

Dairy Goats

Capra aegagrus hircus · Dairy breed

DIFFICULTY Moderate

TYPE Livestock, kept for milk

PRODUCTIVE LIFE Milking after kidding, 8–10 months per lactation



SPACE

4–5m² shelter,
200m²+ browsing
area per goat



DIET

Pasture/browse +
hay + dairy goat
pellets while
milking



WATER

Constant fresh
access, high
intake while
lactating



TEMPERAMENT

Intelligent,
social, can be
escape artists

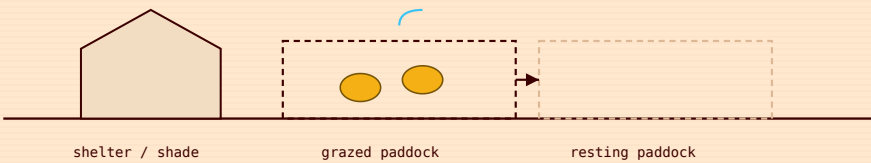


LIFESPAN

10–15 years

01 Rotate the browse

Goats are natural browsers rather than pure grazers — happiest with access to shrubs, weeds, and varied vegetation, and pasture holds up much better if you rotate them between areas.



02 Housing & setup

SHELTER	Dry, draft-free shelter — goats dislike rain far more than cold.
FENCING	Sturdy, well-secured fencing at least 1.2m high — goats are notorious escape artists.
BEDDING	Straw, changed regularly to keep the shelter dry.

04 Health & problems

- **Bloat** — from sudden access to rich, wet pasture; introduce new feed gradually.
- **Worms** — monitor and treat as part of a regular parasite management plan.
- **Escaping** — check and reinforce fencing regularly.
- **Mastitis** — keep milking routine consistent and udders clean.

06 Compatibility & considerations

GOOD WITH

Other goats (herd animals, need company)

Orchards for light browsing (with bark protection)

AVOID KEEPING WITH

Being kept alone

Unsecured toxic plants nearby (many common garden/ornamental plants are toxic to goats)

NOTE

Check exactly which plants on your property are toxic to goats before giving them free range — the list is longer than most people expect.

03 Daily care

- Milk twice daily at consistent times once in lactation.
- Provide varied browse plus quality hay, especially over winter.
- Trim hooves every 6–8 weeks.
- Keep at least two goats — they are herd animals and struggle badly alone.

05 Production & harvest

YIELD	2–4 litres of milk per day at peak lactation, breed-dependent.
MILKING	Twice daily, roughly 12 hours apart.
LACTATION	Around 8–10 months following kidding, then a dry period before the next kidding.
STORAGE	Fresh milk in the fridge a few days; freezes reasonably well for cooking use.