



# Rearing a Kid Goat

## Introduction

Kid goats are some of the most 'fun' animals to rear. Their intelligence, curiosity and 'quickness' of mind add to their cuteness. Kid goats will willingly explore their environment by climbing, sniffing and nibbling at anything and everything. There is little that does not interest or fascinate them. They are naturally explorative and love to play. Once a kid goat has begun to be reared as a pet they become very loving and loyal to their handler. Though the strategies used to rear a lamb and kid goat are similar there are some subtle differences.

In choosing a kid goat it is recommended that the child select a doe. If the child selects a buck kid it is preferable that it be castrated. Buck kids and crypt orchid kids are eligible to enter the kid goat section held at the Waikato A&P Show as they become more aggressive when they begin to grow. However some schools and Boys and Girls Agricultural Groups do allow buck and crypt orchid kids to enter their show days. A kid buck should be castrated at approximately one to two weeks of age. Often the farmer will do this task before the kid is taken home.

As dairy and fibre goat farming has increased in popularity there are goat farmers who will either loan kid goats or give them away. Kid goats can also be reared on a small section and make wonderful 'lawn mowers' as an adult pet as well as providing good company in the garden. (Kid goats will be referred to as 'kids'.)

## Recommended Materials

Kid goat Cover

Bottle with a suitable teat for a kid Milk powder (suitable for kids or lambs) Brush (no wire brushes) Cloth

Collar and lead Pen

Hay and meal or nuts Shelter

Clean bedding Container to hold clean water

Practice ring (optional)

## Early Days

On selecting the kid give it a name, record the breed and date of birth. Where possible choose a kid that has received its mother's colostrum and is about five days old. A kid at this age will quickly bond with the child. It is most important that a newborn kid is kept warm. When the kid goat pen is made choose a sunny position and put an A-framed shelter into the pen so that the kid can keep out of the rain, cold winds or hot sun. Sacking or clean straw is ideal for bedding as this compensates for the warmth that a kid receives from its mother. Keep the bedding clean by renewing it regularly. The kid must be kept warm, dry and clean and the area free from draughts. Kids are extremely susceptible to pneumonia and will die quickly if they lose the will to live.

If the kid has not had colostrum use the recipe below remembering to add one teaspoon of glucose for instant warmth and energy.

### Recipe for Kid Goat Colostrum

1 litre powdered milk that is suitable for lambs or kid goats (read instructions) 1 egg

1 teaspoon of cod liver oil

1 tsp glucose

Two litres should be sufficient to start a kid. Gradually reduce the colostrum content after three days so that more powdered milk is mixed into the feed to prevent scours. Newborn kids require at least four feeds daily. For example 7am, 11am, 3pm and 7pm. Feed in small amounts and often for the first few days. Cows milk is not recommended due to its higher fat content. Ensure that the instructions on the container are read, understood and that the milk replacement is suitable for kids or lambs. After the first few days the milk of choice can be introduced. Kids begin to eat grass from approximately one week of age. At approximately six weeks of age reduce the number of feeds to three times daily and by approximately 12 weeks of age it will need only two feeds per day. Clean dry meadow hay, water and shelter from the rain, wind and sun should be available at all times during the rearing programme. Slowly introduce the kid to pellets after approximately four to six weeks of age. A kid will need approximately four to five months of feeding with milk and plenty of roughage if it is to develop into a well-grown and healthy goat. Roughage develops the rumen and helps to prevent scours.

## Saving Dates for Kids

Early Kids 1st July – 19th August

Late Kids 20th August – 20th September

These dates are flexible and can be adjusted by the organising school or group to achieve a better distribution of participants in the events. This helps to distribute the awards among more participants. However the above dates never change for those entering the Waikato A&P Show.

## Suggestions for a Daily Kid Goat Care Routine

- Feed kid regularly during the day and remove any soiled bedding from its shelter.
- Wash bottle and teat after each feed. This aspect of welfare is vital to avoid health problems.
- Clean with a warm damp cloth around face and ears and under the front and back legs daily and groom with a soft clean brush.
- Wash the kid before show days (optional but never fibre kids). See Cleanliness, • Keep the hooves, the hair between the 'claws' and around the hooves trimmed. This helps to prevent scold. See Health Problems and Some Solutions for Kid Goats
- Check daily for lice and drench the kid for worms if necessary. See Health Problems and Some Solutions for Kid Goats.

Take the kid for daily walks and introduce it to a variety of interesting obstacles such as walking a plank and jumping on to and over logs. Introduce one obstacle at a time and once the kid has mastered it move on to the next interesting challenge. Try to make any challenge 'fit' the size of the kid. For example, it is not recommended that little kids try to jump on to hay bales as these may be too high. While out walking the child should encourage the kid to walk beside him/her ensuring that the kid's front legs are in line with the child's legs and its head held high. This encourages the kid to become confident walking on a lead and close beside the child. Allow the kid to run and exercise freely each day. The amount of time that a child spends with his/her pet is generally reflected in the bonding between them.

## Preparing a Kid Goat for Show Days

While the child and the kid have been working and playing together they will have plenty of opportunities to develop the skills that are required for showing as these can all be developed outside of the ring, making the entire process of rearing a kid both enjoyable and achievable. However practice in a ring can certainly improve the level of skill but do not begin ring practice too soon so as to prevent boredom. There are three main events that the child and the kid will be expected to master on show days.

## Most Obvious Pet

To train a kid for this event the child will need to have someone hold the kid while s/he stands some distance away with a bottle of milk. The child calls the kid's name. When the kid comes to the child it receives a gentle pat on the head, then its bottle. Continue patting while the kid drinks. Note: on show day the child will not be able to use a bottle of milk so ensure that during practice the use of the bottle is gently faded out.

## Leading

This event is now undertaken around an obstacle course. See Figure Seven and Eight below.

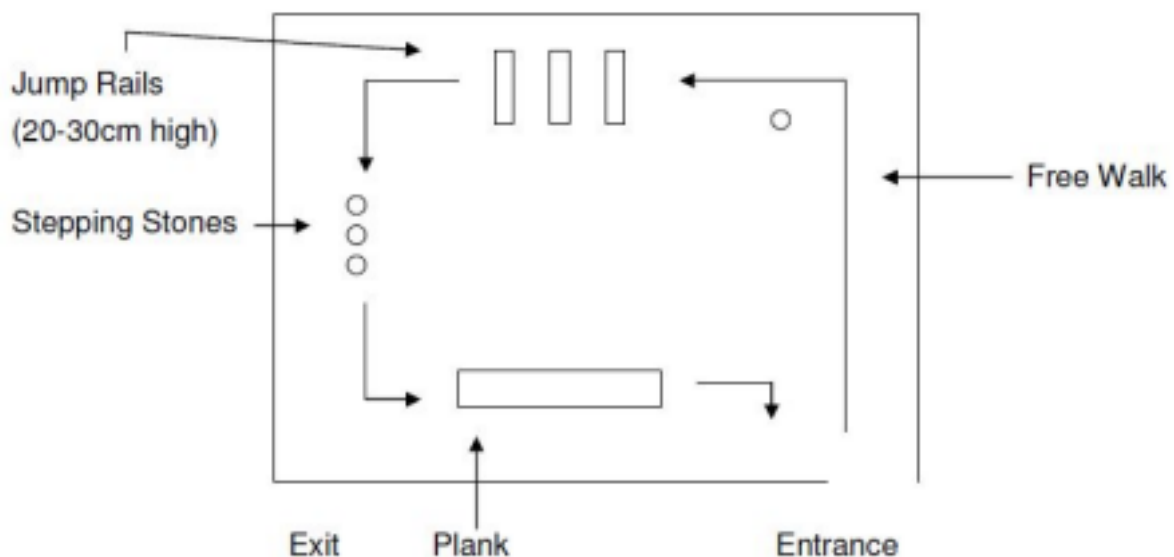


Figure Seven: Obstacle Course for Kid Goat

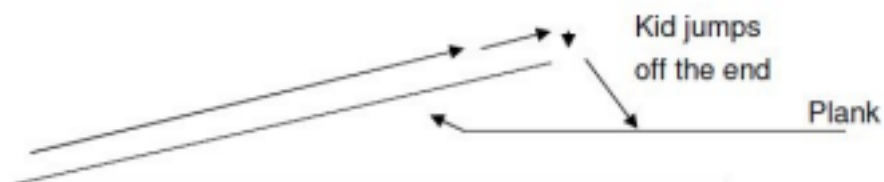


Figure Eight: The Plank

The child walks with the kid, staying on the outside of the obstacles. The child is not permitted to climb over the obstacles or to assist the kid on to them.

## Rearing

This event is usually assessed under the following headings of care, condition and cleanliness. The kids entering this event should be presented with clean ears, eyes, mouth, legs, hooves, flank, under-belly and tail. See Suggestions for a Daily Kid Goat Care Routine. The hooves should be trimmed and hair clipped around them. The child should know the name, breed and the date of birth of their kid. The older children should know about health problems such as scours, footrot, lice and internal parasites and the treatments. Children should be able to talk about their kids with confidence, knowledge and to describe the strategies that they have used to rear it. The child should know which category his/her goat belongs to and their purpose in the primary sector. Senior children should be aware of other breeds and their purpose. For example, what is an angora or a milking goat bred for?

## Condition

This section involves the size for age and breed of kid. The child should know what their kid has been fed, how much and how often. This aspect of rearing includes milk, grass, meal, hay, water and anything else the kid has been fed.

## Cleanliness

Washing kids (not fibre goats) before show day is optional as kids are extremely susceptible to pneumonia. If they need to be washed do it only on a sunny day and ensure that the kid is dried immediately, covered and kept very warm. A blow wave hair dryer is often used to dry newly washed kids. A cover is an advantage as it will assist in keeping the kid clean. See Health Problems and Some Solutions for Kids below. The kid's underbelly, ears, face, mouth, eyes, legs, hooves, and flanks need to be clean for showing. A warm damp cloth may be used for this. After each feed wipe the kid's mouth to avoid any build-up of dried milk. Although dairy goat kids can be brushed, Angora kids can be brushed only very lightly or plucked gently to remove any loose hair so as to retain the natural style and crimp in their fleece. A well-reared kid will be bright, clean, well grown, alert and explorative.

## Health Problems and Some Solutions for Kid Goats

While keeping and caring for the kid there are health problems that can arise. One of the more common is that the kid can develop lice and will possibly need to be drenched for worms (parasites) that live in the gut and intestines. There are many proprietary brands of lice powders and sprays suitable for kids that are available either from the local vet or from a stock and station store. After the first treatment repeat the same dosage in approximately 10 days. Always be sure that the instructions on the container are fully understood before application. There are also drenches that will treat both worms and lice. Also kids may need a supplement of selenium. Check with a vet for the required dosages.

On selecting the kid enquire as to whether the doe (mother) has received a Five in One vaccine prior to kidding. If this has not been administered then it is recommended that the kid be vaccinated against pulp kidney, tetanus, Blackleg, Malignant Oedema and Black Disease. However be aware that some kids are from organic farms where other practices are undertaken.

Scold can be prevented by keeping the hair trimmed around the top of the hooves and in between the 'claws.' This condition can predispose the kid to footrot and can

be identified by reddening and heat around these areas. If scold is unchecked open sores can develop. These will need to be treated by a vet who can offer powders and ointments. However prevention is better than cure as scold will cause distress to the kid and hinder its development.

It is recommended that hooves are kept trimmed to prevent footrot. Trimming prevents the hard surface of the hoof from forming a layer beneath the hoof itself, therefore trapping moisture and hinders the kid from keeping its feet dry. It is recommended to always provide an area raised off the damp ground that will enable the kid to stand on and dry its feet while it is resting. If the kid does develop footrot carefully trim the exterior of the hoof back to healthy tissue and treat with zinc sulphate ten percent solution. A bluestone and water solution can be used. However this remedy may leave a stain on the hair round the feet.

Always use a warm damp cloth to wipe any milk from the kid's mouth after each feed to prevent scale developing in this area. If scale occurs (milk spots around the mouth) dab some baby oil or vaseline on it twice daily. After one to two days the scale should be lifted.

As there are several reasons (see Early Days) for kids developing scours. It is recommended that a vet immediately treat this condition as kids can dehydrate and loose condition rapidly. Be sure to follow any instructions very carefully.

Due to kids being very explorative there are several plants that they should be kept away from to prevent sickness and in some instances death.

The plants are:

Rhododendron Deadly Nightshade

Rhubarb Potato Tops

Tomatoes Tops Daffodils or any plant that develops from a bulb.

Oleander Lantana.

Ragwort.

There are others that are not identified on this list. As a safety measure it is recommended that kids have access to normal pastures that contain few weeds. For example, kids love to eat sour thistle. However this weed causes kids to develop diarrhoea.