

Goat Fact Sheet

Miniature goats can make great pets who also provide ancillary benefits such as milk or fiber. Before deciding to keep goats on your residential property, it is important to understand that goats have different needs than a dog or cat. The following is a list of basic information to consider in addition to a list of resources to consult for more information:

Miniature Goats in Thornton

- Miniature goat keeping in Thornton is only permitted through a Pilot Program. The Pilot Program has an initial term of approximately one year. After that time frame has expired City Council must take action to extend the program. Any miniature goats allowed during the Pilot Program will be allowed to remain within the City until their passing should the Pilot Program not be continued.
- In the City of Thornton, if you are going to keep miniature goats on a residential property, you must keep two miniature goats. The goats must be disbudded (hornless) females or neutered males no larger than 100 pounds at full maturity.

Shelter and Outdoor Space

- The goats will need a minimum of 300 square feet of outdoor space in a sturdy pen.
- The pen should be made of sturdy fencing material as goats love to lean into and rub their coat on fences. Chicken wire is not sturdy enough and goats can pull wooden slats off fences and trap their heads in the opening that is left. Woven wire or chain link would be a good choice. The fence should be at least four feet (48 inches) tall.
- Consider providing opportunities for your goats to play and climb, just be careful not to locate any play structures too close to the fence or your goats may be able to jump out of the pen.
- Each goat will also need a shelter that provides at least 25 square feet of space for each goat (50 square feet for both goats). The shelter should be located in the rear yard of the property and must be set back a minimum of five feet from the property lines.
- The shelter should have a raised floor, be draft-free, have good ventilation, be easy to clean, and enclose the goats overnight to keep them dry and safe from predators.
- Consider whether the shelter will also be the place where you feed and water your goats. Will you need storage for feed and supplies? Will you need a light or water source inside the structure?

Milking and Kids

- If you are interested in the milk that a doe can provide, keep in mind that you will need to breed her. Breeding is not permitted inside the City, so you will have to take your doe to a buck outside of the City for breeding.
- Does can produce milk for approximately 300 days.
- Make sure you have considered who will care for your goats if you go on vacation or become ill. While a neighbor can easily feed goats, it may be difficult to find someone willing to milk your lactating goat(s) while you are away. Milking typically occurs twice a day, ideally at the same time each day.

- When you breed goats, you'll eventually get to experience the kid birthing process. The gestation period for goats is 21 weeks. While many times the doe can handle this process on her own, there may be situations that require your intervention. Review the resources at the bottom of this document so you are prepared for this experience.
- If you decide to breed your goat(s), you will be responsible for finding a home for her kids before they are 3 months old. You will also be responsible for their care, which can include disbudding (burning emerging horns to prevent them from growing), castration, vaccinations, and bottle-feeding, if the kid refuses to nurse from the doe.

Feeding and Nutrition

- Goats are ruminants, which means they have a different digestive system than humans, dogs, or cats. Goats have a four compartment stomach comprised of the rumen, reticulum, omasum, and abomasum. Goats regurgitate their food (the "cud"), chew it again, and re-swallow it as a normal digestive process. It then travels through the stomach, getting fermented and broken down further along the way to the intestines.
- A goat's digestive system works best on high quality grass hay (or average quality alfalfa). Grains are harder for goats to digest and too much grain can lead to serious diseases such as bloat, acidosis, laminitis, enterotoxemia, etc). Pelleted feed is recommended. Make sure you can source food for your goats before you obtain them.
- Goats may need mineral supplements to balance out their diet. You should consult your veterinarian on an appropriate supplement based on their primary diet. In general the supplement should be labeled for sheep or goats.
- Feed should be stored in a secure place or container out of reach of goats, kids, or other animals. Feed should be offered from a feeder and never be placed on the ground. This will prevent your goats from eating too much, prevent feed from being contaminated with urine or feces, prevent disease, and ensure your investment in feed is put to good use.
- Goats typically drink 2 to 3 gallons of water per day and need access to fresh, clean water at all times.

Healthy Goats

- Average lifespan of 8 to 15 years
- Normal body temperature is between 101.5°F and 104°F
- Normal pulse rate is between 60 and 90 beats per minute
- Normal respiration rate is 15-30 per minute

Health and Disease

- Hooves should be trimmed by a farrier or experienced person every 2-3 months. Check their hooves regularly for foot scald or foot rot. The affected foot will become pink to red, the skin between the toes may appear slimy, and there may be an offensive odor.
- Make sure your goats are tested for Caprine Arthritic Encephalitis (CAE) and Caseous Lymphadenitis (CL) before you purchase them. These are deadly diseases for goats.
- Goats should be vaccinated for Clostridium perfringens type C and D (overeating disease) and Clostridium tetani (tetanus). Your veterinarian may recommend other vaccinations as well.

- Goats need to stay dry and in a draft-free shelter at night.
- Goats often have internal parasites (worms) and external parasites (lice, fleas, ticks). Talk with your veterinarian on ways to identify or manage parasites.
- Q fever is a zoonotic disease that can be transmitted between goats and humans. Typically, this is transmitted as an aerosol in dust or soil that has been contaminated by birth fluids or animal waste, but this can also be transmitted through unpasteurized milk. In humans, Q fever can be mild or severe with the most serious cases causing heart issues, miscarriage, stillbirth, or other pregnancy complications.
- Another illness that can be transmitted between goats and humans is Orf (sore mouth).
- Humans caring for goats should use biosecurity measures to protect themselves from diseases. The Q Fever Fact Sheet referenced at the bottom of this document suggests a variety of biosecurity measures.
- Call your veterinarian if your goat exhibits unusual behavior or an abnormal appearance.

Cleanliness

- Goat bedding and waste should be cleaned often. An accumulation of feces or soiled bedding can be a breeding ground for disease.

Resources:

Online:

Van Meter, D. *Q Fever Fact Sheet 8.022*. Colorado State University Extension, Dec. 2014, extension.colostate.edu/docs/pubs/livestk/08022.pdf.

Goat keeping forum. www.thegoatspot.net

Books:

The Ohio State University Extension. *Goat Resources Handbook*. 2008. OSU Extension Publications. 2017. <https://extensionpubs.osu.edu/goat-resource-handbook/>.

Weaver, Sue. *The Backyard Goat: An Introductory Guide to Keeping Productive Pet Goats*. Storey Publishing, 2011. www.storey.com/books/the-backyard-goat/.

Area Veterinarians for Goats

Horizon Veterinary Clinic
2730 E Bridge Street
Brighton, CO 80601
(303) 659-0385

Animal Clinic, LLC
232 First Street
Fort Lupton, CO 80621
(303) 857-6671