

Chapter I

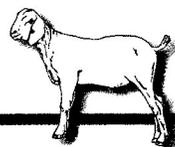
Introduction

Using This Book

This resource book is designed to be used by 4-H members who are participating in goat projects. Younger members may need help reading this book. Members are encouraged to check with their advisors or county Extension office for a complete set of guidelines for their projects. The 4-H goat projects involve the selection, care, and feeding of one or more goats. Although this resource handbook is a one-time purchase, youth need to purchase the *Goat Project and Record Book* every year.

Benefits to a 4-H Member

- 1. Life Skills Development.** As a goat owner, you learn many life skills that help you become a responsible and competent individual. Some of these life skills include managing resources, making decisions, solving problems, learning to learn, reasoning, thinking critically, keeping records, planning and organizing, achieving goals, communicating, cooperating, sharing, caring for others, being empathetic, learning through community service, completing a project/task, motivating yourself, and being responsible. What other skills can you think of?
- 2. Selection.** Whether you currently own a goat or plan to own one in the near future, knowing what questions to ask and breed characteristics to look for make selecting the right animal a rewarding experience.
- 3. Record Keeping.** One requirement for completing a livestock project is keeping accurate records. Inaccurate records do not reflect what you have accomplished with your project. By keeping good records from the beginning of your project, you learn how much it costs to keep your animal, including expenditures for feed, equipment, veterinary care, training, and showing. Keep records on a weekly or monthly basis. Do not wait until so much time has passed that it is hard to remember what you have done. Keep receipts when you purchase anything for your project. This helps you learn the expenses involved in owning a goat.
- 4. Nutrition.** You learn the nutrient requirements of goats, and how diet affects overall health.
- 5. Health.** You learn how to participate in a year round wellness program to keep your goat healthy and prevent diseases.
- 6. Competition.** You benefit from learning to care for and show your project, and to compete gracefully.
- 7. Ownership Pride.** Owning and caring for goats successfully gives you a feeling of pride and satisfaction.
- 8. Professional and Social Development.** Having a goat project brings you into contact with successful owners, breeders, judges, project leaders, and other 4-H members.
- 9. Career Exploration.** Meeting professionals in the goat world gives you opportunities to explore careers in this industry.



10. **Animal Welfare.** Your awareness of the issues of animal well-being and ethics is increased. Animals play a vital role in society, and therefore deserve our protection and compassion.

Teamwork for the Common Goal

The purpose of all project work is to enhance the education, experience, and development of young people, a purpose that is not realized without the involvement of several people working as a team. The successful completion of the goat project depends upon the combined efforts of parents or guardians, experts, 4-H leaders, and you, the 4-H member. All contribute to successful teamwork.

A Message to Parents or Guardians

This *Goat Resource Handbook* is intended for use by youth ages eight years old and in the third grade through eighteen years old. The reading level and terminology in this book is difficult for a younger 4-H member. **It is very important that a younger 4-H member has the help of an older youth or adult to interpret and understand the information in this book.**

Behind most successful club members are parents or guardians who are truly enthusiastic about the projects their children are taking. These parents offer supervision, assistance, and encouragement to the 4-H member working through projects. The payoff from this involvement is an exciting learning experience, and sometimes even honors and prizes at county and state fairs. If you are willing to help in these ways, you can make a big difference.

Be aware that while adult support is clearly important, it is equally important that adults not go too far. That is, as a parent or guardian of a 4-H member undertaking a project, you should assist and supervise only to a reasonable extent. Help out as much as is necessary, but do not do the various chores and requirements called for by the project. These are for the 4-H member to do.

Also keep in mind that most projects, especially those involving animals, require adjustments at home and some investments to be successful. For this project, proper housing, equipment and supplies, nutrition, veterinary care, and training are needed to help the 4-H member have a successful experience. Resources for keeping records are necessary.

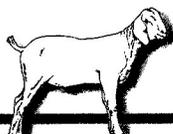
Remember, the 4-H member's success in this and all projects depends to a large extent on the encouragement and support—in the appropriate measures—that only you can give.

A Message to 4-H Advisors

As people directly concerned with youth development, it is the responsibility of every 4-H advisor to help each member who wants to take a goat as a 4-H project (and who has the resources to do so) to learn lifelong skills and be successful. Through 4-H meetings and activities, 4-H advisors help youth set goals, identify resources, learn public speaking skills, gain confidence, and evaluate their own progress with their goat projects.

Eight Key Elements for a Positive 4-H Experience Taking Goat Projects

Eight elements have been identified as key elements in making a young person's 4-H



experience a positive one. It is unlikely that all eight elements prevail at one time; however, elements such as a *caring adult* and *safe environment* must be in place at all times. Information below identifies and defines the Eight Key Elements for a Positive 4-H Experience for youth taking goat projects. Can you identify more “indicators” of each key element?

1. A Positive Relationship with a Caring Adult

Young people’s understanding of what it means and what it takes to be productive, self-assured citizens depends largely on the adult role models and connections they have. Caring adults serve as guides, mentors, and role models to 4-H members. They help youth discover their personal visions, missions, and lifetime goals. Caring adults help set appropriate boundaries and expectations for youth engaged in 4-H programs.

Indicators of a positive relationship with a caring adult through 4-H projects:

- Adult family members commit to year-round support and participation.
- Volunteers commit to the same youth through the entire 4-H project year.
- Volunteers teach youth age-appropriate subject matter while supporting their efforts.
- Volunteers guide youth through learning activities while actively participating themselves.
- Volunteers lend their support and expertise as needed year-round.
- Volunteers engage youth in establishing group parameters, rules, behaviors, and expectations.
- Older youth serve as mentors for younger members.

2. An Emotionally and Physically Safe Environment

Youth should not fear physical or emotional harm from our learning environment, adults who work with them, or from other youth. In our world today, this element is especially important. 4-H strives to provide a safe environment at each and every activity involving our youth.

Indicators of a safe environment through 4-H projects:

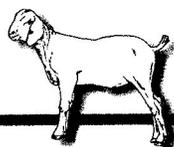
- Volunteers teach youth safe handling and training techniques.
- Volunteers teach youth skills needed to socialize and their animals.
- An environment that is safe for introducing youth and goats is created.
- Positive behavior guidelines are set for youth, and for youth and goats.
- Regional and statewide clinics are offered for volunteers to learn how to work with youth and goats.

3. A Welcoming Environment

A welcoming environment is one that actively cultivates a sense of group identity and belonging, encourages and supports its members, offers encouragement with positive and specific feedback, and shares the successes of all members of the 4-H group by providing many forms of recognition.

Indicators of a welcoming environment through 4-H projects:

- Volunteers involve all youth in introductory activities.
- Volunteers involve all youth in meetings and club activities.
- Volunteers practice age-appropriate teaching methods, involving older members as mentors of younger members.



- Volunteers create an environment to encourage group decision-making.
- Volunteers consider, evaluate, and give feedback to members' thoughts, ideas, and decisions.
- Volunteers give positive feedback during goat activities and member educational activities.
- Group identity is well established as evidenced by, for example, club t-shirts, banners, bandanas with club name, etc.
- Volunteers hold recognition events for youth, including graduation events for youth and their animals.
- Youth celebrate their successes throughout involvement in the goat program.

4. Engagement in Learning

An engaged youth is one who is not only mindful of the subject area, but who is building relationships and connections to develop greater understanding. 4-H provides opportunities for self-reflection that enable youth to connect what they learn today to their futures. Hands-on learning provides opportunities to develop important life skills.

Indicators of engagement in learning through 4-H goat projects:

- Goats are the “hook” that engage youth in hands-on learning opportunities specific to goat subject matter.
- Goats are vehicles that engage youth in a broad scope of 4-H opportunities such as camps, international programs, complementary projects, award trips, and scholarships.
- Youth take ownership of their group and design a project plan for accomplishing their goals with their goat projects.
- Youth learn many life skills as a result of engagement in goat projects.

5. Mastery and Competence in a Chosen Activity or Subject Matter

Young people learn best when the program or activity is centered on a topic that is of personal interest or a passion. Providing an opportunity for mastery and competence allows youth to experience success and achievement that in turn serve as building blocks for their success—not only in 4-H but also in their school and community work.

Indicators of mastery and competence through 4-H goat projects:

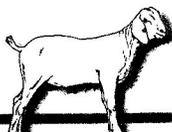
- Goats and related subject matter provide the topic of personal interest.
- Youth practice and demonstrate skills with their goats at various levels.
- Youth practice and demonstrate skills related to educational goat activities, such as skillathons, poster contests, and knowledge bowls.
- Youth set goals and objectives for projects and activities in which they participate.
- Youth take turns teaching each other.
- Youth become confident in their abilities and in their animals' abilities.

6. Self-Determination

Youth must believe that they can impact the events in their lives, rather than events having control over them. The opportunities we provide through 4-H help youth foster a personal sense of influence over their lives, exercising their potential to become self-directing, autonomous adults.

Indicators of self-determination through 4-H goat projects:

- Volunteers and older youth are involved as facilitators, mentors, and teen leaders.
- Youth are a part of the decision-making process for group activities.



- Youth learn critical thinking skills and how to improve their skills.
- Youth learn to be prepared for the unexpected when working with goats.
- Youth learn how to be flexible as well as how to think clearly and rationally when confronted with situations during training and handling of goats.

7. Opportunity to Value and Practice Service for Others

Service is a way for 4-H members to gain exposure to the larger community and the world. It is necessary for youth to actively practice and value serving others. Many times, this experience enables young people to recognize the difference they can make for others and for their communities.

Indicators of valuing and practicing service for others through 4-H goat projects:

- Volunteers and older youth serve as mentors to help younger members participate in club activities and safely work with their goats.
- Youth use their goats in ways that educate, entertain, or assist the community at large through parades, visits to nursing homes, drill teams, etc.
- Youth have a sense of pride in seeing their goats brighten the lives of others.
- Goat projects serve as a stepping stone for youth's continued interest and participation in other community service projects and activities.

8. Active Participation in the Future

Providing youth with the opportunity to see themselves in the future gives them the hope and optimism to shape their life choices accordingly. Leaders can teach all the facts and figures in various subject matter areas, but if they don't link the

information to the future, those facts and figures will likely go unused. 4-H is committed to positive youth development programs that make the connection from today's activities to tomorrow's successes.

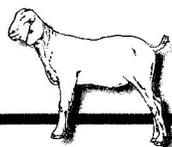
Indicators of seeing one's self as an active participant in the future through 4-H goat projects:

- Youth have opportunities to explore careers related to goats and to the goat industry.
- Youth have opportunities to outline and realize goals.
- Youth have opportunities to make decisions about future activities and programs not inclusive to 4-H goat projects.
- 4-H goat projects may serve as the stepping stone to future involvement with goats and related organizations, such as breed clubs, rescues, or humane societies.

A Message to 4-H Members

After you have made the decision to take a goat project, it is important to know what you want to learn throughout the project year. Information in this resource handbook should help you learn more about goats and better prepare you to be successful with your project. Learning about goat anatomy, uses, selection, health requirements, nutrition, reproduction, etc. helps you understand more about goats. You can learn about showing your goat or simply learn about caring for your goat.

By teaching you these principles through information and experience, this project makes it possible for you to be a responsible and knowledgeable goat owner able to fully appreciate the significance of the human-animal bond. To have a successful project



you must be willing to study and review and apply the information contained in this handbook.

Results of 4-H Youth Development Programs

Research has shown that as a result of 4-H Youth Development programs:

1. Youth develop marketable skills for lifelong success.

Youth gain important leadership, communication, problem-solving, and teamwork skills. These abilities are gained through the numerous projects and activities in which youth participate as 4-H members. Such skills are important not only to immediate success of the 4-H projects but to continued success of many endeavors.

2. Youth engage in community service and citizenship to transform local communities.

This goes beyond just conducting a project; its focus is on recognizing that youth can make valuable contributions to their local communities. Youth can make a difference.

3. Youth appreciate and build upon diversity to foster a harmonious global society.

This is a critical awareness tool for success of youth today and far into the future. Rather than looking at the differences in people as potential sources of conflict and disengagement, our goal is for our youth to recognize these differences as opportunities for positive and rewarding experiences.

4. Youth build sustained relationships with adults that enable them to become better citizens.

We can all remember the significant contributions an adult had during our adolescent lives. Similarly, adult 4-H volunteers should make a tremendous positive impact on the lives of 4-H youth.

5. Volunteers build skills and abilities to more effectively work with youth.

Land-grant universities throughout the nation provide educational opportunities in subject areas, working effectively with youth, and leading positive youth development programs. Extension professionals and other university faculty and staff teach volunteers the many skills and abilities needed to work effectively with youth through educational workshops, clinics, and conferences.

