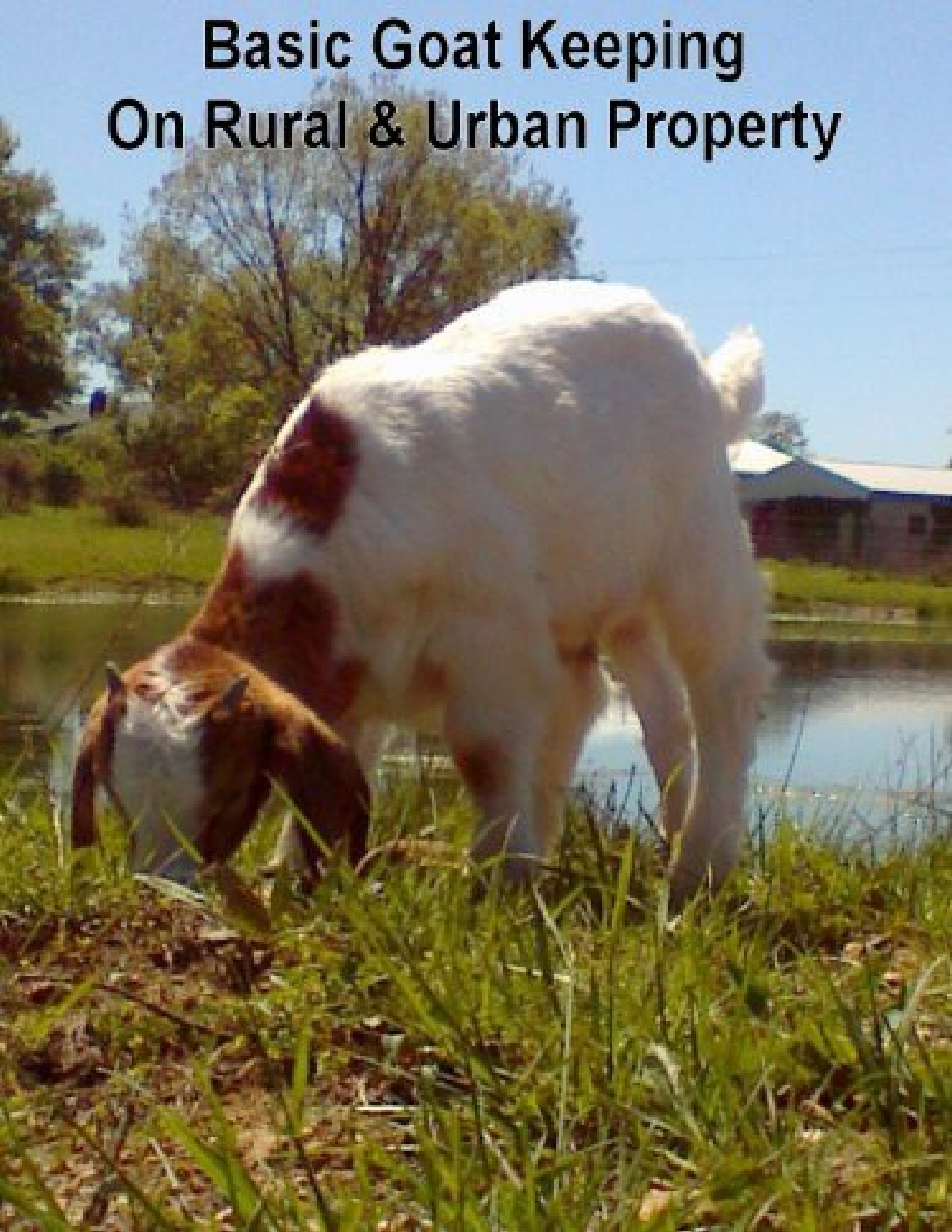


Basic Goat Keeping On Rural & Urban Property



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By Rachel Lynn

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Doverfield Farm & Legacy Connemaras – Galena Missouri

Nan & Phil Hassey and Cuzco of Goat-A-Rama – Rye, Colorado

Thanks for sharing your wonderful photos!

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Getting A Goat

First you need a goat. No wait, first you need a place to keep a goat! Don't bring home a goat or any animal without proper housing for it. You need some land on which to build a shed and put up fencing. Then you need a couple goats.

If you are in a rural area with a few acres or more you will be able to keep more than one or two goats. Goats are like many things in life...you can't have just one! They seem to grow on you and before you know it you have several. Their fun-loving and friendly nature is addictive and their pure exuberance as they play is refreshing to enjoy. They need another goat with them to keep them happy. One goat is simply not advisable.

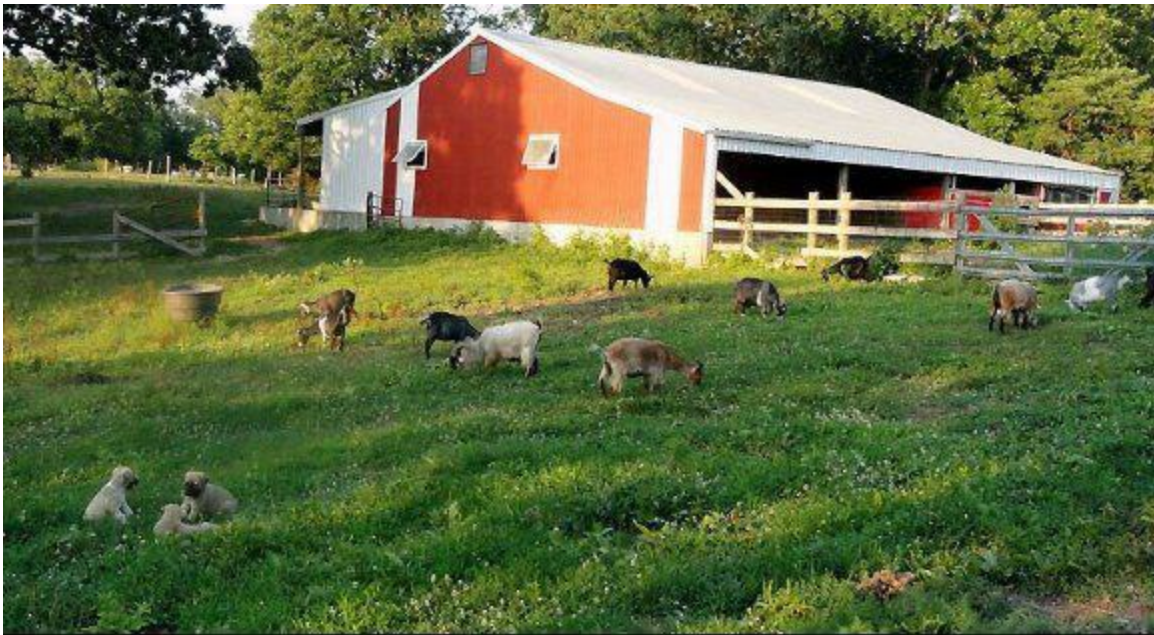


Photo Credit: Doverfield Farm & Legacy Connemaras – Galena Missouri

The females are called does and the young females are called doelings. The males are called bucks and the younger males are called bucklings. A castrated buck is one that cannot breed and is called a wether. Other unofficial terms are often used to describe them such as billy for the males and nanny for the females.

Finding your goat will take some research. Why do you want a goat? Do you want to be milking every day? Do you want something to take backpack trips with or use for a cart? Do you want to raise goats for the meat they can provide for your family? They are excellent for clearing brush and weed-infested fields. Or perhaps you just want a goat for company. Why you want a goat will help you determine the best breed of goat to buy.

Dairy Goats:

Dairy goats will provide you with milk and, if you're so inclined, cheese! Milk goats will require you to be available to milk at least once a day, more often twice daily. They can be trained to require milking only once per day if desired but will produce less than if milked twice daily. This is a time requirement you need to seriously consider if you like to take vacations or are often gone for work. It can be difficult to find a good milk hand to cover for you if you're gone a lot.

There are several breeds of dairy goats. Some produce lots of milk, some produce less, some have high butterfat content, others do not.

The main breeds of dairy goats consist of the Nubian, the LaMancha, the Toggenburg, the Saanen, the Oberhasli and the Alpine. There are others of course but these are the main breeds. You should research each breed to determine what will work for you.



Photo Credit: Doverfield Farm & Legacy Connemaras – Galena Missouri

Meat Goats:

This category of goats can include any breed since any of them can be eaten but there are a few main breeds in this classification. The Boer goat with its classic red head and white body is the one most people think of when you say meat goat. Others include the Savanna, the Kiko, the Spanish, the Tennessee (also called the myotonic or fainting goat), and the Pygmy. The Nubian is also often included in this list as they are a very good dual purpose goat.

These goats are less work as far as milking but they still need attention and care like any animal. They can be milked if desired but will produce much less milk per animal.



Photo Credit: Rachel's Goat Farm – Seymour Missouri

Urban & Suburban Goat Keeping

You do NOT want a buck for urban goat keeping! Not only are they smelly and stinky they can be dangerous. A wether or doe would be acceptable, however, depending on what you want to do with your goat. Since you've decided you want a goat in your life you need to look at your options for keeping a goat. A small urban lot can house a goat or two quite well if attention is given to housing and fencing. If your neighborhood regulations allow keeping a goat be sure to follow all requirements concerning building permits and number of animals allowed.



Photo Credit: Doverfield Farm & Legacy Connemaras – Galena Missouri

You can purchase a pre-made shed or portable building and have it set in your back yard or you can build one yourself. Your goat house can be as simple or as elaborate as you want as long as there is sufficient room for them to move around and lay down in it. The bottom should consist of a floor that will keep them up out of the water and mud when it rains and be covered in a comfortable bedding material such as straw or hay. Goats hate to be wet and while they don't mind a gentle breeze they don't like wind blowing on them. If they get wet and cold they may get sick and die.



Photo Credit: Rachel's Goat Farm – Seymour Missouri

Rural Goat Keeping

Keeping a goat on several acres is quite easy. The requirements are similar to urban goat keeping but on a much larger scale and you can keep several goats this way.

They will need a barn or shed large enough to comfortably accommodate the quantity you desire.



Photo Credit: Doverfield Farm & Legacy Connemaras – Galena Missouri

There are some goat herders keeping goats very successfully on open range with heavy woods and forests for shelter. The goats certainly need enough land to roam and find the nutrients they require and enough woods for shelter from with and rain but since the domestic goat can easily revert to the wild they will survive and thrive even with little human intervention. Goat keeping on this scale should be attempted only after you have experience with goats and their care and you have safeguards in place such as guard animals.

Guard Animals

Livestock guard dogs, known as LGDs, are very helpful for larger pastured herds. There are several breeds that seem to excel in this. The Anatolian Shepherd, the Maremara, the Great Pyrenees and others not only protect the goats but have been known to even help with birthing and keeping the kids warm. Other animals such as llamas and donkeys are also used.



Photo Credit: Doverfield Farm & Legacy Connemaras – Galena Missouri



Photo Credit: Doverfield Farm & Legacy Connemaras – Galena Missouri

Fencing

There are metal fencing panels for purchase that will work quite well for containment. Allow as much room as possible so your goat can move around freely and get exercise. For urban goat keeping fencing the whole back yard much like you would for a dog will be satisfactory. Remember that goats can and will go over or under a fence if your neighbor's flowers or shrubs look tempting!

When installing fencing make sure the bottom of the fence is on the ground or no more than 2 inches above it and that it is at least 4 foot to the top or higher. Goats can go through small openings so get panels with no more than 6-inch openings at the top and smaller openings at the bottom. Farm stores sell a 'combination panel' that meets this requirement.



Photo Credit: Rachel's Goat Farm – Seymour Missouri

For fencing larger areas woven wire field fence comes in handy. This comes in rolls of 330' long and 47" tall and can be purchased at most farm stores.



Photo Credit: Rachel’s Goat Farm – Seymour Missouri

Food & Water

All goats regardless of breed will need good quality goat feed and minerals, especially copper. Many feeds sold as goat and sheep feed do not have enough copper since sheep will die if given copper. The subject of feeds can be quite complicated if you want it to be or it can be simple. Don't over think it! There are many other books dedicated to the subject of feeding if you want to get into that. It suffices to say feed them quality goat feed, good quality grass hay without mold, free choice minerals with copper, baking soda and clean water and they will be fine. The baking soda helps keep their rumen in balance and they seem to love it!

You will need a hayrack to keep the hay up off the ground when feeding your goat. Goats do NOT like to eat anything that has been stepped on. Contrary to popular belief goats do not eat just anything! They are very picky about having clean food and water. Hayracks come in different models and can be freestanding or attached to a wall.



Photo Credit: Rachel's Goat Farm – Seymour Missouri

There are many options when it comes to feed tubs, you will need to find one that you and your goat both like. One that hangs over the fence or door will work well or you can use a tub that sits on the ground. They are both good options that can be easily cleaned and used. Of course the free range chickens are great to clean up after the goats!



Photo Credit: Doverfield Farm & Legacy Connemaras – Galena Missouri



Photo Credit: Rachel's Goat Farm – Seymour Missouri

The water tub should be low enough that they can reach the bottom while drinking without struggling. A tall tub used for cattle or horses is generally unacceptable for goats but a shorter one will work very well. A bucket also works well and is easy to clean. If you're in a cold climate you can get a heated bucket for winter use that will assure the water doesn't freeze and is always available to them. Water is very important to any animal and should always be clean and available at all times.



Photo Credit: Doverfield Farm & Legacy Connemaras – Galena Missouri



Photo Credit: Rachel's Goat Farm – Seymour Missouri

Companion Animals

Goats are fun and lively and can be a wonderful companion for children or older adults alike. Wethers are most commonly chosen for this purpose since they are not a breeding animal and will settle in quite nicely with their human companions. Does can be considered if you also want milk, but remember, you will need to breed her every year to continue getting milk. Goats provide much enjoyment with their cappers and the more toys you give them the more fun they will have. Wood blocks, crates with boards across them, benches and many other similar items will keep them and you entertained for hours! They love to climb and will try to get as high as possible. Because of this you should keep any items in their pen, including their hayrack, away from the fence. They can climb up and jump over very easily.



Photo Credit: Doverfield Farm & Legacy Connemaras – Galena Missouri

Backpacking And Carts

They are great for backpacking and trails. Their surefootedness helps them travel trails that would be almost impossible with another pack animal. Generally a large wether is used for hiking and packing but a doe can also be used. A trained and conditioned goat can carry up to 25% of it's own weight for 10 miles without tiring. Goats younger than 4 should not be used for packing but can be trained during their younger years to behave on the trail and exhibit good manners. Bonding is a priority. If your goat is not well bonded to you no matter how big or well built it is it will not make a good pack goat.

If you are traveling in a national park or on conservation land or anywhere there is a chance you may come across other people or animals be sure to protect your goats from dogs or wild animals and for safety's sake tell others 'no' when they ask to pet your animals.



Photo Credit: Nan & Phil Hassey and Cuzco of Goat-A-Rama – Rye, CO

Driving goat carts for fun and show is another great way to enjoy your goat. Goat supply places sell harnesses and carts for showing, racing and just enjoying. You will need to train your goat to pull a cart and there are several books on that subject. Ask other goat enthusiasts in your area about goat shows and places to drive your goats. Most small towns probably won't mind if you drive your goat to the grocery store but be sure to watch for traffic and other pets.



Photo Credit: Nan & Phil Hassey and Cuzco of Goat-A-Rama – Rye, CO



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Thank you for purchasing this ebook on goats. To continue feeding mine I need more sales of this book so please tell your friends about me! Leave a nice review of it on Amazon as well if you would, it helps to get more sales. The goats thank you too.



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