

Proper Goat Care

Housing

There are many ways to house your goats! They will need some form of indoor shelter, proper fencing to keep them contained, and a fun and enriching outdoor space they can explore and enjoy. Here at Wayward Ranch, our goats have access to either a stall or run-in shed as well as a field or yard where they can play and explore during the day. When it comes to fencing the saying is “if it can’t hold water, it can’t hold a goat!” These guys are so mischievous they can find their way out of almost any kind of enclosure, so be sure your fencing is secure and with small enough openings they can’t get their heads stuck! Goats love having soft bedding, and ours especially enjoy fluffy wood shavings in their indoor space so they can cuddle up together at the end of a long day. If your fencing is short enough predators, like coyotes, would be able to come into the goat area, you may want to consider adding a herd protector, such as a donkey, mule, or llama.

Diet

The most important part of your goat’s diet will be hay, hay, and more hay. If there is roughage in the field your goat will also partake in that. Goat feed can be a part of your goat’s diet in moderation. Overuse of goat feed can cause urinary tract problems as well as obesity and other health concerns. We give our goats a small amount of goat feed mixed with a small amount of molasses and their minerals and supplements each morning. This allows us to be sure each goat is getting the proper supplements and medication they need, and also gives us a chance to get our eyes on each goat each day to check them for any injuries or signs of illness. Your goat will need mineral supplementation either in their food or in mineral blocks.

Veterinary Care

Plan to provide your goat with routine veterinary care which at the minimum is yearly check ups with a veterinarian. We highly suggest castrating your male goats, once they are old enough. Your vet will suggest routine bloodwork and vaccinations for your goat, such as the rabies and CDT vaccines. You will also want to discuss deworming options with you vet, as well as regular fecal tests.

Grooming

It is important to regularly groom your goat, especially their hooves. You must keep your goat’s hooves trimmed at the minimum every 4-6 weeks. Neglecting hoof care can lead to hoof rot which can be very serious and contagious. It is also important to be sure if your fields are wet, that your goats have plenty of climbing spaces to get out of the moisture so their hooves can dry out and avoid hoof rot. Regular ear cleanings and the occasional bath can help your goat look and feel their best. We find that all natural baby wipes are always good to have on hand in case your goat needs help cleaning their nose or ears. Brushing your goat regularly will allow you to check them all over for any signs of injury or illness and also helps your goat bond to you and learn to trust you.

Enrichment

Your new goat will need plenty of enrichment options! Goats are such mischievous little guys, and giving them playgrounds and toys to investigate will keep their energy moving in a positive direction instead of leaving them to get into trouble on their own! It is easy to find plants to build climbing materials out of used wooden pallets, and if you can find wooden spools that your local power company is looking to dispose of, those are easy to set up climbing gyms! Your goat may also enjoy toys! There are hay balls, slow feeder balls, and salt lick toys designed for horses that can be fun for goats as well! There are even some dog puzzle toys that can be fun for your goat to experiment with.

