



ANIMAL CARE AND WELL-BEING FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

GOAT



Q. Why doesn't that goat have ears?

A. Actually it does have ears, but they are extremely small. Just as breeds of dogs look different from each other, goat breeds also differ in appearance. This characteristic is unique to *Lamancha* goats. This breed was developed in North America and was selected to have ears that are 2 inches long or less.

Q. What are goats used for?

A. Goats, like sheep, have many uses. They are used for meat and milk products as well as fiber. Goat products are not as popular in the U.S. compared to cow products, but they are important food sources in many parts of the world. In fact, worldwide more people consume goat products than cow products. A number of goat products found in the U.S. are viewed as specialty high-end foods. *Cashmere* is the most common fiber that comes from goats and is actually hair, different from the wool sheep produce.

Q. Is it safe to drink goat's milk?

A. Yes! As with cow's milk, goat's milk is safe to drink once it has been *pasteurized* (a process of heating the milk for a short time to kill pathogens that could cause illness). Goat's milk has a similar protein and fat profile to cow's milk. Other goat's milk food products, such as cheese or yogurt, are now available in most grocery stores. Goat's milk can also be used to make many other products such as soaps and lotions.

Q. Why do some goats have horns and others don't?

A. As with some sheep and cattle, some goats will never develop horns. These animals are called *polled*. Most goats, both male and female, naturally have horns. Some goats are dehorned or disbudded so that the horns cannot grow. This is done to prevent injury to the goat itself, other goats or the owner.



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Q. Does the collar hurt the goat's neck?

A. No, the collar does not hurt the goat. If used with proper training, the collar is a useful tool to help lead the goat. To make sure the goat is comfortable, the collar must be placed correctly on its neck and must fit properly.

Q. Why are some goats penned alone and others together?

A. Goats are a herd species. They like to be around other goats. They do not necessarily have to be in the same pen, but they should be able to see, hear and smell other goats. As with people, not all goats get along, especially if they are newly introduced. It might be better for each to have its own pen so they are not stressed.

Q. Does it hurt the goat when she is milked?

A. No, milking is not painful. Just as with dairy cows or sheep, as long as the goat is milked properly, it does not hurt her. Care must be taken to make sure the person doing the milking knows the correct way to do so. People who milk the goat must also know how to prepare the goat before milking and how to clean the *udder* after milking to make sure the goat stays healthy.

Q. How can you tell if your goat is sick?

A. Just as with humans, when goats are sick, they will eat and drink less, rest a lot more, and sometimes have a fever or other symptoms. By watching the goat and knowing how it usually behaves, we can tell when it's not feeling good and take appropriate action to help it get better.

Q. What are the tags in the goat ears?

A. This is an *ear tag*, and every goat has an identification number printed on the tag. Farmers use the number to find a goat quickly. If you see a goat without an ear tag, that's okay because its identification is tattooed inside its ear. If there is a disease outbreak, veterinarians can use these tags to track sick animals.

Q. Why is the goat chewing gum?

A. They're not really chewing gum, they're *chewing their cud* – or in scientific terms, *ruminating*. Cattle, sheep and goats are *ruminant animals*. That means the animal has a four-chambered stomach and can digest feed that a single-chambered human stomach can't handle. A goat's *cud* is food that is belched up from the first stomach chamber. Chewing the food again grinds it into very small pieces that are more easily digested in the next stomach chamber, the rumen.



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