

RESPONSIBLE SOURCING



Production process

GOATS (DAIRY)

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Animal welfare considerations

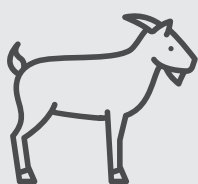
- Access to stimulating environment
 - Doe-kid separation
 - Early weaning
 - Husbandry practices such as disbudding and castration without pain management
 - Lameness and mastitis prevalence
 - Rangeland (feral) goat mustering and management
 - Slaughter methods
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Definitions

Kid – young goat

Buck – male goat

Doe – female goat



Goats are gregarious, inquisitive, and playful animals. They are among the first animals domesticated by humans and have been kept for their milk and meat for centuries. In Australia several new breeds have been developed for milk production. A goat's natural lifespan is 15–20 years but in dairy production a milking goat will live for around 10 years.

Farming of dairy goats is a relatively small industry in Australia. It supplies a market for fresh goat milk and cheese, as well as yoghurt and milk powder. Dairy goats are farmed in all states, with Victoria making up over one third of total production in Australia. There are about six specialty breeds of goats used for dairy production in Australia with the most popular being the white- or cream-coloured Saanen breed (and their crossbreeds).

Dairy goats may be managed extensively on pasture or intensively in sheds with or without access to outdoor areas. A herd size of around 300 goats is needed for commercial production, with one buck (male goat) per 30–40 does for ongoing breeding, which is necessary for milk production.

The farming of dairy goats typically involves natural mating of does (female goats) at around 18 months of age and follows a seasonal, or natural, breeding pattern. In spring, following a five months pregnancy, two or more kids (baby goats) are usually born per doe. The doe will then produce milk for about 10 months giving an average of 2-3 litres per day. Goats are milked with a milking machine with two cups. Each cup attaches to one of the two teats. Does are usually milked twice daily.

Kids are usually removed from their mothers at birth with female kids reared on milk, or milk replacer, until weaning at around eight weeks of age and ideally have hay and pellets available from a few days of age. Male kids, because they do not produce milk, are killed shortly after birth or raised for meat.

Goats, particularly young goats, are inquisitive and playful and their housing system must be able to satisfy these natural behaviours. Goats are susceptible to stress but good management can minimise the factors which may cause stress. A number of husbandry and management practices may cause pain and/or distress in dairy goats, including weaning, horn removal and lack of ability to express natural behaviours.

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