Getting Started in Sheep and Goats

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What you should know about sheep and goats:

- They like to be together
- They are ruminants and eat forages
- They are prey animals
- They can be fiber or meat animals or both
Things to think about:

- Good Fences/Predator Protection
- Winter
  - Water?
  - Feed Storage?
  - Housing?
Things to think about:

- Ram + Ewes = Lambs 5 months later
- Buck + Does = Kids 5 months later

- No matter what the weather
- When do you want to lamb/kid?
- Plan ahead
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Things to think about:

- Buy sheep/goats from someone who takes care of their animals the way you plan to take care of yours.
Things to think about:

- How are you going to market your lambs/kids?
  - Traditional markets?
  - Direct to consumer?
  - With other producers?
  - NOT “where do I get rid of these lambs/kids?”
  - You cannot keep them all 😊
Things to think about:

- What breed should you raise?
  - Depends on your reasons for sheep and goat farming
  - To shear or not to shear?
  - How much milk do you really want?
Breed?? continued

- Will you market with others?
  - Don’t want to stand out in the crowd

- How hard will it be to find a ram or buck?
Health things to remember:

- Parasites – Take the class!
- Predators – dogs, llamas, donkeys, rifle, traps
Health things to remember:

- Nutrition – get I right and other things will fall into place
  - Body condition
  - Minerals (loose)

- Fresh Air
  - Lack of it = respiratory problems
Sources of info:

- Cornell Cooperative Extension

- Other Producers – with caution

- Books
  - Ron Parker’s Sheep Book
  - Bill Kruesi – Sheep Raiser’s Manual
  - Mary Smith’s Book on goat health
  - Info Vet Small Ruminant Notebook
More Sources of info:

- **Magazines**
  - Shepherd
  - Sheep!
  - Graze

- **Listservs**
  - Srmarketing-l
  - Livestock processing
  - Production Dorset, etc
More sources of info:

- www.sheep.cornell.edu
- www.sheepandgoat.com
- https://sheepgoatmarketing.info
- https://attra.ncat.org
- www.nnyagdev.org
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