

# GOAT FEED & NUTRITION

Goats need a proper, balanced diet in order to maintain health. They have very specific mineral requirements, as well as protein needs, and being careful about your goats' diet can be the biggest step towards keeping healthy goats.

Goats also become overweight easily, and males can develop urinary calculi, so care must be taken in what your goats are fed, and males (especially wethers) do not eat the same diet as breeding/milking does.

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## GRAIN

Breeding and milking does should receive grain once a day to maintain healthy weight and balanced diets. Breeding bucks may also receive extra grain, but wethers and unbred does should not. Goats gain weight very easily when fed grain.

*Keep some grain on hand for bribing goats and getting them to stand calmly on the milking stand.*

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## HAY

Hay is often a goat's primary diet. They should eat more nutritious second cut hay or alfalfa hay in winter when forage is not available. In summer, first cut is acceptable. Goats are generally offered free-choice of hay.

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## FORAGE

Goat's forage or pasture is their most natural way of maintaining their diet. Goats will eat most brush, brambles, sticks, twigs, and bushes -- but do not prefer grass. They are browsers, not grazers. The more goats can be offered forage and pasture, the healthier they will be (generally speaking).

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**MINERALS.** No matter what your goats eat, they should receive free choice of loose minerals. Minerals should contain calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, sodium, potassium, sulfur, iron, copper, cobalt, manganese, zinc, iodine, selenium, molybdenum, and others. To avoid urinary calculi, 2 1/2: 1 calcium to phosphorous should be provided.