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Goat Rearing: Source of Income for Rural Farmers

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Abstract

Goat has been economically important to people living in arid, semiarid, hilly rural and tribal areas, because of its tolerance to harsh weather conditions, ability to feed on inferior quality crop residues, high prolificacy, short gestation period and high rate of growth. The production potentials of goat have not been optimally tapped due to unavailability of services required for breeding, veterinary care, mobilization of feed resources and market connectivity for milk and meat. Providing technical services to goat keepers to improve yield and quality of the produce, instead of mere increase in population should be the focus of goat development programme. Strengthening of infrastructure for supply of good quality inputs, processing of various goat products and marketing can enhance the income of goat keepers by several folds. Goat husbandry being an important tool for empowering women and poor for ensuring nutritional security and important livelihood support program in the rural development.

Introduction

In India, goat is called 'Poor man's cow' and is an important component in dry land farming system. Marginal or undulating lands inappropriate for other types of animals such as cow or buffalo, goat are the best option. With very less investments goat rearing can be turned into a lucrative venture for small & marginal farmers.

Goat farming is significantly income generation and employment generation of rural masses. Rural population of the arid zone of Rajasthan depends on livestock for their milk and meat requirement. Goats have a sizable population of total livestock strength in the zone. Most of the small ruminants in the village condition were kept on natural available feed resources i.e., tree leaves, grasses, residues of vegetable crops and food grain grasses, residues of vegetable crops and food grain crops. Goats mainly depend on grazing in common lands, village waste lands, irrigation canals and channels, gocher lands and agricultural land during the lean period of agriculture crop.

Goat Rearing

Goats are basically reared mainly for milk & meat. Goat is said to be a multi functional animal and plays an important role in the economy & nutrition of landless, small & marginal farmers in India. Goat rearing is an enterprise that has been practiced by a large segment of population in rural areas. Goat can easily survive on available trees and shrubs in adverse harsh atmosphere in low fertility lands where no other crop can be cultivated.

Globally, more people drink goat milk as compared to cow milk and many people eat goat meat than beef etc. Historians

said that goats were the very first animals to be domesticated. Since years, goats have been used for milk, meat, hair & skins all over the world.



Figure 1: Goat Rearing

Advantages of Goat Rearing

1. Goat Products are Healthy & Easily Digestible

Goat products such as milk and meat are not only nutritious and easily digestible but are also a great source of regular income for the poor, landless and marginal farmers. It contributes immensely in rural economy and national income. Its meat and milk are cholesterol free and easily digestible. Goat milk is used for making different types of foods. They can produce milk, meat, skin, fiber and manure at the same time.

2. Easy Maintenance & Less Capital

Small sized animal, goats are very easily maintained and cared by women and children. For being a successful goat farmer, one needs to do some common tasks like, feeding, milking and caring. These tasks do not require much equipment, capital, labor or hard work. Their return of investment ratio is also very good. As goat farming business is very profitable, hence many government and non government banks are giving loans for starting this business.

3. Require a Small Area

Goats don't require a huge area for housing due to their small body size. They can easily share their living place with their owners or his/her other livestock animals. Adding to it, goats are very suitable for mixed farming with other domestic animals.

4. Good Breeders

Goats are not only very friendly and lovable in nature, but are excellent breeders too. You will be surprised to know that they reach sexual maturity within their 7-12 months of age and give birth to kids within a short time period. Also, some goat breed produces many kids per kidding.

5. Less Risk

It is good to know that there is less risk even in drought prone areas for goat farming. It is not true in any other livestock farming business. Goats can be milked as often

as required. This also prevents refrigeration costs and milk storage problems.



Figure 2: Goat as Good Breeders

6. Equal Price in Market

Both male and female goats have almost equal value/price in the market; there is no religious taboo against goat farming and meat consumption. Therefore, commercial goat farming business has developed a potential way of employment for unemployed people. Their meat has a huge demand and high price in the local and international market.



Figure 3: Women Rearing Goat

7. Good Adaptability & Less Prone to Diseases

Goats are very much capable of adopting themselves with almost all types of agro climatic environments and conditions. They can even bear high and low temperature throughout the world and live happily. Adding to it, they can tolerate to hot climate more than any other animals. Diseases are also less in goats as compared to other domestic animals.

8. Best Milk Producers

Goats are popularly called as the "foster mother of human". Their milk is considered as the best milk for human consumption than any other species of livestock

animal's milk. The milk is low cost, nutritious, wholesome and easily digestible. In fact, all aged people from child to old can easily digest goat's milk. Goat milk also has lesser allergic problems. It is also used as an Ayurvedic medicine for the people who are ailing with diabetes, asthma, cough etc.

9. Natural Fertilizer

Goat's manure can be used as a high quality natural fertilizer in crop field which will directly help to maximize crop production.

Be a Successful Goat Developer

1. Right Location

Location is the first and most important point to be taken care. Though, common goats generally survive in warm areas that are well drained. Besides temperature, space is also necessary. Goat lives in groups, hence individual pens are not effective. A large field is needed for animals to roam freely. Such goats usually have better resistance to sickness and infection.

The best locations considered for a goat farm are far from towns as urban pollution is dangerous to animal health; as goats eat a lot of grass on a daily basis. So, their food source is highly accessible and not too far from rearing area.



Figure 4: Goats on road with women collecting fire wood for making food at home

2. Land Requirement

Goats can be reared intensively on small acre by using supplemental feed. If you are using an extensive system, then 2 to 10 goats per acre is a rough guide depending on the supply of grass and brush.

3. Goat Breed

There are breeds which produce more milk while there are others that grow quickly. Therefore, depending on the purpose, type of breed to rear and also farm both types of breeds will be harvesting both meat and milk.

4. Veterinarian

Easy access to a veterinarian plays an important role. When starting a goat farm, there are chances that animals to contract diseases. Thus, a veterinarian can help in disease control and management to avoid losses.

They help to diagnose diseases or recommend vitamins and supplements to keep animals in good health especially during stressful situations like weaning.

5. Proper Food & Housing

Goats are very choosy with food. They don't eat dried or soiled grass; make sure to have enough clean, fresh grass for them so they don't go hungry. It is well known that goats are not carnivorous animal. They usually prefer to eat grasses, plants, shrubs, weeds and herbs. Goats also need energy, protein, vitamins, fiber and water for proper growth.

A well-designed shed and good management will help to reap all the profit from goat farming. Keep the house neat, clean and dry with proper ventilation and drainage system inside the house. Ensure the availability of sufficient fresh air and light inside the house.

6. Proper Planning

Ensure proper and effective goat farming business plan.

7. Good Transportation

A market near the farm land will be best, as it will help to sell goats easily and for buying necessary commodities.

8. Care & Management

For proper care of goats, never feed them contaminated food or polluted water. Keep their house neat and clean on a regular basis. Extra care to the breeding bucks, kids and pregnant and keep the kids with their mother for several weeks after their birth. Artificial insemination is also a good way for breeding does. Vaccinate on timely basis, to keep them free from all types of diseases and health problems. Keep a stock of some necessary vaccines and medicines on regular basis.

9. Vaccination

Many types of viral diseases like PPR, goat pox, foot and mouth diseases and bacterial diseases like anthrax, brucellosis etc. are very harmful for goats. Thus, proper vaccination is a must to prevent these types of diseases. The does which was not vaccinated PPR, goat pox, brucellosis vaccines previously, vaccinate them at the fifth month of gestation period and vaccinate the kids PPR vaccine when they reach 5 months of age.

10. Total Expenditure & Profit

Total expenditure and profit from goat farming business is totally dependent on the farming system, location, breeds, feeding cost. With good planning and proper management one can easily make goat farming business profitable. On one hand, small scale farming requires less investment and profit can contribute on regular income.

On the other hand, large scale or commercial production requires high investment and some other additional costs.

To Raise Goats for Maximum Profit:

- Collect information, research and planning on how to raise goats.
- Maintain good and strong health of goats.
- Choose the right and high productive goat breeds for business purpose.
- Learn more about goat farming business from the nearest livestock training center or expert producers.
- Goats like to live in groups. Hence, ensure a big area so that they can roam freely.
- There should be availability of all equipments which are essential for goat farming.
- Make sure a well bred conduct, to produce better milk, meat and to keep the goat free from diseases.
- As per their daily demand, give them sufficient clean water, food and fresh grasses.
- Take extra care to the pregnant doe, breeding buck and kids.
- Feed the buck extra nutritious food during the period of mating.
- To improve goat's health contact and visit a veterinarian regularly.
- During the summer season, provide them salt and mineral with lots of water.

- Keep them away from cold and rain to avoid mass death.

Conclusion

Although, there are some risk in every business. But, taking proper care and good management can ensure better production and high profit. Goat farming can be concluded as a traditional, profitable, risk-less and very easy business because of its multi-utility and fast growing rate. They are also used as a tool for poverty reduction and play a crucial role in the economic growth of the country.

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