

Selecting Your First Kid

What to look for when selecting your first project animal

Here are some of the important guidelines to keep in mind.

- 1) Selecting a breed. There is a breed for everyone. The best rule of thumb is to start with what looks pretty to you. You will be looking at these animals twice a day, every day- make sure that you enjoy how they look. Look at adults and kids; all baby goats are cute!
- 2) What will your fair allow for your show? Don't buy a pygmy wether to show at an ADGA sanctioned show. Check your fair's entry book to make sure you can show your animal. Not all fairs offer Recorded Grades or an AOP division.
- 3) What is in your area? If everyone in the area has the same breed, it will be easier for obtaining bucks or sire service, but you will all be in competition with each other. Which is more important? How far will a parent help you go to breed your doe?
- 4) What can you afford? Always buy the best goat you can afford, but expect to pay between \$200 and \$700 for a good quality kid. Proving and caring for a healthy, competitive herd is expensive. A cheap goat is probably cheap for a reason. Put a deposit down in the fall for a first choice on the spring kids!

Once you have picked out your breed – start your research.

- 1) **Find a breeder in your area. Use the Internet, the ADGA directory, or recommendation from breeders you know.**
 - a. Look for a breeder who takes their animals to shows regularly. If they tell you they have the “top genetics in the state” but haven't been to a show in years, be cautious.
 - b. If possible, look for a breeder whose animals are on milk test or participate in linear appraisal.
 - c. Always look for a herd where the animals are healthy and happy and reasonably clean. Goats live outside; we can't avoid all the mud, but they shouldn't be in filth.
 - d. Never buy a goat that isn't CAE negative. Just don't do it – it isn't worth it. With the exception of an abscess at the elbows (possible injection site), be really

suspicious of lumps anywhere else on animals in the herd. If one goat has CL in the herd, it is highly likely that the other ones will also have it.

- e. Research your breed so you know what the serious breed defects and disqualification are. Do not buy a registered animal with a known very serious defect or disqualification.
- f. Use reputable sources of information – breed clubs, cooperative extension sites etc. when researching information about your goats. Remember that not everything on the world wide web has factual information behind it.
- g. As a breeder, I am happy to answer questions, however, if I have a website, please use it to gain a general sense of my herd, reference pedigrees or performance data as numbers are easy to mix up or forget.
- h. Go visit the herd before you buy the kid – if possible. If you have a trusted goat friend, bring them with you when you go see the herd. Sometimes this isn't possible, but if you can, visiting the herd before you purchase the kid can give you a lot of valuable information.

2) What to look for in a kid. (sometimes there isn't an option. Sometimes there is only one kid born)

- a. Healthy, bright eyed and curious. Clean nose. Healthy appetite.
- b. Two teats and two testicles (if buying a buck). No more, no less.
- c. Wide rump, straight front legs and high escutcheon.
- d. Ask to see the mother (the breeder may or may not own the father). If they have already sold the mother of a kid, or they do not want to show her to you, – ask why and proceed with caution.
- e. Do not purchase a kid until it has been disbudded. Let the breeder do that job your first time out.

One final note: Purchasing from your fellow youth member can be a great way to get an animal. However, if you are directly competing with that person, realize that you will probably not be starting off with a goat that will beat theirs. Rarely do people sell their top kids. Sometimes it is better to buy from a youth member out of your county or an adult breeder.