

Milking Sheep & Goats

Hand or machine milking for dairy sheep and goats

DIFFICULTY Moderate
TYPE Ongoing daily practice
TIME 10–20 min per animal



DIFFICULTY
Moderate



TIME
10–20
min/animal



COST
Low–moderate
(stand/equipment)



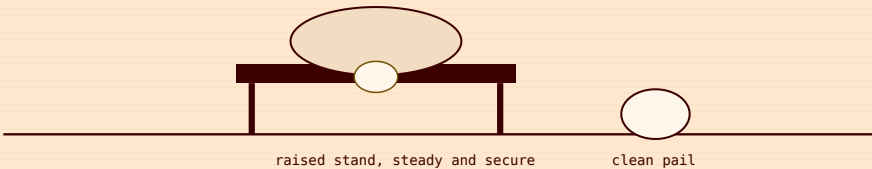
BEST SEASON
Through
lactation, 8–10
months typically



FREQUENCY
Twice daily

01 A steady stand and a calm routine

Both sheep and goats milk far more easily and calmly on a raised milking stand with a feed ration to occupy them — the routine and consistency matter as much as the milking technique itself.



02 What you'll need

- A raised milking stand with a head restraint and feed trough
- Clean pails or a milking machine for larger herds
- Udder wash and clean towels
- A consistent daily routine — same times, same order if milking multiple animals

04 Troubleshooting

- **Low milk yield** — check feed quality, milking frequency and completeness, and rule out mastitis or a health issue.
- **Animal restless or kicking** — often a comfort or routine issue; check the stand is comfortable and the routine consistent, and be patient with young or new milkers.
- **Mastitis (hot, hard, or lumpy udder)** — treat promptly per veterinary guidance; can affect milk safety and future production if untreated.
- **Milk with an off flavour** — check diet (some strong-flavoured feed affects milk), and ensure rapid chilling after milking.

06 Tips & variations

PAIRS WELL WITH

[Cheesemaking Basics](#)

[Butter & Cream](#)

[Yoghurt & Cultured Dairy](#)

COMMON MISTAKES

Pulling rather than using a proper squeeze-release hand milking technique

Missing or delaying milkings, which reduces yield and raises mastitis risk

PRO TIP

Goat and sheep milk both have a naturally higher fat content than cow milk, making them excellent for cheese and yoghurt — chill promptly, as this fat content also means the flavour turns 'goaty' faster if left warm.

03 Method

1. Bring the animal onto the stand and secure the head restraint, offering feed to keep her settled.
2. Wash and dry the udder thoroughly before starting.
3. Hand milk using a full-hand squeeze-and-release technique (not a pull, which causes irritation), or attach a milking machine cluster.
4. Milk out fully — incomplete milking can reduce future yield and increase mastitis risk.
5. Dip or spray teats with a post-milking disinfectant, then release the animal.

05 Timing & maintenance

BEST TIME	Twice daily at consistent times, roughly 12 hours apart, throughout the 8–10 month lactation.
DURATION	Lactation typically runs 8–10 months following kidding/lambing, then a dry period before the next.
MAINTENANCE	Twice-daily milking without exception — animals in milk need a consistent routine.
SIGNS OF SUCCESS	Consistent yield, a calm animal on the stand, and clean, good-flavoured milk chilling promptly after each session.