

## Goats – Basic Care

- Goats are highly social animals and should be maintained in groups to avoid unnecessary stress.
- Have a strong social hierarchy, and the addition of several goats to an established group is generally less stressful than the addition of an individual.
- Goats are hollow horned, cloven hoofed ruminants.
- Male goats are called “bucks,” castrated males are called “wethers,” and female goats are called “does.”
- Sexually mature males have a powerful odor that comes from the must glands on top of the head.
- The only goat likely to attack a person is a mature male, especially if there is a female in heat.
- Disbudding of goats should be performed at less than one month of age.
- Horned goats can get their head and legs trapped in fencing. Horned and polled goats can be housed together but special care must be given to protect the polls by using multiple feeders and adequate space requirements.
- Enrichment should be provided unless specified in protocol and approved by the IACUC.
- Examples of enrichment:
  - Climbing structures
  - Food treats
  - Trees and bushes
  - Human interaction
- Minimum requirements are protection and shelter from the elements. A three sided shed is sufficient.
- Minimum pen sizes are specified in the Animal Welfare Regulations and The Guide for the Care and Use of Agriculture Animals in Agriculture Research and Teaching. Exceptions must be approved by the IACUC.
- Goats are agile, can climb and jump high, and habitually dig and crawl under fence wire.
- A 48 inch fence is needed for goats.
- Always catch and secure the male first then proceed to catch the females.
- Regardless of how tame they seem, never trust a male.
- Goats may be restrained by the chin hold and backed into a corner in the same manner as sheep.
- If horned and used for restraint, grasp horns near the base to prevent them from breaking.
- Will accept restraint more easily if lying flat on the ground. To accomplish – stand on one side of the goat, lean over, and grasp both the front and back legs that are closest to your body. Lower the goat gently to the ground and, as it goes down, put you knee on its neck.
- When a goat is alarmed, it will snort, stamp its fore feet, flatten its tail up over the back, and raise the hair along its spine, and emit a high pitched sneezing sound.
- Goats are fastidious eaters and will refuse food or water that has become soiled with feces or urine.
- Should be fed a high quality, commercially prepared, nutritionally balanced diet.
- Fresh water should be available ad libitum.
- For more specific species information including physiologic data, husbandry and breeding requirements, or procedural information, please contact the Office of Laboratory Animal Care (865-974-5634).