Getting Started with Goats

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How to Get Yer Goat:
- Establish WHY you want to get goats in your life...
- "provide kids with responsibility"
- "produce my own food"
- "land management"
- "they’re cute!"
- "I want to work with fiber"
- "farm business that I can work"

What is your goal?
- Meat
- Breeding Stock
- Milk
- Fiber
- Showing
- Research
- Pets/agritourism

Who will be involved?
- Only you?
- Family?
- Hired labor?
- Vacations/time away?
- Further processors?

What is your plan?
- Business planning
  - Search for business plan on line and self educate
  - CCE workshops
  - Seminars
  - Courses
  - Hire a consultant

Keep in mind....
- Your idea might have regulations attached to it!
- Ag and Markets/USDA
- Local laws for selling
- Butchering?
- Insurance
- Taxes
Every good plan also evaluates

- Are you keeping your financial records?
- Are your customers satisfied?
- For the time you spend, are you getting a satisfactory ROI?
- Determine culling factors for animals
  - Traits of economic importance
  - Benchmarks that make her outstanding or "must go"

Actually getting your goat(s)

- When to get them
- Where to get them
- What to get
- What NOT to get....
- Find a mentor! Sign up for a breed/use listserv, lurk if necessary...

Practical management - feed

- Reduce waste!
- Less waste means more feed in animals, less used as bedding/manure pack
- Make it easy and quick to feed animals
- Separate feeders for hay and grain?
- Enough space for all to eat?
- Keep babies out? Feet out? Don't trap animals with horns?

- What kind of problems does this lead to?
But, you can have problems with animals with horns or heads too big. Might need to cut holes. Holes, however, allow lambs/kids to enter, or cases with horns to get stuck!

Build Your Own Feeders

Premier has plans on their website. They use the 4x4 half panels. These can be sourced locally. Can use as freestall (build one half) or build both sides and project in to pen and toss hay/grain from outside pen

Build legs taller and put a standing rail on for goats; should keep kids out. Bumper ends as adult can't crawl under. Makes a safe zone for kids/lambs

Wooden structures do weaken over time

Animal wear and tear

Construction materials

Repair

Chewing (what does this tell you?)

Townsend Feeders:
Rugged construction, different presentation of feeds. More expensive, but should last many years.
Facilities
- Animal needs
- Animal and caretaker comfort
- Access to feed and water
- Cleaning?
- Catching/Birthing/
- Treatment/Isolation of special needs animals

Handling systems
From D-S Livestock:
Complete system catch pen, tub, tilt table, scales, headlock gate and sorting gates.
Yes, you will spend $ on this!

Are you feeding a proper ration for the stages of animals?
- Concentrate supplement on pasture
- Concentrate supplement to poor quality forages
- Mineral/Vitamin supplement?
- Protein lick block?
- Great resource for balancing ration (if you can do Excel) Ration Evaluator at http://www.sheepandgoat.com/feed.html

Or you can go really cheap...
This was a small stock trailer and fence.
Can be set up with portable pens and flushing pens.

Breeding
- Short period of birthing = short period of breeding
- Can consider reproduct tools like CIDR/lutalyse (both need your veterinarian's approval!)
- Raddle paint to know if breeding accomplished!
- Source for breeding males = your management style/goals
- Can you "share" males with others? (either in same season, or when you are done)
Saving on utilities
- Electric
- Disposal
- Water

Consult with your vet for...

Vet and Meds....
- Have your vet in the loop! VCPR in place!
- Have a mentor to ask questions/help
- Prepare for challenges that are normally expected
- Check for expiration dates, adequate supplies of products needed BEFORE you have major events (birth, processing, deworming, breeding, etc)

Products I keep on hand...

And don't be without: