

Traits of Successful Goat Producers

By

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This article will address the characteristics and traits of a successful meat goat producer. In most cases these would be the same traits found in dairy goat producers.

The first thing to realize is that a goat is not a sheep. They are entirely different animals and eat different things and deposit fat in different ways and locations on the body. Sheep and cattle are grazers who eat primarily a meter or below down to the ground favoring grass. On the other hand goats are browsers preferring leaves, twigs and weeds as a diet and eating a meter and above the ground. Due to this fact goats do not have as much trouble with stomach worms and parasites as sheep and cattle do as the worms tend to be lower on the grass near the ground. Sheep and cattle deposit fat over the carcass while goats deposit fat around the internal organs such as the kidney, pelvic and heart area (KPH). This type of fat deposition results in the goat being the healthiest red meat you can eat even lower fat than chicken. The goat is God's perfect gift to man being the healthiest red meat you can eat and goat milk is the closest thing to the perfect food. Goat milk is similar to mother's breast milk and is rich, creamy and smooth. Goat milk retards aging and changes the deposition of cholesterol in the system. Further goat milk can be given to infants that are allergic to cow's milk (lactose intolerant) as goat milk does not have the allergen in it that cow's milk contains that causes snooty nose and allergies in babies.

Eighty percent of the world eats red meat on a regular basis and 60% of all red meat consumed in the world is goat meat. This translates into approximately 63% of the world's population eating goat meat on a regular basis. Producing goat meat may be a 21st century industry in the United States. As the ethnic population increases in the U.S. many of them ate goat meat in the countries where they originated and when they come to the States they bring their preference for goat meat with them. Currently the demand for goat meat in this country far exceeds the supply.

Producing meat goats year round used to be a problem as many meat goats were Spanish goats or brush goats and did not breed from March to August which results in goat meat not being available in large supplies all year. With the introduction of the South African Boer goat into the U.S. and crossing these Boer goats with the native goats the hybrid or crossbred offspring breed year round and thus the product of goat meat can be supplied all year. At the present time the demand for goat meat is so great that over 80% of the goat meat consumed in this country is imported from Australia and New Zealand.

Given the information above what are the traits of successful meat goat producers. Of course as in any successful business the character traits of honesty and integrity are foremost. Having a passion for what you do certainly does not hurt in participating in the meat goat industry. Being flexible to the changes in weather, feed production and market prices and being willing to tackle the health or medical issues realized in meat goat management are also important traits. It has been said that the perfect job is the job you would do for free. If you enjoy what you are doing you will never work a day in your life.

The volatility of prices to be realized in the meat goat market is not for the weak hearted. The goat producer must be aware of the rapid change in prices and the cost of production of the goat meat product. The meat goat market is driven by ethnic populations particularly the muslim-islamic market. This market desires a 50 to 80 pound goat which is a 25 to 40 pound carcass. The goat has to be humanly killed with religious procedures employed. Smaller meat goats meet the demand of the Greek and Hispanic trade which prefers a 25 pound kid that is still nursing on its mother. Goats above 80 pounds typically go to the Haitian and Caribbean trade which prefers a big stinky billy which they cut up into 2 inch cubes and cooked in a spicy, hot stew. In other words, there is a place for every size and weight of meat goat.

There are several avenues for selling meat goats and meat goat products. These avenues range from raising fancy breeding stock, meat goats for the commercial trade, meat goats (castrated males) called wethers for 4H and FFA county shows, production and selling of meat goat embryos to the breeding market to improve the breed, selling frozen goat semen to be used in artificial insemination (AI) to distribute excellent genetics to meat goat females all over the world.

Selling breeding stock can be done by direct sales from the farm or ranch, marketing outstanding sires over the internet or participating in production sales. Another trait of successful goat producers is creativity in marketing their product which is either goat meat or goat milk.

The goat industry is a 21st century industry relative to livestock with no end in sight. Good luck with your endeavors into the goat industry.

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