

The Dairy Goat Buyer's Checklist

What to actually look for before you bring a goat home — from The Chatty Goat

There are wonderful unregistered goats and really disappointing registered ones. Give more weight to the goat in front of you — her conformation, her health, her genetics — than to the paperwork. Bring this list to the farm.

The udder (doe in milk)

- Ask to milk her, or watch her be milked.** A seller who hesitates is telling you something.
- High, tight attachment with lots of surface area.** A teardrop-shaped udder hung from a small area will sag, and her productive years will be cut short.
- Fills and empties well.** Ask for photos of the udder both full and milked out — you don't want a goat just carrying around a fleshy udder.
- Straight, centered teats** long enough to get a few fingers around for hand milking.
- Exactly two teats.** An extra, non-working teat is a serious breed fault, a nuisance on the milk stand, and in some cases a cause of recurring mastitis.

Body, feet & legs

- Straight legs and even, well-trimmed feet.** A doe can milk for a decade — but not on legs that bow in or out.
- Deep-bodied:** a wide, round barrel on stick legs — a healthy rumen and room for growing kids.
- Shiny, slick coat; bright eyes; full upright tail; curious personality.**
- Berry poop.** Small, hard pellets — not clumpy or wet.
- Good flesh over spine and hips.** You should feel the spine, but it shouldn't poke up prominently.

Buying kids? Look at the family

- Inspect the dam's udder** — and the sire's dam's udder if you can. That's the udder your doeling is most likely to grow.
- Check the doeling for exactly two teats** before money changes hands.

Before she comes home

- Request current bioscreen results.** Some illness can't be seen from the outside — this matters most if you'll drink the milk or are adding to an established herd.

From **Homesteading with Dairy Goats** by Morgan Michaluk — foreword by Joel Salatin.

The whole story, not just the pretty parts: choosing goats, breeding & birthing, milking, herd health, and the whole-animal approach.

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