

The Goat Source

The Goat Source Newsletter *Volume 4 Number 4 April 2007*

Here is your April issue of The Goat Source Newsletter. March came in like a lion and is leaving like one too! Rain two days last week and now it is snowing! My goats are NOT happy! Spring in Colorado is always interesting, that's for sure. Please feel free to pass this newsletter on to your friends.

What's New This Month?

- 1 Feeders - What Works For You?
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Feeders - What Works For You

Feeding goats is always a challenge - they waste a lot of what you feed, it seems, no matter how hard you try to make them just eat the hay, not use it for bedding! At nearly \$200 a ton, that's expensive bedding!

My feeders have evolved over 25 years of goat ownership. I started out feeding on the ground - not good. The first feeders I built were the octagonal sheep feeders popular at the time. They were pretty and took a lot of work to build. Expensive, too! They were hard to clean and began wobbling quickly due to the goats shoving on it and weakening the joints. They had a very short life for an expensive investment.

The next feeders were the typical ones with slats set in a V shape. They worked fairly well but were heavy and hard to move. The goats still pulled hay out and dropped it on the ground. Cleaning was still a chore.

When I moved to a new place, I tried a fence-line feeder. It had the V slats on one side, and a solid back. Hay was placed in from the back. I also built a roof over it, to divert the rain off the hay. Unfortunately, I didn't plan very well, and melting snow would run down the roof and hit the goats instead of the hay.

I rebuilt the fence-line feeders and put slats on both sides, made a slightly larger roof and each feeder was 4 feet long instead of 8 feet, for portability. I screwed these feeders together, instead of nailing them, put metal flashing on the roof to divert the drips and painted them with two coats of paint. These feeders held together better than any other I had made up to that point, but still allowed the goats to waste feed.

I moved again, and brought along the fence-line feeders. Because of the pen set-up, I couldn't use them in the fence-line, so I drove two steel posts in the ground, one at each end and wired the feeders in between the posts.



These served until I built the Newest, Improved Version (NIV) a couple of years ago. (Seen above). The NIV is made from 1" square steel tubing, welded together for the ends and the sides are bolted on. Cattle panel fits in the middle and holds the hay. A plywood shelf holds the panels up and can be used for grain feeding. The goats still waste quite a bit of hay, but they haven't wrecked the feeders yet! I just clean out under the feeders and feed the waste to the calves. Cleaning the inside of the feeder is easy, I just tip it over and bang on it a few times, then tip it back up. It's not perfect, but I can live with it. I would like to have it in a more sheltered area, so the hay doesn't blow away in the wind!

The picture (above right) is from Jane Weir with a inexpensive and imaginative feeder she built from a junk crate she picked up. Thanks Jane!



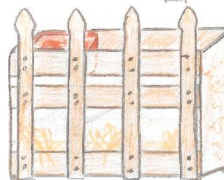
Original crate

Cut one piece of plywood the width and the length of the crate. set aside. Now cut two pieces of 1" x the width of the crate and nail them to the inside of the crate horizontally so that the larger piece of plywood can set on them. This will assure that the wood shelf will not fall down onto the goats heads!

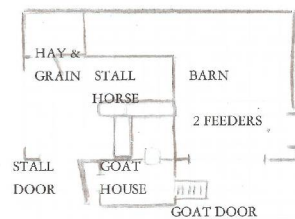


This gives you a top feeder for a larger animal or a place to store something.

Now on the other side of the crate, remove the second to the last horizontal slat. Take as many fence posts or plain wood slats you need, and nail them to the remaining horizontal slats wide enough for a goat to comfortably and safely eat



MY BARN



Here are some links to show how other breeders have solved the eternal feeder question:

<http://www.northwestpackgoats.com/news.htm>

<http://goatdairylibrary.org/Pages/Building%20and%20Planning-%20Plans.htm>

<http://www.goatworld.com/articles/feeders/feeder.shtml>

<http://kinne.net/gpix2.htm>

http://www.volcano.net/~pinetown/index/index_files/page0001.htm

How have you solved the feeder wars? Inquiring minds want to know!!

This Month's Quiz...

What kinds of lice can goats get? Can I get lice from my goats?

Classified Ads...

The Goat Source now has a custom shirt shop!

Custom t-shirts, mugs and tote bags/ **SPRING SALE on custom designs. Contact me for details.** Great gifts for the goat person or buy in quantity and use for prizes at your local show! I can use your design, or mine and will put your herd name or club name on the back at no extra charge. Find out more: <http://www.cafepress.com/goatsource>

Learn about raising animals, gardening and making your own bread!!

<http://applegoat9.bread.hop.clickbank.net/> Homesteading books to help you say "Good bye" to City Life.

Computerized recordkeeping for your goats –

<http://www.goatsoftware.com/affiliates/idevaffiliate.php?id=127> Easy to use and affordable for the small herd.

More great things for the Goat Person in Your Life!! Check them Out Here –

<http://www.cafepress.com/getyergoat?pid=598960> Fun T-shirts, tote bags, coffee mugs and more!!

Answer to the April Quiz:

Lice are ectoparasites, which mean that they live their entire life on the surface of mammals and birds. Lice are highly host specific. Few of them are able to survive on any but their correct host. Some lice can be as small as 1 mm or less, while others can be as large as 10 mm. Goats can be host to two different kinds of lice, biting lice and sucking lice. If you notice your goats scratching and rubbing, they probably need to be treated. You won't get lice from your goats – lice from goats can only survive on goats and will

die if separated from their host. Call your vet to see what she recommends and read and follow all label directions.

<http://www.imagecyte.com/lice.html>

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/IG129>

Helpful hints:

I had to buy some hay in the big bales this year because the small bales were outrageously priced and very scarce! Handling them is not hard, it just requires some planning. My ½ ton pickup can haul one 3X3X8 or one 3X4X8 bale. I had to put it near to the pen for convenient feeding but had to have some way to get it off the truck. You must take the tailgate off for this operation as the heavy bale would crumple your tailgate as it slid over it and off. We put a stout rope around the bale, and looped it around the base of the corner post nearest it, after backing the truck up close to where we wanted the bale to land. Make sure the rope is around the base of the post and that it is a really well set one, or you may be fixing fence as well as unloading hay. Carefully drive up until the bale is about half way out and back up again, take up the slack in the ropes and drive forward again. Take it slow and easy and the bale should slide right out and land with a plop. You can either put it on a set of pallets (just back up right over them – they should fit between your wheels nicely), or just put it right on the ground. I opted for the ground, as it is really dry where I live and it will be fed right away, no chance of too much spoilage here. In a wet climate, pallets would be better. As an alternative to using the post, if you have room and a tractor, just pull the bale off with the tractor and a rope. However you do it, use caution – these bales weigh upwards of ½ ton plus and it would not be hard to hurt yourself or your helper!

If you have trouble getting the rubber lamb nipples on the bottle, just lick the bottom of it and pull on the bottle. It goes on slick as a whistle. Remember, if it isn't clean enough for you to lick, it isn't clean enough for your babies to suck on!!

Using a weight tape is quick and easy, but I always pick up the wrong end first. Use a permanent magic marker and color the low end (lightest weight end) so you know which end to start at! Remember the weight tape is not perfect and will be more accurate on younger animals.

That's all for this month,...

See you next month!!

Leslie, The Goat Source

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