

EXERCISE

One of the most lacking programs in showing goats is a good exercise program. Exercise is extremely important to help the animal look and feel its best but it will not make up for inferiority's in other programs. To be competitive in the show ring a quality wether goat is made up of a combination of several things. Genetic background and potential, proper management, a good feeding program, and exercise. Excellence in only one or two of these categories will not allow you to place as well as others. One must have an understanding that all of these programs work in unison to make the goat the best it can be.

Genetic background and potential refers to the ability of the animal to grow and gain. Selection of the animal is the most important decision you can make. Structure, muscling, volume, capacity, style, and balance will all play a major role in the show ring results. Proper management and a good quality feed will allow you to keep the animal healthy and give it all the nutritional requirements it needs. Remember that a good program cannot and will not make up for a lack of superior genetics. Management requires knowing how much the goat weighs, when the animal is too fat or too lean, keeping clean fresh water out daily and careful observation of any changes.

Exercise is a necessity and will be very beneficial to your goat and to your success in the show ring. Exercise will help adjust the finish on an animal as well as give the animal some tone and firmness of handle. One of the best methods of exercise is to use a dog. Dogs are usually used to run animals in a circular track. Overall dimensions of a track should be between 40 feet by 40 feet on the smaller end of the scale and up to 100 feet by 100 feet on the larger end of the scale. The track path should be between 5 and 7 feet wide. The track should have rounded corners so the animals can make the turn without injury. The track and fence should be free of any obstructions such as loose wires and rocks. A soft running surface is recommended such as sand or loose dirt. If you do not have a dog, other methods may be used such as a four-wheeler, tread mill, walking wagon or all-terrain vehicle. Some have chosen to run their animals by foot, however, this method may not give the goat enough exercise. Be advised that simply walking your animal will not give them enough exercise, but it is better than no exercise at all.

The theory behind exercise is to exercise extremely hard and fast for a short amount of time. The goal is for the animal to run long enough to release adrenalin which will help develop muscle. As a general rule 300 to 500 yards of hard running should reach this point of adrenalin release. Long runs have proven not to be as beneficial as a short hard run. Look at the difference between sprinters and long distance runners. Sprinters are extremely muscular and can exert tremendous energy over a short time period. Long distance runners on the other hand are very slender, usually light muscled and can extend there energy level over long periods of time. Too much exercise can cause muscle to tear down instead of being full and bulging.

Exercise programs should begin when the animal has been properly conditioned. All animals are different and will require different running schedules. Some animals may need to be run every day or every other day. Some may only need it once or twice a week. As a general rule most animals can be run 3 to 4 times a week. It is important that you be able to determine the condition of the animal and make your running schedule on the amount of cover the animals has or doesn't have.

Exercise is an essential part of the overall success of your animal, but it is to be used in combination with an animal that has the ability to grow and gain, a good management program and a good feeding program