GOAT FARMING BUSINESS
BY SAMUEL NDERITU

Goat business is profitable. with some guidance and patience anyone will sure make a living from it. the market for goat is high and will continue to increase. yet many young folks are not looking into this direction. whether you desire to go into goat farming or simply rearing for personal purposes, we at G-BIACK are willing to provide guidance. Or if you simply want to go into buying and selling of goats, which is very lucrative!

Decide what type of goat business you want to do.

Goat business is a diversified business. Goats produce diary and meat, aside the excreta and hair. Goats can also be breed to sell. As a business owner explore these different aspects of the business and make money.

Decide on which areas you want to focus your attention on. Identify the purpose of your goat farming business.

These are no hard things and anyone can do it with a bit of commitment and guidance.

Do one need big money to start goat Business? no as you will discover later on. Can one even start with zero budget ? yes. can one start small ? yes as you will discover later on.

what about feeding issue any ways around this without big budget? yes . shelter and security? yes serious issues but there are ways around them.

need for training? yes formal or informal , on the job or otherwise Risk? yes. moderate to high but can be mitigated. Profitable? sure , profitable with ready market year round without religious, cultural or medical limitations

RAW BASICS!

1. decide your area of interest. We suggest you settle for goat meat production including live goats.

2. decide that you will run it as a business. give a name to it: e.g G-BIACK Goat company ltd, after you have enough fund you may register it as a legal entity; but have record books and treat it as fully fledged business entity even if you are doing it part time.

3. you can do it full time or part time but you need to schedule your time to see the goats daily. don't delegate yet. start part time. later employ attendants.

4.start small to gain experience at least for few months. do it at this stage alone. start with 10 goats of mixed breeds but don't worry too much about breeds at this stage. if you start with 50 goats chances are high that you will fail or be discouraged except you hire experienced hands which will increase your budget.

4. Secure a space for your goat.
do you really need a large space for goats ? do you need grazing pasture ? is the extensive system of goat management still profitable for commercial goat business ? what is the current trend that is profitable in the long term ?

You don't need this kind of space. You can keep goats on a small area as long as they are able to move around

4. Secure a space for your goat.
The popular belief is that the goats can be economically maintained ONLY under semi-intensive and extensive systems with a provision of grazing. however contrary to this , goats can be and has been raised successfully under intensive system of management both here in Kenya

and elsewhere. in fact most commercial goat farms in developed world are under extensive system.

So non access to grazing resources and large expanse of Land should not discourage intending commercial goat farmers.
The question therefore is this: how do you handle the issue of feeding without access to free large expanse of grasses?
You can consider hydroponic fodder growing. You can start fodder beds around your home. Make sure to understand goat feeding so you can use alternative supplement feeding!
just note that you can raise goats for profit without large expanse of land . In fact it is more profitable

Question comes: Is your large backyard still OK for 10 goats? yes if you can secure them properly with good ventilation and protection from rain and adverse weather conditions. in fact there are several reasons why you need to start from your backyard or nearby space. don't go buy big farmland yet until you grow big after starting from your back yard or nearby space.

So you have no reason not to go into goat farming. So your next assignment is to go prepare your backyard or lease your neighbors backyard. Construct open sheds backing the wall of your fence. That is where to keep the goats.

Shelter
Goats need to be confined at night for a number of reasons:
- To provide shelter from bad weather
- To prevent theft
- To prevent predation.

If animals are kraaled but are not provided with a shelter they will be exposed to the weather and will not be able to choose a place that is more protected from rain or wind. For this reason, it is important that the kraal owner provides the necessary shelter and protection.
In building such a structure it is important to consider the following aspects:

- A roof to protect from rain
- Walls/sides to protect from wind

- Drainage or cement floor to prevent the ground from being too muddy after rain
- Provision of raised areas (preferably slatted to allow droppings to fall through) where goats can escape from wet, muddy conditions
- It is also important that it is possible to clean the kraal in order to prevent the build up of disease-causing bacteria and parasites in the dung and dust.

STOCKING IN GOAT BUSINESS.

Don't start your goat business with one goat. Plan on getting at least two goats. Normally if you have enough fund get ten goats.
Goats are social animals, and are more likely to be uncooperative or try to escape if kept alone. Always keep at least two goats in each enclosure.

Don't keep uncastrated males (bucks) with females (does) in same enclosure all the time except for planned breeding purpose. Decide how many male and female goats to purchase.

There are three main types of goats divided by sex:

- Females, called does;
- Uncastrated males, called bucks;
- Castrated males, called wethers.

Does need to be impregnated by a buck before they produce milk and kids but raising a buck can require a lot of extra work.

Bucks require a separate enclosure, may develop a strong odor, and are often aggressive.

For the easiest way to start your goat farm, buy two does, and pay another goat farm for the opportunity to breed your does with its buck.

wethers are not able to breed or produce milk. Many goat farms end up with wethers when their goats give birth to extra males. So you should consider castrating the extra males and keep just one male for between 25 and 50 females.

If you do purchase a buck, consider one with the ideal traits in goats without any defect so as not to introduce defects into your herd .

GOAT FARMING BUSINESS
BY SAMUEL NDERITU

It is a wise management decision to choose a buck to breed selected does and run only that buck with the females.

Different goat breeds

Goat breeds can be divided into three categories:

1. Indigenous breeds which have been naturally selected for adaptability to harsh environments and which are generally used for meat production, but are also important for cultural purposes.

2. Meat breeds which have been specifically bred for meat producing characteristics. Such breeds available in Kenya include Red Maasai goat, Somali goat and Boer Goats. It is generally accepted that they are more susceptible to disease than non-improved goats.

3. Dairy breeds which are all imported breeds and include mainly Saanen goats and Toggenburg goats. These are breeds that have been selected for milk production and are used for the production of milk and processed milk products such as cheese and yoghurt. It is generally accepted that these breeds are very susceptible to diseases and parasites.

Basic information for indigenous goats!!

- ✓ Length of gestation period (pregnancy) 150 days (approximately 5 months)
- ✓ Birth weight 2.5 kg
- ✓ Weaning weight (weight when kid stops suckling) 12-15 kg
- ✓ Mature mass of female 35-40 kg
- ✓ Mature mass of rams 45-50 kg
- ✓ Breeding age for young ewes 9 months
- ✓ Main kidding seasons (April–June) or (September–December)
- ✓ Ram/ewe ratio 1 ram to 20 ewes (5 rams for every 100 ewes)
- ✓ Lifespan (10-12 years).

Goats can be kept healthy by:

- Ensuring that they have access to enough feed of the correct quality
- Ensuring they have access to clean water
- Following a vaccination programme against common diseases
- Keeping internal and external parasites under control
- Keeping sick goats separate so that disease does not spread to healthy goats

- Making sure that any goats introduced to the flock are disease-free
- Sheltering goats from adverse weather. If a goat does get sick it needs to be treated. More importantly, it is essential to keep a record of goats that you treat because if a particular animal gets sick often, it should be culled as it is a weak individual and is not only costing you money but is also passing on its genes to the next generation.

How do I know if my goat is sick?

If the goat is sick:

- It will appear dull and listless
- It may have obvious symptoms of sickness such as coughing or diarrhoea
- It may not follow the rest of the flock when they go out to feed

It may have an abnormal temperature – either too high or too low.

Key equipment The goat farmer should have access to:

- ✓ Cooler box
- ✓ Goat book
- ✓ Animal Health Book
- ✓ Burdizzo
- ✓ Ear tag applicator
- ✓ Hoof trimmers
- ✓ Tattoo applicator, ink and alphabet
- ✓ Knapsack sprayer
- ✓ Scale or weight belt
- ✓ Mask
- ✓ Gloves
- ✓ Blades
- ✓ Digital thermometer
- ✓ Antiseptic hand wash
- ✓ Gauze swabs.

Consumable medicines and equipment The goat farmer should have on hand:

- Disposable syringes (5cc, 10cc)
- Large syringe for drenching/dosing (60cc)
- Non disposable syringe
- Needles (20 gauge or 22 gauge but preferably 5/8 or 1 inch length)
- Antibiotic eye powder

- Antibiotic powder
- Broad spectrum dewormer for wireworms, tapeworms and flukes, (e.e Prodose Orange and Eradiworm)
- Dip – a conventional one to be mixed with water (such as Tactic)
- Wound spray with fly repellent
- Coopers Wound oil
- Tick grease
- Long acting antibiotic
- Short acting antibiotic
- Sulphur based antibiotic for treating coccidiosis
- Injectable solution for mange, lice
- Iodine spray
- Iodine drops (for newborn kids)
- Copper Sulphate (for foot baths)
- Vitamins (such as Multivite).

Record keeping Part To be able to manage your goats, you need some basic system of record keeping. Your system should be able to give you the following information:

The exact number of goats that you have (broken down into different age categories)
The dates when your ewes give birth and the number of kids born
The number of goats that die (and the age when they die and cause of death)
The exact goats that have been treated (for what and with what)
Who the mother of any particular kid is
When a particular ram was brought into the herd
The age of any particular goat (the year it was born)
The number of goats sold, time when they were sold and prices obtained.