

HOUSING YOUR GOAT

G-02

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The goat is an extremely adaptable animal, and does not require a fancy place to stay. However, the housing you choose should provide protection from three stress factors; 1) rain, 2) wind and 3) cold.

OPEN HOUSING

The least expensive and easiest to build housing features three sides with the open side facing away from prevailing winds. The roof of the housing should be sloped to repel the rain. Thus, the front should be about 5 - 6 ft. tall, and the back about 3 - 4 ft. tall. The low height of this roof will help hold the heat down to the goat's level. The open side may be closed down to just a door opening if less than three goats will be housed. Mature goats, in open housing, require 10 -15 square feet of bedding space per goat. There should be adequate drainage around the housing area. Three to four inches of straw, or low quality hay should be put in the house for bedding. In the winter a manure pack could be allowed to build up as the lower layers decompose, this will provide a source of heat for the goat.

CONFINEMENT HOUSING

If you plan to build a barn that can be completely closed as needed, there are many additional considerations. Building and maintenance expenses will also increase with the complexity of the housing. Langston University should be contacted for additional information on closed barns.

Lighting - Allow one or two square feet of window space for each goat that is to be housed. If insufficient light is provided, health problems may occur.

Ventilation - Fresh air is needed to keep the animal healthy, but one should be careful to not cause a draft. The fan should move 15 - 200 cubic feet of air per minute in the heat of the summer and 20 cubic feet per minute of air in the winter. The fan should be positioned to pull air from the floor in the winter and pull air from the ceiling in the summer. A removable hood can be built around the fan to accomplish this task.

Insulation - The addition of insulation will prevent warm air in the barn from condensing on the cold walls. If humidity is high and condensation is present, health problems such as colds and respiratory problems, will increase. It is important for one to remember to cover blown-in insulation with plywood, so the goats will not be able to nibble on the insulation.

Space - A mature goat will require 20 square feet of space inside the barn, (free from obstructions), and another 25 square feet of space per goat should be provided in an adjacent exercise yard in addition to the space that is occupied by water and feeding troughs; calculate clear space only.

Heating - Goats do not require heat if dry bedding and a draft free area are provided. Bedding should be 5 - 6 inches thick on concrete, and provide for good drainage of urine and feces. A dirt floor can also be properly covered with 3 - 4 inches of bedding material.

A confinement housing system will allow one to closely control and maintain his animals, but it is less natural, and has a higher cost than loose housing. One should look closely at his or her existing structures and resources before deciding on which housing system to use. Contact your Langston University 4-H Specialist if additional information is required.