Goat Showing Hints, Tips and Tricks
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The season for goat shows will come up quickly so here are some hints on starting your project off right. Keep in mind the breed of your goat and whether it is a meat or dairy animal as they have different expectations.

Animal Health
Be sure to vaccinate all goats, especially new goats brought into your program. Check regularly for signs of fungus, ringworm, soremouth and other problems and administer medications as needed. Keep all medications on hand for when necessary and work with your veterinarian on a herd health plan. Also make sure you keep detailed and accurate records to ensure proper care for your animals.

Feed and Nutrition
All goats should have access to fresh, clean water and quality feeds. Use a balanced ration specifically formulated for goats (meat goats 15-18% protein and only 10-15% fiber) rather than a general livestock or sheep feed. A good rule of thumb is 2 lbs of feed per head per day. For meat goats, most of the feeds have a higher concentrate with less roughage and while using these complete feeds, families showing goats often try to get them to eat as much as they can. This causes the goats to get a touch of acidosis and go off feed. Be aware of this and adjust accordingly. Dairy goats that are lactating or growing should have access to high quality alfalfa hay and an adequate amount of grain depending on their lactation. Goats on a maintenance diet should have access to a pasture or good quality grass hay.

Fitting
When washing use a mild soap and rinse and dry the animal thoroughly. A stiff brush is important to have your tack box. Brushing removes all of the dead hair and dirt. Clipping should happen 3-5 days ahead of the show. It allows the hair time to even out giving the goat a fresher look. A pair of electric clippers equipped with either a 20--23-tooth comb work best. Small animal clippers may be needed to clip delicate areas. For dairy goats, a standard hair head works well for clipping the body and a 10 blade clipper works best for clipping heads and legs. Dairy should have their whole bodies clipped including udders to show off shape and structure.

Showmanship
Presentation means a lot in showing goats their full potential so prepare for the show by working with your animal daily. Exercise is important for both toning muscle and as practice working with your animal. Start out by halter breaking to start the gentling process. After it begins to calm down, you can start leading and eventually progress to a chain, collar or no lead. A standard chain collar placed
behind the jaw works great. A meat goat should be taught to brace, or naturally tense it's muscles, when handled. With dairy and other goats bracing is not necessary. Goats should be presented with their head up high and neck at a 90 degree angle to their shoulders, feet set square under their body, forming a box like figure.

The most important tip for any livestock project is to ask questions. Many volunteers and educators are happy to help you succeed in your projects. For more in depth information go to cass.unl.edu to find goat showing resources to help you along the way.