Group One: Adult goats

The following list highlights important aspects of the adult goats’ care and associated health problems. Producing does have some additional health challenges that are considered below.

(1) Diet: Goats are ruminants. Their digestive system is very different from that of people, cats and dogs. Goats stay healthiest when the main part of their diet is forages like grass and hay. They should not have access to trash, especially when it contains plastic bags and containers because they may consume the plastic and harm their digestive system. Proper nutrition is important for their health. Some feeding errors make goats ill, and can even lead to death.

A thorough description of goat feeding can be found at Chapter 5 GRHB. The most common goat problems associated with improper diet are:

- **Body Condition:** Don’t let them get too fat or too lean.
- http://kinne.net/bcs.htm
- Enterotoxemia (overeating disease, pulpy kidney, struck) Make all feed changes gradually and vaccinate for C perfringens type C or D. Pg 89 GRHB
- Grain Overload (Ruminal Acidosis, Toxic Indigestion) If your goat gets into the grain barrel and consumes more grain than usual, call a veterinarian. Grain overload is very serious and can lead to death. For most dwarf animals there is not a need for grain unless they are almost ready to kid, or are in early lactation (first 4 weeks after birth of kids).

(2) Water: Provide plenty of fresh clean water that is warm in the winter and cool in the summer. Pg 51 GRHB Problems associated with water deprivation include Urinary Calculi. CSU extension fact sheet no. 1.629, pg 90 GRHB and Heat stress/dehydration. Both conditions require veterinary attention.

(3) Minerals: A trace mineral block specifically formulated for sheep or goats should be available at all times. Most trace nutrients and vitamins are provided by a good quality grass hay and the appropriate trace mineral-supplemented salt block that is formulated specifically for sheep and goats.

Copper toxicity may result from feeding minerals that are formulated for horses and cattle.
In wethers salt imbalance and water deprivation contribute to the formation of urinary calculi (stones) and blockage of the urethra. If wethers are straining to urinate, veterinary care is needed immediately.

(4) Parasites: Parasites may be on the outside of the goat involving the skin and hair coat (external parasites) or the inside of the goat inhabiting the digestive tract (internal parasites, also called “worms”). Possible skin parasites include lice, mites, ticks and fleas.


Depending on the parasite, signs of internal parasitism can range from weight loss, diarrhea, anemia with pale mucous membranes of the eyes and mouth, “bottle jaw” (edematous swelling under the jaw), generalized weakness and eventually death. CSU extension fact sheet no. 8.019; Pg 88 Goat resource book Coccidia, Cryptosporidia, and other internal parasites may be carried and shed by adult goats that are not showing signs of disease. Young goat kids are very susceptible to getting these parasites from the older animals and then can be severely affected by disease.: pg 88 GRHB

*Toxoplasmosis from cats, especially kittens, defecating in the goat feed represent a special risk to pregnant women. Goat feed should be stored so that other animals do not have access.
http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/toxoplasmosis/

(5) Dental evaluations: Goat teeth wear out as the goat ages. The teeth should be examined yearly for signs of excessive wear. Goats who are losing weight or disinterested in food should have dental exams. They can’t eat without teeth!

(6) Skin and coat diseases: Abnormalities of the goat’s coat, hair loss and sores on their mouth and between their toes may be symptoms of significant diseases.

*Contagious Ecthyma (Orf, Soremouth, Scabby Mouth)
Pg 90 GRHB; http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/orf_virus/

*Ringworm: http://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/diseases/ringworm.htm

http://www.tennesseemeatgoats.com/articles2/skindiseases.html

Caseous Lymphadenitis (CLA, Boils) pg 91 GRHB
It is important to realize that some of these diseases (Sore Mouth and Ringworm) can easily transfer to humans. The sores should not be handled or examined without protective gloves.

(7) Skeletal Diseases: Lameness, stiffness or reluctance to move are primary symptoms of diseases affecting the muscles, joints or bones.

- Hoof health: Hooves need to be trimmed: [Page 85 GRHB](#)
- Tetanus: Vaccinations are available to protect against this painful and deadly disease [Pg 90 GRHB](#)
- Caprine Arthritis-Encephalitis Virus infection (CAE) [Pg 91 GRHB](#)

(8) Diseases of the Nervous System: Primary symptoms are abnormal behavior, sleepiness, aggression.

- *Rabies:* vaccination is required for a City goat license.
  - [http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/ag_Animals/CBON/1251630949689](http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/ag_Animals/CBON/1251630949689)

(9) Facilities management: [Pg 147 GRHB](#)

Dry, draft-fee housing is essential for goat health. Excessive humidity and warmth, or alternatively wetness and chilling in cold weather may lead to pneumonia, recognized by fevers, cough, runny eyes and nose, rapid breathing and loss of appetite.  

- The facility must be cleaned of manure frequently for the health of the goats, to decrease odors and minimize annoying insects (flies and mosquitoes). Adult goats may be carriers of potentially harmful fecal bacteria that cause disease in goats and people.  
- Manure should be composted prior to applying to gardens to decrease the chance that harmful fecal bacteria might contaminate edible plants.  
- Although many lay publications encourage the application of goat manure directly on the garden, this practice is not supported as part of best agricultural practices.
  - [http://www.cdc.gov/features/ecoliinfection/](http://www.cdc.gov/features/ecoliinfection/)
  - [http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2094871/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2094871/)
  - [http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3123879/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3123879/)