

NEW YORK STATE 4-H MEAT GOAT PROJECT FACT SHEET #12



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GOAT SLAUGHTER

While you may not want to think about it, the future for many goats is to be slaughtered and used as meat. Does that no longer have a place in the herd may finish their useful life in the home freezer. Also, there are many more male kids born than will ever be needed in breeding programs. Some of these excess kids will find homes as pack or cart goats or even pets. However, keep in mind that not many people are truly willing to commit to keeping a pet goat for his entire lifetime. In reality, most excess male goats are slaughtered for their good tasting, low fat meat. Goat meat is called “chevon”.

Many local slaughterhouses will slaughter goats. However, some goat owners choose to slaughter and dress goats for home consumption in their own back yards. This Fact Sheet may help you with this process. The home slaughter procedure must be done with adult supervision, being sure that any 4-H members involved are prepared for this type of activity. Male kids may be slaughtered as kids, or be castrated and fed for several months to produce a larger carcass. The time fed will depend on the carcass size desired.

- 1) Kids slaughtered as kids will yield a carcass that weighs about 50-60% of the live weight of the kid. Small kids can be dressed out like rabbits. Cut through the back just in front of the hind legs and just behind the front legs. The saddle can be cut in two pieces, and the legs cut apart, giving six pieces of meat in all.
- 2) The goat that has been fed out for several months to produce a larger carcass will yield a carcass that is 30-50% of the animal's live weight. Feed, but not water, should be withheld from the goat for 12 hours prior to slaughter.

Slaughter

Have a person who is used to killing goats, kill the goat in a way that is consistent with your family's beliefs. One way is to stun the animal with a sharp blow to the skull or a gunshot to the brain. Cut through the jugular vein with a sharp knife. The animal should be hung head downwards to allow thorough draining of the blood.

Skinning

Cut a slit from the hind legs to the throat, taking care not to cut too deeply. Cut along the insides of all four legs, and cut around the anus and loosen until a length of colon can be pulled out and tied with string. This avoids contamination of the carcass with fecal material. Cut above the string, and let the colon fall back into the body cavity. Cut off the skin at the base of the tail. Remove the head at the base of the skull.

Removal of Offal and Internal Organs

After the skin has been removed, cut open the belly to the brisket, taking care not to cut too deeply. Let the stomach and intestines roll out, and pull down the tied-off end of the colon. Carefully remove the bladder. Pull out the liver and carefully remove the gall bladder, cutting off a piece of the liver with it. A bitter taste results if the gall bladder contents spill on the meat. Wash in cold water immediately if this happens. Cut through the gullet, and the offal will fall free.

Saw open the brisket, and remove the heart and lungs. Wash the carcass with cold water and wipe dry. Bury or burn the offal.

Cutting up the Carcass

The carcass can be cut up as for lamb, and may be prepared with most recipes that call for lamb.

It is important to realize that goat meat is leaner than lamb, and has less fat under the skin. This means that chevon will tend to dry out faster than lamb, and may also be more susceptible to freezer burn, so care should be taken to avoid these problems.

Suggested Resources

- 1) Goat Slaughter – Backyard Procedure. Slide set of 18 slides with script. Available through your County 4-H office.
- 2) “Let’s Cut Meat” by G.H. Wellington. Animal Science Extension Information Bulletin 92.

Suggested Activities

- 1) Discuss the uses of the different cuts of meat with your 4-H club; talk about preparation of a chevon dinner with your club or family.
- 2) Develop a public presentation on the uses of chevon.
- 3) Have your 4-H group make a collection of chevon recipes.
- 4) Make a poster of the different parts of a carcass and label them.