



The Place Where Animal Lovers Come Together | Summer 2009

**Featured Story**

“I always come back to Purina. I can tell the goats like the taste better.”  
- Valerie Bryan, Purina® feeder

**THIS QUARTER'S**



goat tips:  
Summer Tips for Healthy Goats



**Product Spotlight**

**Featured Story | Congratulations! You're a Goat Owner**



In September 2007, Valerie Bryan returned from an out-of-town trip to learn, much to her surprise, that she had become a goat owner!

It seems that, upon visiting the county fair, her husband Rusty and their daughter Cady had concluded that goats would make an excellent 4-H project for the nine-year-old.

> [click to read more!](#)

**Summer Tips for Raising Healthy Goat**

*Some people think goats can practically feed and care for themselves. But goats need care and attention, especially in summer. Here are some tips:*



- Water is essential for temperature control, waste excretion, electrolyte balance, digestion and more. Fresh, clean water should be available at all times, especially for pregnant and nursing does. Water is essential to bucks and wethers for proper maintenance of their urinary tracts.
- Place water containers in the shade if possible. Algae grows like crazy in water that receives direct sun.
- Keep water troughs clean. Dirty water leads to illness, and clean water will encourage water consumption. Goats will not drink water contaminated with urine or manure (including that from dogs, cats or birds).
- Add ice blocks to your goats' water during extreme heat or if you will be away for long periods.
- If using small individual water containers, change drinking water several times a day in hot weather.
- Inadequate water consumption can result in concentrated urine, which can increase the risk of urinary calculi, especially in hot weather. (Urinary calculi occurs when stones form in the urinary tract and block the urethra, interfering with urination.) Increase water intake by offering free choice salt. This will help dilute the urine.
- Building ventilation is a must in hot weather. Cross ventilation, which brings in fresh air and removes stale air and odors, is preferred. Goats don't need luxurious accommodations, but they need more than a stuffy shed to protect them from sun or rain.
- Goats hate rain and mud. A dirt floor is okay as long as it's clean and dry, but a raised, slotted floor is even better.
- Goats sleep low to the ground, and breathing ammonia fumes is harmful. Ammonia builds up quickly in summer heat. If you can smell ammonia from eight inches above the floor, your shed is overdue for a thorough cleaning.
- A dirty shed with dirty bedding is an invitation to skin sores, mastitis, respiratory ailments, foot problems and more. These problems escalate in summer, so keep your goats' shelter immaculate.
- Diarrhea can quickly lead to dehydration in summer heat. Keep cool, clean water available at all times. Persistent diarrhea in young kids can lead to death if left untreated. Consult your veterinarian.
- Shear longhaired goats before summer heat sets in.
- Goats are playful and inquisitive, always looking for something to do. A raised platform in the pasture (preferably in shade) can be a great place for goats to play.
- Goats are especially vulnerable to stress when transported in hot weather:
  - keep travel time to a minimum
  - provide proper ventilation and keep the truck moving to prevent heat build-up
  - avoid transporting does in late gestation
  - stop to check goats periodically in transit to make sure they're not in distress
  - build in plenty of time to rest, water and feed them along the way.

Have a great summer!

**Get to Know Purina Mills® Goat Chow® Mineral Supplement**

Goats are “browsing ruminants.” Ruminant animals have a 4-section multiple compartment stomach specialized in digesting fibrous feedstuffs. Browsers are animals that prefer to eat the leaf and bud portion of shrubs and trees. Thus the ideal grazing situation for goats will be an environment with lots of high quality browse. All they need to balance their nutrition is a goat mineral like Purina Mills® Goat Chow® Mineral.

A mineral supplement is a concentrated source of salt, trace minerals and vitamins. It also stimulates water intake, which reduces the potential for urinary calculi. To best meet a goat's nutritional need and to avoid potential toxicities, always choose a mineral supplement that is goat-specific.

Goat Chow Mineral is ideal because:

- It's a coarse, loose mineral that can be top-dressed on grain or fed free-choice in a mineral feeder.
- Due to its unique, coarse texture, it will not “cake up” when it gets wet or blow away under windy conditions
- It's rich in nutrients essential to the proper development and well-being of goats of all ages and breeds
- The formula is expertly balanced to overcome the variation in mineral content found in natural forage
- Whether feeding a few goats or an entire herd, it provides consistent nutrition to help your goats reach their full genetic potential
- It's highly palatable

Goat Chow Mineral is available in 25 lb. bags.

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**The More the Merrier**

Unfortunately, the Bryans would soon discover that the Pygmy and Boer goats they had purchased were a bit too old for the 4-H circuit. But that was soon remedied by the addition of two Dwarf Nigerians.

“And it sort of spiraled out of control after that,” laughs Valerie.



Since then, the Bryans have added two Nubians, an Oberhasli, a Pygmy cross and two more Dwarf Nigerian does born in March there at the farm, bringing the total to 10 goats on their five acres in Lexington Park, Maryland. Three dogs, a guinea pig, a rabbit and fish round out the Bryan's “menagerie.”

**Learning the Ropes**

“It's been a bit of a learning curve with the goats,” confesses Valerie, a lifelong animal lover and former veterinary technician. “As a vet tech, I saw lots of dogs and cats, but never a goat.” Fortunately, their close-knit 4-H group includes a lot of other livestock owners. In fact, the Bryans bought their goats from the 4-H their leader. So when Valerie has questions, she knows who to call for suggestions.

Because of her job, Valerie is often out the door by 6 a.m., so Cady and Rusty take care of the morning feedings. In the evenings, Valerie handles feeding and milking. “Our goats are more pets than livestock,” she laughs. “Like dogs, they want attention. When they see you're outside, they want you with them, they want to be petted. So we spend a lot of time down there in the evenings.”

**They Like the Taste of Purina**

Valerie feeds Purina® Goat Chow® and Goat Mineral. She finds it at Canter-Lope Horse Tack in nearby Callaway. “They're primarily a horse supply store, but they carry some limited goat supplies.”

“I've briefly tried some other brands,” says Valerie, “but I always come back to Purina. I can tell the goats like the taste better, and I think they like the ‘feel’ of a sweet feed, so that makes me feel good. They're pets, and I like them to be happy.”

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