

# So You Want to be a Goat Farmer

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## Buying Goats

The first part of your new venture or expansion is securing a supply of goats. If you are new to the goat industry, this is an ideal time to start with goats that are low risk for specific diseases. Producers can reduce the risk of introducing diseases by purchasing goats with known health status. Selecting good quality healthy stock goes a long way to starting a profitable business.

Points to consider when buying goats:

### Health

- What is the health status of the goats I wish to purchase?
- Are the goats low risk for diseases like Caprine-Arthritis-Encephalitis (CAE) or Johne's? If so, ask for documented proof.
- What is the seller's herd vaccination protocol?
- What is the seller's herd de-worming schedule?
- Is there a health certificate from the herd veterinarian?
- Will the current veterinarian provide withdrawal dates for goats currently being treated; including those fed medicated feed, stating meat and milk withdrawals?
- Be sure to get a statement if any broken needles are in the goats and the approximate location.
- Ask about the seller's kid rearing program.
- Talk to your vet about testing that should be done on the goats prior to purchase. What is the health guarantee of the goats from the time of arrival on farm?
- What are the guarantees for does and doelings sold pregnant and for reproductive soundness if they are sold not bred?

### Record keeping

- Will the owner provide copies of the records for each goat?
- Review production information and the milk test results, if available.
- Are the goats classified?
- Are the goats registered? If so, match the tattoo number to the papers. Who will pay to transfer the pedigrees?
- If a tour of the operation is not offered, ask for a tour. A lot can be learned by what you observe. Be respectful of biosecurity practices when on-farm.

### **Purchase agreement**

- What is the agreed upon price? Is a deposit required to hold the goats?
- If you are unable to take the goats on the agreed upon date will the deposit be forfeited?
- If the seller and buyer agree the goats can stay past the original agreed upon date, are there additional costs associated with the goats staying longer? This may be a dollar value per head per day.
- Ask for the agreement in writing and have both parties sign the document, clearly stating the agreed upon price, possession and transportation dates and other information necessary.

### **Facility**

- Is your facility **really** ready to receive the load of goats? A few key areas to double check include water, bedding, feed supply, and ventilation.
- If your facility is not ready will the owner hold the goats longer? If so, what are the additional costs? Is there an absolute final date the goats need to be moved by?
- If you are milking goats has the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) been contacted for the final inspection?

### **Transportation**

How close are the does and/or doelings to kidding? Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) regulations prohibit the transport of animals likely to give birth during transport. Knowing that transport stress can induce labour, producers need to use caution during the last 10 per cent of gestation. Other points to consider:

- Who will be trucking the goats?
- Are the trucks clean, disinfected and well bedded before moving the new goats?
- What will the weather conditions be on the day of transportation?

For more information on farming goats refer to:

- [Best Management Practices for Commercial Goat Production](#)
- [Biosecurity Planning Guide for Canadian Goat Producers](#)
- [National Farm-level Biosecurity Standard for the Goat Industry](#)
- [Canadian Goat On-Farm Food Safety Program](#)
- [Recommended code of practice for the care and handling of farm animals-Goats](#)
- [Recommended code of practice for the care and handling of farm animals-Transportation](#)
- [Facts and Figures about Canadian Goat Farming](#)

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