

## RAISING GOATS - BEST PRACTICES

In Zimbabwe, raising goats has become an increasingly popular form of livestock production. Goat farming can provide healthy food options, lucrative economic opportunities and valuable sources of income for smallholder farmers. Goat farming requires limited investment and offers youth and women a viable opportunity to raise livestock.

Goat farming is climate smart as goats are tolerant to drought, are good scavengers, and are browsers. By browsing, goats can be raised together with other livestock like cattle and sheep with minimum competition on the grazing.

If you are thinking of starting a goat farm, there are some key things you need to know.



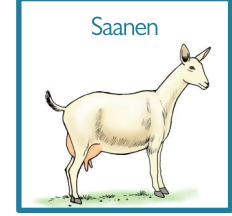
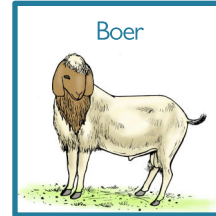
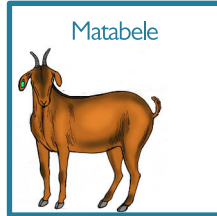
### BENEFITS OF RAISING GOATS

1. Goat farming can be a **profitable business** due to the growing local and international demand for goats, goat meat and goat milk.
2. The overall **cost is relatively low** for starting a goat farm.
3. Goats:
  - Are hardy animals and **succeed in many different climates** and environments.
  - Are small and easy to handle and **require very little space**.
  - **Require less food and water** than other livestock.
  - **Feed costs are low** because they are adaptable at grazing, scavenging and browsing.
  - **Hides and fibers can be sold** to local tanneries and weavers.
  - Provide **a good introduction to young people** on raising livestock.

## THE KEYS TO SUCCESSFULLY RAISING GOATS

### 1. Choose the right breed of goat for your climate and needs.

Goat breeds common in Zimbabwe include:



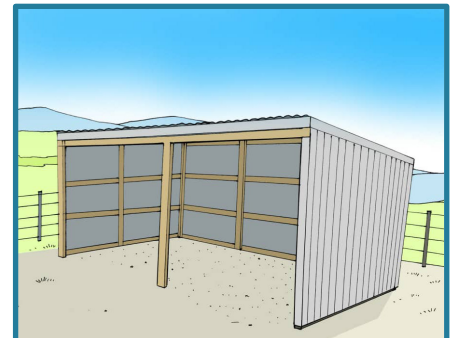
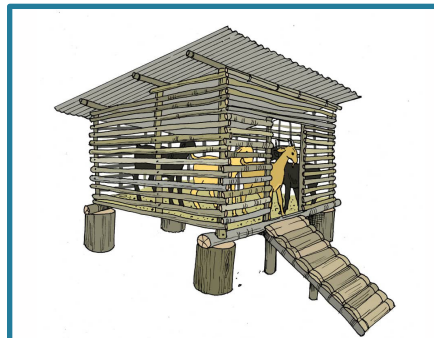
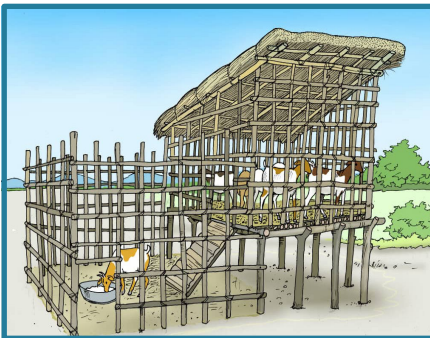
### 2. Purchase quality breeding stock from local breeders or livestock auctions.

Bucks should be kept in good health and can service 20-30 does. Bucks should be replaced every 2-3 years to reduce the chances of inbreeding.



### 3. Build appropriate housing (pens with fencing) for sheltering goats.

- Pens can be simple and made from old tires, pallets, scrap lumber or branches.
- Ensure there are dry floors, cover from the sun, rain, and wind, and good ventilation for goat health.
- Goats also need shelter to prevent theft and predation.
- Fencing should be at least 1.2 meters high and sturdy - goats jump, are strong, and like to wander.
- Shelter should be on a slope to ensure good drainage and to avoid dung buildup.







# FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

## 4. Freshwater

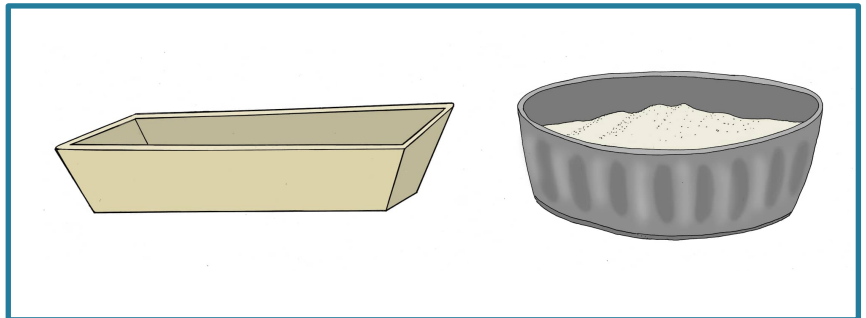
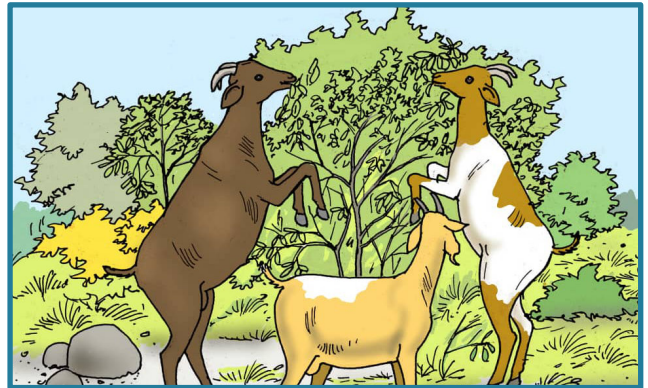
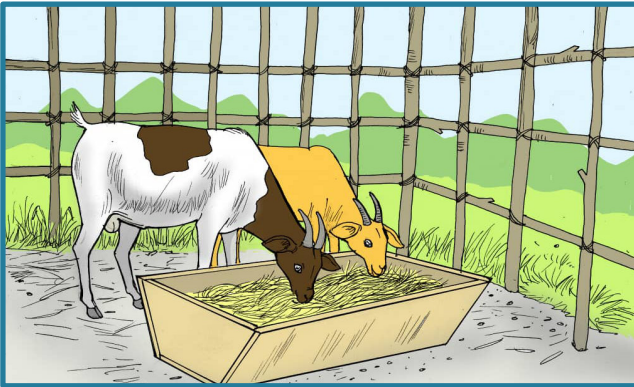
Access to fresh water is critical for goat health and herd success.



## 5. Feed

Goats are browsers and eat over 80 types of plants - bushes, trees, twigs and leaves (as well as grass) - supplement feed with hay and mineral block or loose minerals where possible.

Avoid overgrazing or overstocking the paddocks as this will force goats to eat poisonous plants such as lantana camara and plastics.



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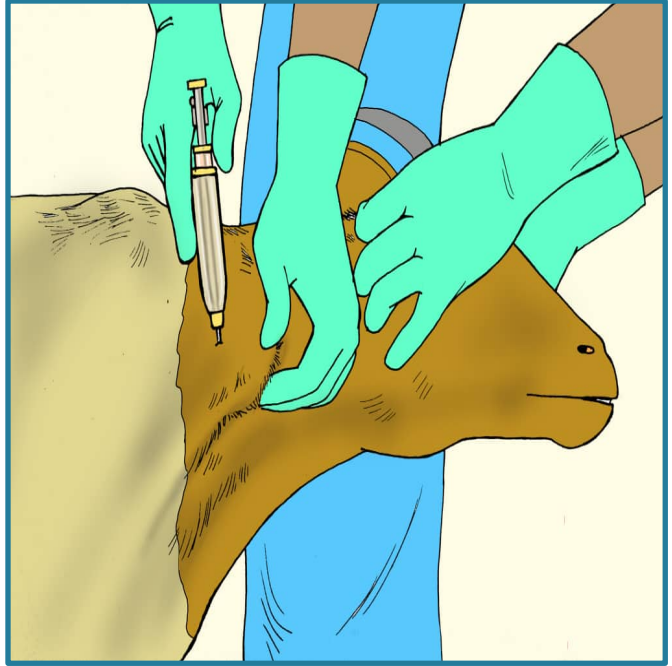




## 6. Goat health

Farmers need to know the common diseases that affect goats in their area and adopt an appropriate vaccination, dosing, dipping and treatment programme.

- Vaccinate for lung infections and pulpy kidney disease.
- Adult goats are vaccinated annually in September with a booster vaccine after 4 weeks.
- Young goats are vaccinated at 4-5 months with a booster vaccine after one month.
- Deworm goats for roundworms, tapeworms, screw worms and flukes using a variety of dewormers/anthelmintics to target the different worms and reduce buildup of resistance to dewormers.
- Reduce external parasites, ticks, mange fleas and lice by dipping, spraying or plunging goats regularly.



## 7. Market opportunities

There is growing demand for live goats, goat meat, milk and hides by local community, slaughterhouses, animal markets and tanneries.

Smallholder farmers can pool their goats for sale through village-based aggregators to reduce the costs of selling their goats at market.

