

For further clarification on accepted animal husbandry practices for goats, please contact the Vermont Agency of Agriculture's Animal Health Section at (802) 828-2421

If you suspect animal cruelty or neglect please visit:

[www.ReportAnimalCruelty.com](http://www.ReportAnimalCruelty.com)

Or call  
**(877) 9-HUMANE**



## **The Vermont Humane Federation's Animal Cruelty Response Coalition**

**A state-wide network of professionals coordinating Vermont's efforts to prevent and respond to animal cruelty through communication, education, and training.**

### Members include:

- The VT Humane Federation
- The VT Veterinary Medical Association
- The VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets
- The VT League of Cities & Towns
- The VT Farm Bureau
- The Green Mountain Dairy Farmers Cooperative
- The VT Sheriffs Association
- The VT Police Chiefs Association
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## **Caring for Goats**



### **Vermont's Recommendations and Requirements**

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# Goats: The Basics

## Terminology

Female - Doe

Male - Buck

Castrated male - Wether

Young Goat (either sex) - Kid

## Goat Care

- Fresh, clean water should be available at all times. If does are kidding in small pens (jugs), water pails should be removed during active labor. Fresh water should be provided immediately after kidding.
- Goats are ruminants and should have a forage-based diet with supplemental grains as needed. Dairy breeds tend to be thinner than meat breeds. Fermented feeds can be used with caution to avoid spoilage as goats are more sensitive to listeria than cattle.
- Trace mineral supplementation is important as Vermont is a selenium-deficient state. A loose trace mineral supplement, including but not limited to selenium and iodine with salt, should be available at all times.
- Any and all diet changes should be made gradually to avoid overconsumption/indigestion.
- Don't overfeed grain and other concentrates to wethers, who are especially prone to urinary calculi, resulting in an inability to urinate.

## Shelter

Vermont law requires that goats are provided with shelter that protects them. A stand of trees, shed, or barn can all be considered shelter. Goats must also be provided with a dry place to rest.

Sanitary conditions should be maintained (including dry, clean bedding.) Kids are especially susceptible to unsanitary conditions.

## Additional Recommendations

- Parasitism is a **major** cause of death in goats, usually during the grazing season. Routine de-worming of all animals is **not** recommended because of their limited availability and documented parasite resistance. During the grazing months, it is important to examine all animals at least monthly to determine parasite load. Contact your veterinarian or extension agent to develop a strategic de-worming protocol suited to your particular situation.
- Goats must have their hooves trimmed as needed to avoid lameness and abnormal growth.
- Goats can be vaccinated for rabies and clostridial disease (including tetanus) annually.
- De-horning and castration should be done at an early age (<1 week) to minimize pain and trauma. Contact your veterinarian to perform and/or advise you.

# Common Concerns

## Appearance of Animal

Too thin; excessive hoof length; limping; animal "walking" on knees; Bottle jaw (swelling under the jaw) can be an indication of parasitism; Horns growing back into the face or skull.

## Housing Conditions

The lack of food, water, or shelter (natural or man made) are not acceptable practices. Overcrowding or insufficient feeding area may cause the less aggressive goats to be excluded from the food source; overcrowding in an unventilated barn can lead to pneumonia.

## Behavior

Dull, minimally responsive; drooping head; hair loss; straining to urinate (saw horse stance). If any of these elements are present, call a veterinarian to examine the animals.

