous. Most feeds mixed for sheep or goats will have a 2:1 (or higher) calcium to phosphorus ratio and should be sufficient in preventing this disorder. The more additives, hays, etc. fed to the goat, the higher the risk of offsetting this balance becomes.

Other preventative measures include adding small amounts of ammonium chloride to the feed, adding a small amount of daily vitamin C to the goats diet, etc. Some of the treatments used for urinary calculi can be somewhat controversial, so please discuss this issue with me before treating your goat.

### *Scours (Diarrhea)*

If your goat gets diarrhea the first thing I would like for you to do is try to determine the cause of the problem. This is usually due to a change in feeding, weather, stress, etc. in most of these cases simply adjusting the feed may be the only step necessary. You can give your goat Pepto Bismol® if necessary. If your goats gets a watery, bloody diarrhea please let me know quickly. We have had many goats with Coccidiosis which causes weight loss and continued inefficiency in goats. The disease is characterized by bloody diarrhea, dehydration, weight loss and weakness. I have a much stronger medicine for this, Pepto Bismol® will not be effective.

### *Hoof Trimming*

A goat's hooves will grow long (and obstruct the proper structure of the goat) if not naturally worn down by traveling over rough terrain. Our goats do not travel rough terrain; therefore, we must trim their hooves. This should be done about once a month. Although

this is not a difficult process, please do not attempt to keep your goats feet trimmed yourself unless you are comfortable doing so. It is easy to cut into the 'quick' of the goat's hoof and improper trimming can actually cause more structural problems than no trimming at all. I will be happy to teach each exhibitor how to trim the hooves on their goat.

### *Dehorning or Tipping*

Some shows require that goats be dehorned. The preferred method of dehorning is to 'disbud' goats at 10 to 14 days of age. Most shows require only that goat horns be tipped for show. We can tip the horns on your goat without causing much stress to the goat. Horns should be tipped 4 to 6 weeks prior to the show to allow the horns to heal properly. Dehorning or tipping rules are made for the safety of the exhibitors. I prefer to show goats without horns. Therefore, almost all of the goats I help purchase will not have horns. The students tend to like them better because there are no horns or scurs to hurt their hands and judges also tend to prefer the "look" of a goat without horns.

### *Illegal Drugs*

Almost all Texas livestock shows have strict policies against the illegal use of drugs and will disqualify animals if such drugs have been used. This can include any use of drugs not labeled for use in meat goats and/or the misuse of drugs which are labeled for use. Many instances of illegal drug use tend to be exhibitors using household (human) products which are not labeled for use in meat animals. Remember, this is a market animal which must produce meat safe for human consumption.

---

## **NUTRITIONAL MANAGEMENT**

**Contrary to popular belief, there are no magic feeds or rations that make champion goats.** It is the total feeding program, including feeding schedule, exercise program, and careful observation of the goat during growing and finishing stages, that make a champion goat.

Water

**Clean fresh water** is the most important and often most overlooked aspect of proper nutrition. I suggest using a small water bucket which can be cleaned and refilled on a regular basis. You should never deprive your goat from adequate water; however, limited water can be beneficial during certain periods (usually just prior to a show) to reduce the size of the rumen and make the goat look trimmer. When doing this you should usually be drenching the goat with a supplement, electrolyte, etc. to ensure you are not depleting the water from the goat's muscle tissue, otherwise you are defeating the purpose.

### **Feed**

There are many commercial goat feeds on the market. These feeds are going to vary in price, quality, availability and other factors. There are two feeds I personally prefer. You do not have to feed either of these, but by doing so I will be able to give you better feeding advice as I know how the goats usually perform on these feeds. The first feed is made by Sure-Fed and is called NTimidator. This is a pelleted feed which is usually the most widely fed in our barn. The other feed is called MoorMan's Fast Forward Lamb feed. This is a textured feed which the goats seem to eat very well and works well for mixing additives with it. The main factors I believe you should consider in choosing a feed include: quality, freshness, price, and availability (will you consistently receive a fresh, high quality feed from the dealer you choose to use?). I feel it is very important for you to choose a feed you are comfortable with, learn to feed it effectively and stick with it.

At the time of purchase, some young goats may not know how to eat the pelleted feed from the trough. These goats should be started on good, leafy alfalfa that is top dressed with the pelleted feed. After a few days you can usually take away the hay and the goats will continue eating the pellets. I recommend feeding a small amount of alfalfa hay to your goat on a weekly basis throughout the entire feeding period. This will help to promote his microbial activity and usually helps keep a good appetite. More hay can be fed

when the goat is young, but too much hay as the goat becomes older usually results in a large undesirable belly which will be very hard to get rid of. We also often use microbial pastes (Probios®, Fastrac®, etc.) on a weekly basis to help maintain proper rumen function and increased appetite. These products are available at local feed stores, etc..

**The most important part of properly feeding your goat project is monitoring his growth, and fat deposition and coordinating this with the proper exercise program.**

I will help you with this, but you have to understand the general idea of feeding for maximum muscle and proper finish. We achieve this balance by adjusting the feed intake and sometimes adding protein supplements, grains such as corn or barley, or other additives when needed. Also, exercise can be increased or decreased according to the goat's condition. Every goat has individual needs. You cannot simply do what your neighbor does and expect it to fit your goat.

You must be willing to demonstrate good work ethic and dedicate a great deal of time if you wish to have a successful project. Your goat must be fed, watered and cared for at least twice every day. This includes weekends, holidays, etc.. I encourage you to share feeding duties with other students and have parents, relatives, etc. feed for you when you are not able to do so. I do not expect every student to be at the barn themselves for every feeding of every day, but **I do expect each goat to be fed twice everyday**. On this same note, do not overuse your friends or family. This is your project and you should be the one caring for it the majority of the time.

---

## **EXERCISE**

Proper exercise is a crucial part of fitting a winning show goat. **A goat which handles hard to the judge's touch and has a fit athletic appearance is desirable in the show ring.** A goat that is not exercised properly will either be soft and not firm when handled by the judge (usually has too much belly also) or will be thin and bony, once again not carrying the

proper finish for the judge.

6

In a young goat sufficient exercise can usually be acquired simply by allowing the goat to be active (playing, running, etc.). As your goat becomes older he will begin to deposit fat over his ribs, in his chest, and elsewhere. When this begins to happen it is very important to implement an exercise program which will tone the fat and make him handle properly. Over exercising your goat will result in not enough finish and a hard bony handle. While insufficient exercising will leave your goat feeling soft and not firm enough.

The best exercise for achieving this is to have your goat run several good fast sprints. This is easier said than done!

There are other options for exercising. Running your goat from the top barn or the cattle fence back to the goat barn can be effective, but is often very tiring for the student and usually does not give the goat quite enough of a workout. You can lead your goat by halter, which is a very good training tool for teaching the goat to lead, but very seldom results in adequate exercise. Whatever methods you decide to use, please remember to make sure it is safe for both the student and the goat and that it meets school policies (no dogs, ATV's, unethical treatment, etc.).

## **SHOWMANSHIP**

Showing market goats is an art. Some people have natural abilities to show. All exhibitors can learn techniques and improve their showmanship skills.

### **Pre-Show Preparation**

The amount of time required to train a goat for show depends on several factors. Some goats are easier to gentle and train for show than others. Older, more experienced exhibitors can often handle a wilder goat, while beginners often need a gentle, well-trained goat. Some exhibitors spend time training throughout the program, while others start a more intensified training program just 2 to 3 weeks before the show. All goats can be trained to show effectively if the proper time and care is taken.

I recommend starting by tying your goat to the fence until he is somewhat gentle. Do not leave your goat

unattended or in a position where he can hurt himself. Once he is used to being caught, tied, etc., it is a good idea to begin teaching him to lead. I recommend teaching him to lead without the leash first. This is done by holding one hand on the top of his collar (or back of his neck) and the other hand under his chin. Have someone assist you by patting the goat at it's tail when it stops.

Once your goat will lead for you, learn to properly set him up. You want all four legs squarely beneath your goat. Set the hind legs first, then place the front legs, keeping the body and neck straight and the head in a high, proud position.

After your goat is trained to lead, set up and remain set up, the goat is ready to be taught to brace or push when pressure is applied to its neck or chest. **In order for your goat to handle it's best, it must push or brace when the judge is handling it.** A constant, steady pressure is desirable because it helps the judge better evaluate the goat. **Keep the goat's front feet on the ground when bracing.** A goat can be taught how to brace by backing it off a blocking table or by lightly tapping it on the rear when it moves backward. Do not overpower the goat when teaching it to brace, be careful not to practice too much when teaching a goat how to push.

Whether or not you should "brace" your goat has become somewhat of a controversial topic in goat showmanship over the last few years. We have exhibited goats at all of the major livestock shows and numerous other jackpot, county and local shows and have found that **having your goat taught to brace is definitely in your best interest**. The majority of judges will allow exhibitors to brace their goats as long as they do not pick their front feet off of the ground. Most of them even allow them to pick their feet off the ground as long as it is not excessive. When this is the case, you'd better have a goat that will brace if you want to have a chance at placing. Even the most die-hard judges who strictly say they do not want the goats shown like lambs will usually still allow the kids to put a knee into them and most definitely still like

the goats which handle with the firmness of a bracing goat. When we show to these judges we can always back off and meet their needs.

### Showing

Once you are in the show ring, your ability to demonstrate proper showmanship cannot be emphasized enough! **Showmanship is often the difference between winning and losing!**

You should be mentally and physically ready to enter the show ring for competition. By completing the preshow activities, you should have confidence that you can do an effective job showing your goat. You should be neat in appearance, but not overdressed. Do not wear a hat or cap in the show ring. You do not need to wear 'kicker' clothes to show in, but please make sure you are not dressed inappropriately.

Before the show begins, become familiar with the show ring. When the judging begins, watch the judge if possible and see how he/she works the goats. You will feel more comfortable and confident if you know what the judge will want you to do.

When your class is called, take your goat to the show ring. Usually the ring steward will tell you where to go. Make sure you are 'showing your goat off' to the judge from the second you enter the ring. Make sure you find a place where your goat will look its best. Avoid corners of the ring and leave plenty of space between your goat and others. Set your goat up, making sure the legs are set properly, and keep the body, neck and head in a straight line with the goat's head up and alert. Always show with both hands. Do not put your free hand behind your back; use it to keep the goat's head and body straight or hold it at your side until needed.

A good showman must be alert and always know where the judge is at all times. Remember to keep your eye on the judge! Remain calm and concentrate on showing. Set up your goat and be ready before the judge gets to you. Be careful not to cover your goat with your body and block the judge's view. Always keep your goat between you and the judge. In large classes, it may take

several minutes before the judge handles your goat. Be patient and let your goat relax.

After handling your goat, the judge usually will step back and look at it. Be sure to keep the goat's head up and body, neck and head in a straight line. Keep one eye on the judge and one eye on your goat at all times. It is your responsibility to watch the judge and not miss a decision.

If your goat is not pulled the first time, keep trying. Continue to keep it set up, remain alert and watch the judge. If your goat is pulled, circle it out of the line and follow the directions of the ring steward while continuing to keep an eye on the judge. Move your goat with style and at a slow, steady pace.

Remember to keep showing at all time, because a class is not over until the ribbons are distributed. Be courteous to fellow exhibitors. A good showman will emphasize strong points and minimize weak points of a goat. Remain standing at all times and always display a pleasant facial expression. **Always be a good sport, a graceful loser and a humble winner!**

## LIVESTOCK SHOWS

There are basically **three types of shows** you will have the opportunity to compete in this year.

**1. Jackpot shows** - There is a jackpot goat show held somewhere in Texas almost every Saturday and Sunday from early summer thru early Spring. Most of these shows are one day events open to all 4-H and FFA members. They usually give points, buckles, small cash prizes, etc. as awards.

These are not mandatory, but will provide good practice both for the student and the goat. Students wishing to attend jackpot shows may do so on their own.

**2. Major Livestock Shows** - These are shows open to 4-H and FFA members from across Texas. They are highly competitive and difficult to place well at. They can often be overwhelming for first-time exhibitors and others.

**Fort Worth Stock Show** - Held in late January, unless they increase the number of sale animals, we will likely not attend this show this year.

**San Antonio Livestock Show** - Held in mid February.

**Houston Livestock Show** - Held in late February, this is easily the biggest and toughest goat show which awards more money than any other show!

### Show Rules

Each show you will attend has it's own independent rules. It is your responsibility to know the rules for each show you attend. I will make every effort to inform you of the rules of each show. It is very important to know the rules of the shows you plan to attend before purchasing your goat. Each show has different weight limits, horn rules, etc. which can make a difference on the goat you should purchase.

### Example Show Schedule

Since many new exhibitors (and their family) may not understand the whole "show" concept, the following is a basic outline of what the schedule might be for a jackpot show.

Saturday morning 7 a.m. load goats at barn - You would be required to be at the barn by about 6:30 a.m. to feed your goat and then help load out by 7 a.m.. Usually I will haul the goats with the school truck and trailer.

Arrive at show 8:30 a.m. - You would be required to follow us to the show and help unload goats and setup exhibit, etc. ( I usually have space for some students whose parents do not attend.)

Entries and weight cards due by 10 a.m. - You must be there to enter your goat (pay entry fee), take your goat to the scales, etc.. I will give you advice in 10

feeding, watering, etc. before or after you weigh-in. Always check with me about your weight card before turning it in to the show.

Show begins 10 a.m. - You must be present in plenty of time before your class is called to prepare your goat and have him ready to show. After your class, you should take your goat back to the pen and feed or water him if needed.

Show ends at 4 p.m. - You must be present to help load out goats, take down exhibit, etc.

Arrive back at school at 5:30 p.m. - You must be present to help unload goats and spray/wash for ringworm, mites, etc..

*Each exhibitor does not necessarily need to be present for every step of the above schedule at every show, but you **must** make sure you have another student who has specifically agreed to do it for you.* This is only an example of a schedule, every show is going to be different. The main purpose is to explain the major expectations of you at a show. If you are continually expecting other exhibitors to do many of the steps for you, you will not be allowed to attend additional shows.

Please remember you are attending a livestock show to learn, practice and exhibit your animal. At most shows there will be quite a bit of “down” time. During this time you are usually allowed to visit the concessions, exhibits and other areas of the fairgrounds. Some shows will even have a carnival. **Do not make this a bigger priority than showing your goat.** Students have found in the past that I become extremely angry if you are late for your class or miss something because you are off playing around somewhere. Returning sick from the carnival and not being able to do a good job showing is obviously unacceptable.

## **GOAT BARN RULES**

Basically, all rules that apply at the project facility apply at the goat barn and to goat exhibitors while they are at shows or representing the program.

Issues we have had to address in the past include:

- . Loitering is not permitted at the goat barn. Students are encouraged to spend time with their projects, but useless “hanging out” at the barn is not permitted. You are allowed to bring (reasonable) visitors with you to the barn, but you are absolutely responsible for their actions while there.

- . Absolutely no PDA (public display of affection) is allowed in the goat barn. This should not even be an issue and it will not be tolerated. Violators will be given few warnings and dealt with seriously.

- . Please dress appropriately while at the barn, at shows, etc.. If something is not appropriate to wear to school it is not appropriate to wear at shows where you are representing College Park FFA.

- . Animal abuse of any kind will not be tolerated.

- . No dogs are allowed in the barn or at the barn area. Please do not ask us to waive this rule. Obviously, some dogs are better behaved than others, but it is for your safety and the safety of your project that we strictly enforce this rule!

- . You must respect the property of other exhibitors in the barn. You are one of many students sharing the facility. **I expect everyone to be mature and responsible in their actions.**

11

## **CONCLUSION**

There are many issues you will encounter this year which are not covered in this manual. Hopefully though, by reading and having this material you will be better prepared for the responsibility of raising a market goat in the College Park FFA program. Throughout the year you will have many questions. Other students and parents in the barn will be able to answer many of these questions. Other resources such as goat breeders, feed store employees, friend and others will offer much advice. Please be cautious not to get caught up in trying to follow everyone’s advice. This will usually result in a poor outcome and a frustrated exhibitor.

My ultimate goal for you this year is:

1. **you will enjoy the experience of raising and showing a market goat,**
2. **you will gain skills in responsibility, leadership and work ethic, and**
3. **you will gain an exposure to agriculture that will last lifelong with you.**

-----  
Good Luck!!

## **CREDITS**

- . Much of the information in this manual is taken directly from the ‘4-H Meat Goat Guide’ published by the Texas Agricultural Extension Service and written by Dr. Frank Craddock and Ross Stultz. A copy of this publication can be found at: <http://texas4-h.tamu.edu/publications/index.htm>