



KIDS CONNECTION

Goats



Grades 3rd - 5th

Great Goats!

Goats were one of the first livestock species to be domesticated by humans over 9,000 years ago! Worldwide, more people consume the meat and milk from goats than any other animal. There are two types of goats – dairy and meat goats. Boer goats are the most popular breed of meat goats in the United States, while Nubian goats are the most common dairy goat breed. In addition to providing meat and milk, goats are often used by farmers to help clean up pastures that are used for other grazing animals. Goats are called nonselective browsers because of their desire to eat a large variety of vegetative plants. Goats have been used for meat, milk, fiber and companionship for thousands of years.

Fun Fact!

There are over 43,000 meat goats and 4,200 dairy goats in Kansas!



Unscramble the definitions!

1. kubic - a male goat; also known as a billy
2. rboe - a breed of goat primarily raised for meat
3. ode - a female goat
6. tnsoeigat - length of time a goat is pregnant
7. rhed - a group of five goats or more
8. kdi - a young goat
9. didikng - when a female goat gives birth



Growing a Goat



1.



Female goats have a gestation period of five months. Kids, young goats, are typically born between January and August.

2.



A doe can have anywhere between one and five kids at a time; however, it is common for a doe to have twins.

3.



Kids raised for meat will stay with their mother for 10-12 weeks. They will be weaned off of their mother's milk and fed hay and grain and graze on a pasture until they reach 35-90 pounds, which is market weight.

4.



After the kids reach market weight, they are sold. The goats are sold for meat or to produce milk and dairy products

5.



Goat meat is found in grocery stores, specialty markets and restaurants. Dairy goat products including milk and cheese are also found at grocery stores and restaurants.

Do Goats Graze?

Goats do graze! They are ruminant animals, which means their stomachs have multiple compartments that allow them to digest plants that humans cannot. Roughage or grasses fulfill the primary diet of goats. Hay, silage, trees, shrubs and prairie grasses are examples of roughage and grasses.

When goats are first born, they drink their mother's milk for a few weeks, but also eat hay and grain.

Goats are very curious, which means they will get into and eat just about anything! Goats are known as "non-selective browsers" because they eat a wide variety of plants. They are inclined to eat a plant from the top down which makes them good at controlling undesirable plants and shrubs in pastures. They can also eat kudzu, which is a plant that is toxic to a lot of other animals.



Fun Fact!

Kids can eat hay at just two days old! That is faster than a calf, which takes about 6 weeks.

PRODUCE



Goats at the Grocery Store

In the United States, there are many goat products found in our grocery store aisles. Dairy goats produce milk, which is used to make cheese, soaps and yogurt. If you're allergic to milk from a cow, you may drink goat's milk as a replacement.

Goat meat is consumed worldwide and is an important source of animal protein. Goats are inexpensive to raise and their meat packs a nutritious punch! Goat meat contains only 122 calories per serving and includes 23 grams of protein and 32 grams of iron. It is lower in fat and calories than chicken, beef, pork and lamb.

Fun Fact!

The Toggenburg dairy goat is the oldest known dairy goat breed!

Goat Products and Coproducts

Cashmere is a type of fiber that is produced by goats.

Many goat breeds are considered cashmere goats. Cashmere is a very soft, warm and long lasting fiber that comes from the hair of goats. You or your parents may even have a cashmere sweater in your closet! Another item you may find in your closet is leather, a coproduct of goat processing. Goat milk is also used to make paint and can repel flies.

Kansas Economy



Boer Goats

There are 46 million acres of farm ground in Kansas and not all of it can be used for producing crops. Goats can be used to graze, just like cattle, to help keep the pasture free of unwanted plants and weeds.

Goats help prevent wildfires by eating plants and forages on pastures that other grazing animals do not eat. This helps keep the vegetation lower to the ground.

There are many different breeds of meat goats found in Kansas, including Boer and Kiko. These goats are used primarily in the meat industry because they are well muscled, have a broad chest and larger body size. Dairy goats common in Kansas are Nubian, Alpine and Saanen.

Careers

Goat farmer – an important job, goat farmers and ranchers raise and care for their goats to ultimately produce meat or milk for consumers.

Agricultural extension agent – these agents help develop and deliver educational programs and resources about goats to farmers, ranchers and consumers.

Veterinarian – veterinarians give vaccines, provide regular care and emergency care, and help ensure goats and all other animals are in good condition and healthy.

Nutritionist – nutritionists make sure the animals are given a well-balanced diet and help in the manufacturing of feed to ensure goats are given a healthy diet.



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