

Goat Tips & Tricks

**500+ ways to take care of
goats better, easier, cheaper**



Volume 1

Sue Weaver

Goat Tips & Tricks

500+ ways to take care of goats better, easier, cheaper

Volume 1



Sue Weaver

www.ozarkwriter.com

Author of *The Backyard Goat*, *Hobby Farms Goats*, and *Mini Goats*

Copyright 2017 Sue Weaver - All Rights Reserved

This ebook is licensed for your personal enjoyment only. It may not be re-sold or any part reproduced or copied without the author's written permission. Since the income from my writing is used to support my animal family I would appreciate if you don't give this book away to other people. If you would like to share it with others, please visit www.ozarkwriter.com and purchase an additional copy for each recipient. My animals and I sincerely appreciate your support.

~ To Julie Jablonski and Sue Solakian, who kindly proofread
the first draft of this book—thank you, ladies! ~

Table of Contents

[Introduction](#)

[38 things you should know before buying goats](#)

[Training goats](#)

[New goats](#)

[Goats and sheep](#)

[Goat treats](#)

[Memorializing goats](#)

[County Extension](#)

[Everyday tools](#)

[Save money on equipment](#)

[Neck ropes, collars, halters, and leads](#)

[Keeping goats in the pink](#)

[Essential oils for goat care products](#)

[DIY goat shampoos and conditioners](#)

[Homemade fly repellents](#)

[DIY skeeter cheaters](#)

[Wound care](#)

[DIY ice packs](#)

[DIY heating pads](#)

[Cleaning Lamancha ears](#)

[Ringworm fixes](#)

[Beer](#)

[Red raspberry and blackberry leaves](#)

[Bottle jaw vs. milk goiter](#)

[Copper](#)

[Health care this and that](#)

[Bucks](#)

[Kidding and kid care](#)

[House training and house goats](#)

[Milking misc.](#)

[Water](#)

[Feeders](#)

[Grain](#)

[Buying hay](#)

[Hay alternatives](#)

[Mineral supplements and salt](#)

[Weighing goats](#)

[Worms and worming](#)

[Reuse feed bags](#)

[Reuse baler twine](#)

[Duct tape](#)

[Save those socks](#)

[Pallets](#)

[This and that](#)

[About the author](#)

[*An excerpt from Frugal Horse Keeping; Buying and Keeping
Horses without Going Broke; Volume 1 – Buy the Right Horse*](#)



Introduction

Have you ever seen something in a book or posted at Facebook and thought, "I should write that down so I remember it"? Well, I do that all the time. If there's a way to take care of my goats better, easier, and in a less costly manner, I want to know it. With that in mind I've collected goat keeping tips for years and I've compiled them in this book for you to enjoy.

I'll be writing more books in this series as time goes by, so if you have tips to share with others, please let me know (you'll find contact information at the end of this book). I'll give you a credit line and a free copy of the book they appear in.



38 things you should know before buying goats

*Don't get goats unless you know what you're getting into. Goats are gentle, intelligent, sweet and loving but sometimes annoyingly independent, mischievous, determined, and frustrating. Meet some goats and talk to experienced goat owners before you commit. And don't get goats unless you have a good sense of humor.

*Be aware going in that it's possible to make money with goats, but don't plan on it. If you raise commercial meat goats or top flight, registered dairy or meat goats, or you produce and market niche dairy products to a lot of customers—you might. Otherwise, probably not.

*Goats are social creatures. Don't plan to buy one goat. Every goat needs a companion, preferably another goat. A single goat is lonely and sad and she'll probably let you and your neighbors know it by screaming at the top of her lungs. The only exception would be a single bottle kid raised in the house with people, dogs, and other pets. But even a house-raised single needs companionship when and if he moves outdoors.

*Find a goat-savvy veterinarian before you buy your goats. Ask him what types of emergency medications to keep on hand and stock up before you need them. Program his number into your phone.

*Try to find a local mentor to advise you when you need it. Barring that, join goat-oriented Facebook groups or online forums like the Homesteading Today goat forum where experienced goat folks will be happy to answer your questions. Putting together a reference library of goat books or a folder of printed material downloaded from the Internet is a good idea too.

*Have good fencing in place before getting goats. Really good fencing, tall and stout. You'll need good fences to keep your goats in and predators like free-ranging dogs and coyotes out. If you don't know what to build, talk to your County Extension agent or do an Internet search for *fences for goats*.

*Don't plan to tether your goats instead of building good fences. A tethered goat is at the mercy of predators, including wild animals, free-roaming dogs, and ornery children. Tethered goats tip over their water buckets, wrap their ropes or

chains around trees, and get injured more quickly and seriously than you can imagine.

*Goats don't need fancy housing but they do need draft-free shelter where they can get away from bad weather, and they need good shade in the summertime. Avoid pressed-wood and cheap plywood when building new structures or redoing old ones. Most goats chew wood and they'll quickly destroy pressed-wood or flimsy plywood panels, both of which are processed using chemicals that can harm a goat.

*Even when sick, in quarantine, or kidding, goats should be within sight and sound of other large animals, preferably goats. Bucks need companionship too; another buck or a wether works well.

*Goats love routine and get upset when the routine changes. Try to feed and, especially, milk your goats within half an hour or so of the same times every day.

*Don't stress your goats any more than you have to. Stressed goats are prone to a host of health-related problems.

*Don't underestimate how high and how far a goat, even a mini goat, and especially a goat that doesn't want to be caught can jump out of. The same applies to hauling goats. Don't use a conveyance your goat can jump out of.

*Goats are climbers and they're very good at it. Don't leave your car, truck, or tractor where your goats can reach it. You'll be sorry if you do.

*Horse owners take note: goats move into pressure instead of away from it. Pushing against a goat is counterproductive.

*Don't buy goats at sale barns unless you want to bring home foot rot, caseous lymphadenitis (CL), sore mouth, ringworm, and a lot more nasty diseases and parasites. Buy healthy goats from experienced goat keepers, preferably those who test their stock for major diseases and have the paperwork to prove it.

*Each goat has his or her own distinct personality, which is partially but far from totally influenced by breed. Nubians are said to be noisy and clingy, Alpines aloof and ornery, Saanens and Sables ultra-laidback. Don't believe it. These qualities vary from individual to individual in every breed.

*Keep your feed room door securely latched. In fact, install two latches. Or a lock (and use it). Build goat-proof feed bins inside the feed room or install an old chest freezer as a grain bin. Accidental grain overload kills countless numbers of goats every year.

*Goats don't eat tin cans. In fact, they're astoundingly picky eaters and famous for wasting a lot of hay. Once it's on the ground, they won't touch it. Waste hay, however, makes good bedding.

*Don't abruptly change types or the amounts of feed you give your goats. Make changes over a period of a week or more so your goat's digestive microbes can adapt.

*Goats were designed to eat forage (browse, grass, hay). Feeding too much grain can lead to serious, even fatal digestive problems and it contributes to UC (urinary calculi) in bucks and wethers.

*Avoid poor-quality hay. Learn to recognize good hay (you'll find hay-buying tips later in this book) and then buy more than you think you'll need. Store it correctly, so it doesn't spoil.

*Goats are browsers, not grazers. Don't buy goats to mow your yard (you need sheep for that). They will, however, clear brush, brambles, saplings, and weeds from your pastures or woodlots.

*A goat doesn't have upper front teeth; instead, she has a hard dental palate on the roof of her mouth. Goats do have lower front teeth and back teeth on the top and bottom. Those back teeth are razor sharp. Don't put your hand where your goat might accidentally bite you.

*Goats are a 'laying out species' like deer, rather than a 'following species' like sheep and horses, meaning that does sometimes hide their newborn kids and go off with the rest of their herd for a nosh. If you can't find a doe's young offspring, don't panic. A careful search will usually turn them up.

*Don't over- or under-feed bottle kids and don't scrimp on what you feed them. Never feed milk replacers formulated for other species or replacers that contain soy instead of milk products. Homemade milk replacers are better than commercial versions; we'll talk about some of them later in this book.

*Horns are beautiful but horned goats tend to get their heads caught in fences, they accidentally poke their handlers (and it's painful), and they use their horns to bully their herdmates. Most goat owners prefer hornless goats. Nearly all goats grow horns unless they're disbudded as tiny kids. Disbudding means burning a kid's horn buds before they start to grow. It's generally done at 5 to 10 days of age, depending on sex and breed. If disbudding is done incorrectly, the kid will grow scurs—deformed hornlike structures that (usually) aren't firmly attached to the animal's skull. Scurs tend to break off and bleed and if they grow toward the goat's skull, they'll have to be trimmed, which is a painful and gory chore. If you're a beginner, find an experienced goat breeder who can disbud your kids for a fee. Or, if you choose to do it yourself (if you do, you'll have to buy an expensive disbudding iron and a disbudding box to hold your kids while they're

being disbudded), ask an experienced person to show you how it's properly done. Look at their goats if you can; if you see a lot of scurs, find another teacher.

*If you don't want goats with horns, don't buy horned goats thinking you can saw their horns off. A veterinarian can dehorn a goat but it's a bloody, painful, and dangerous process, and many vets refuse to do it. Horns are part of a goat's skull and the big holes left from dehorning open directly into the goat's sinus cavities. It takes a long time for those holes to heal and requires lots of nursing and packing materials. It isn't worth it and it's inhumane. Buy polled (naturally hornless) or disbudded goats or resign yourself to having horned goats.

*You can raise goats 'naturally' but it isn't easy and you'll need a knowledgeable mentor to do it right. Goats are host to serious internal parasites like barberpole worm, which can kill them unless they're wormed when they need it. Natural wormers work really well in some instances and not at all in others. Likewise, goats can quickly die of diseases that might respond to natural therapies if the goat survives long enough, but often doesn't. If you're not up for learning about natural/holistic goat care from the ground up, it's okay to combine regular wormers and veterinary care with natural therapies. That's what's what I do, The most knowledgeable holistic goat keeper that I know says she falls back on chemical wormers and antibiotics if a goat will die without them. You should too.

*It's amazingly easy to house train a goat if you start with a young bottle kid. Goats, especially mini goats, can make good house pets but since they're strong climbers and dedicated counter surfers, and they chew everything in sight, they aren't for the easily discouraged or faint of heart.

*Whether you have 2 goats or 20, your goats will establish a pecking order among themselves. Higher-ups pick on newcomers and on goats lower in the

herd hierarchy than they are, and they can be very mean about it. Don't be surprised by a certain amount of in-fighting.

*If you plan to milk your goats, keep in mind that you'll have to milk once or twice a day (depending on how much milk your doe produces), morning and evening, the entire time she's lactating. Milking does don't take vacations or sick days; unless there's a reliable person to milk in your stead, neither can you.

*In most cases, a doe must be bred and have kids every year to produce milk. Some does 'milk through', meaning that they produce a significant amount of milk for one or more additional years without rebreeding, as long as they're kept in production through daily milking. The Swiss breeds (Saanens, Alpines, Oberhaslis, and Toggenburgs) are more likely to milk through than other breeds, but the ability varies from individual to individual between all of the dairy goat breeds.

*Don't jump into breeding right away. If you've never had goats before, get some experience by starting with pets or recreational wethers, or at least older bred does who know their job and can teach you the ropes. Especially, don't start with bred doelings. If you do breed, plan ahead. What will you do with excess kids, especially bucklings?

*If you breed your doe, plan to be with her when she kids. Yes, goats have given birth without assistance since the dawn of time, but many of those goats and their offspring died in the process. A doe may occasionally take you by surprise, but for the most part, there are plenty of signs that will make you aware of imminent kidding. Know what to do in emergencies and be there to save the day.

*Don't underestimate a goat's sex drive. It isn't unheard of for kids to be conceived through gates and fences—it's happened here—so it's best to avoid

keeping bucks and does in adjacent paddocks. Bucks, especially horned bucks, should be kept behind tall, sturdy gates and fencing; otherwise they'll get out.

*Bucks pee on themselves during rut (breeding season), which, depending on where you live and what breed you keep, can be from a few months to all year. If you don't like strong, musky aromas, you might not want to keep a buck.

*Finally, never take a buck for granted. Bucks, even mini bucks, are extremely powerful and strongly hormone-driven, especially during rut, when even easygoing bucks sometimes misbehave. Don't turn your back on a buck and always plan an escape route when working in a buck's enclosure. Barring that, at least carry a walking stick or shepherd's crook for self defense. If a buck threatens you, smack his nose, not his forehead; if you whack his forehead, he'll think you're issuing a challenge. And if you're cornered by a buck, grab his beard and yank, then use his beard to lead him to the fence or gate before letting him go.



Training goats

There are lots of ways to train goats. Here are some worth considering:

Clicker training

Goats work their hearts out for food, making them ideal candidates for clicker training. Clicker training, also known as operant conditioning, is widely used to train sea mammals, horses, and dogs.



*Horse training methods can be easily tailored for clicker training goats but if you've never tried clicker training before, start by reading my Storey book, *The Backyard Goat* (where I cover clicker training in some detail), or *Clicking With Your Dog; Step-by-Step in Pictures* by Peggy Tillman (Sunshine Books; 2000). While you probably won't want to teach your goat to fetch a soda from the fridge (although then again you might), most of the training routines in *Clicking with Your Dog* work well with goats.

*To see clicker trained goats in action visit YouTube (www.youtube.com) and do a search for *clicker trained goat*.

Don't chase the goat

*If your goat is doing something wrong, like climbing on your car, don't yell and wave your arms and chase her away. To most goats, chasing is play behavior; you're rewarding your goat for misbehaving when you do it.

Stop bad behavior now

Reward-based training always works best but sometimes you need to nip dangerous behavior like jumping up against people or head-butting in the bud.

*When you do, reach for a high-powered water pistol or a household pump sprayer with a long, strong jet. Goats despise water, especially when it's squirted in their faces. A loud "No!" coupled with a blast or two of water tends to work.

*If water doesn't work, try juice from a ReaLemon, the lemon-shaped plastic squeeze bottle from the grocery store. Hide it in your hand and when your goat misbehaves, say "No!" and squirt a stream of juice at her mouth. Yuck!



New Goats

Getting a new goat or two? Here's how to make their transition into your existing herd easier and safer.

*Always quarantine newcomers for at least 2 weeks, though a month is better. Multiples can be quarantined together. If you're adding just 1 new herd member, keep her somewhere she can see other goats but not touch noses with them. Keep in mind that goats and sheep share many diseases and parasites, so quarantine the species separate from one another.

*Be sure to worm new goats as they enter quarantine. Have your vet run a fecal 10 days later and worm again if needed. If you didn't get health records with the new goat, assume the worst and vaccinate her as she enters quarantine as though she's never been vaccinated before.

*To give her added respect via scent recognition, switch the newcomer's collar with that of the highest-ranking goat in your herd's social hierarchy.

*When a new goat leaves quarantine, make sure she has a friend rather than dumping her with your other goats to duke it out. Begin by placing her in a pen or paddock next to the main group where they can see and smell her. Then pick out a friendly, laidback goat and house her with the new goat until they get along well. Only then add those 2 to the main herd.



Goats and Sheep

Lots of us keep both goats and sheep. If you don't but you want to, here are some things you should know:

Getting along

Goats tend to dominate sheep but they can peacefully coexist, given enough room.

*However, it's best to feed in species-specific groups to avoid sheep being battered around (they usually get along well enough to eat free-choice hay together).

*It's wise to remove late-gestation ewes from communal groups to avoid them being bashed in the sides by aggressive goats, which can cause them to abort their lambs.

Copper and sheep

Copper blousing (see Copper elsewhere in this book) is especially important when people keep both sheep and goats. Sheep need copper but usually get enough through their diets. Sheep that consume bagged feed or mineral products formulated for goats retain excess copper in their livers. This builds up and eventually kills them. If you keep both sheep and goats you can do one of several things.

*Goats are great climbers (Myotonic/fainting goats excepted), but most sheep aren't, so it's usually safe to put goat mineral where goats can hop up on something to eat it but sheep can't. The disadvantage is that the sheep need sheep mineral down at their own level and if goats eat that instead of their goat mineral, they might not ingest enough copper.

*Separate your sheep and goats at night and provide species-specific minerals in each group's sleeping area.

*Put out sheep minerals for everyone and copper bolus your goats 2 or 3 times a year.

Worms and diseases

*Sheep and goats are susceptible to the same parasites and also most diseases. If one group gets sick or shows signs of parasite infection, the other group likely will too.

Scrapie ID

If you keep both sheep and goats, chances are that your goats must be permanently identified in compliance with the USDA's National Scrapie Identification Program.

*Although it's a Federal program, exact rules vary from state to state, so it's best to ask your county Extension agent for more information.

*Or, Google *goats USDA scrapie program* but be prepared to wade through a heap of gobbledygook.

Ram daddies

*According to a study, "The Interbreeding of Sheep and Goats" (www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1576582), that first appeared in the April 1997 issue of the Canadian Veterinary Journal, rams can successfully impregnate does but the resulting fetuses die at 5 to 10 weeks after conception. Bucks cannot successfully impregnate ewes, though they'll certainly try. Since conceiving and aborting early term fetuses is hard on does, it's unwise to comingle does and rams.

Rams and bucks don't mix

*Because of differing fighting styles, rams can kill bucks and wethers. A goat fights (and play-fights) by rearing and swooping down on his opponent. A ram fights by backing off for a distance, then charging and bashing into his opponent. The buck or wether is rearing just as the ram slams into his belly or side. Internal injuries and subsequent death are fairly common.

Goats as foster moms for lambs

*Some goats are very open to raising orphan or rejected lambs. This can be perilous for the goat. Goat kids bunt their dams' udders but not as forcefully as lambs do, especially older lambs, are wont to do. It isn't unusual for bunting lambs to hoist their mothers' hindquarters up off the ground. This can injure a dairy doe's large, fine-skinned udder. Some does assertively put rough lambs in their places and they learn not to bunt so hard. But that's not a given, so approach cross-fostering with certain misgivings.



Goat Treats

Goats love treats but a lot of unfamiliar food easily upsets a goat's digestive system. When treating your goats, do it in moderation. Keep in mind that some goats are gobblers, so big things should be sliced or broken into smaller chunks.

*These are some healthy treats goats enjoy:

Raisins

Craisins (commercially dried cranberries)

Peanuts fed shelled or in the shell, or any other type of shelled nuts (ours love unsalted almonds)

Tortilla chips

Diced apples

Sliced carrots

Chunks of dehydrated fruit

Plain or frozen grapes

Juicy treats like watermelon, cantaloupe, or pumpkin chunks

*Here are some not so healthy treats that can be fed in moderation:

Dry breakfast cereal (Chex and any variety of Cheerios work really well)

Animal crackers

Flavored crackers like Cheez Nips

Jelly beans, gummy bears, and similar bite-size candy (but don't feed chocolate to goats)

Miniature marshmallows

Hard candies like pinwheel mints broken into several pieces

*Goats like commercial horse treats too, but be sure to break them into bite-size pieces.

*Or, for something extra special, whip up one of these DIY goat cookie recipes. For more ideas Google *horse treats*.

Goaty Chews

1 1/2 cup oats

2 tbsp. honey or molasses

1 cup water

1/2 apple, finely chopped

1 carrot, finely chopped

1 1/2 tbsp. flour

1 tbsp. brown sugar

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Mix oats, water, and honey or molasses in a bowl.

Microwave for 2 minutes.

Add chopped apple and carrots, brown sugar, and flour to the mixture.

Microwave for another 2 minutes..

Put mixture in mini muffin pan and bake for about 15 minutes.

Break into bite-size pieces before feeding.

~*~

Beer Bites

1 cup flour

3/4 cup beer

2 cups molasses

1 pound cracked corn or bird seed mix

1/2 cup raisins

Preheat oven to 250°F.

Mix the flour, beer, and molasses. Slowly add grain or seed mix and stir well, then add raisins.

Pour into an oiled 12"x15" pan, and place in oven.

When the mixture starts to firm up (about 25-30 minutes), remove the pan and cut the contents into bite-sized pieces.

Return the pan to the oven and bake until the treats are fairly firm (about 40-45 minutes).

After removing the pan from the oven, let it cool before removing the treats.

Place the treats on cooling racks overnight.

~*~

Oatmeal Carrot Crunchies

1 cup dry oatmeal

1 cup flour

1 cup chopped carrots

1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon sugar

2 teaspoons vegetable or olive oil

1/4 cup molasses

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Chop the carrots.

Stir together oatmeal, salt, flour, and sugar, then mix in the chopped carrots.

Stir in the oil.

Add the molasses.

Stir until everything is mixed together, then form into small balls and place on a greased cookie sheet.

Bake for 15 minutes or until golden brown.

~*~

Goat Biscuits

1 cup grated carrot

1 grated apple

2 tablespoons vegetable or olive oil

1/4 cup molasses

1 teaspoon salt

1 cup rolled oats

1 cup flour

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Combine carrot, apple, corn oil, and molasses.

In a separate bowl, combine salt, rolled oats, and flour and stir until blended.

Add the dry ingredients to the wet and mix well.

Spread dough out on oiled cookie sheet.

Bake 20-25 minutes.

Cool completely before breaking into bite-size pieces.



Visit Sue Weaver's Ozark Writer webpage at www.ozarkwriter.com to read her blog, download lots of free goodies including comprehensive resource guides to keeping goats, sheep, horses and donkeys; and to buy her ebooks (including this one).

Sue Weaver – Ozark Writer

www.ozarkwriter.com

goatberrypie@gmail.com

www.facebook.com/sue.weaver.writer