

Preparing for a Show

You have your goat and you may belong to a youth club that will help you learn lots about how to care and teach your goat how to show. So you can learn as much as you can before you go to a show, ask questions of local breeders, judges that live in your area, 4-H leaders, or other experienced exhibitors you know. Learn the Pygmy Goat Breed Standard, study and learn all the parts of a goat, learn about how to properly feed your goat and what vaccinations are important to do to help keep your goat healthy. If you own a goat, you should be able to answer basic health and safety questions about owning, raising, breeding, and showing your goat. The more time you spend handling and working with your goat at home will show in your confidence in the show ring. You can also learn how to do showmanship by watching how other exhibitors do the turns, how they stand or squat and what maneuvers judges ask the exhibitors to do in a showmanship class. Judges can ask you anything about your goat, showing your goat, raising your goat, so learn all you can.

Learn Goat Parts

When you own a goat and intend to learn how to show your goat, it is very important to learn all the parts of your goat. Study and know where to find all the parts. If a judge asks you to tell them a part of the goat that starts with a certain alphabet letter, then you can tell and show the judge. Example: a judge might ask “tell me a part of the goat that starts with the letter H.” Or a judge might ask “Where is the stifle joint and what two bones connect to make it.” When a judge asks where a certain part is located, show them on the side of the goat that the judge is standing on. An exception would be if the judge is asking about the 4 parts of the stomach.

Showmanship Tip: Learn as much as you can so you know the parts of a goat, the Breed Standard, general care, show rules, showmanship points, and glossary of terms. Be proud of learning all you can, you are getting yourself ready to show your goat.

Exhibitors Appearance

When an exhibitor attends a goat show they will need to have a change of clothes for showmanship (if specific attire is required for county 4-H) and change of clothes for open show competition in breed classes, and clothes that they can work in when they are feeding or getting their goat all cleaned up for the show. When the exhibitor enters the ring, wear clothes that are clean neat and tidy and show respect to the judge and your fellow exhibitors. Show the judge your abilities as an exhibitor by dressing in a professional manner and not trying to show off a new fashion trend such as slacks with rips over the knees, or short tops that expose your midriff, etc.

Now that you have clothes for the different events you will be doing during the day, just before your class, change into your showmanship clothes so you are clean and ready to go. Your hair should be brushed or combed. If you have long hair, you should pull it back with a band, clasp, or pony tail holder (that will help keep the goat from chewing on your hair while your showing). You want to act and show the judge and public that you raise and show goats that deserve the same respect and care as other breeds.

What to Wear in Class

When showing in a showmanship class, you want to wear long pants with a belt. In certain counties the 4-H youth have to be dressed and show in all white and you should have a top that is long enough to be tucked in at the waist. If a youth show doesn't require all white attire, then any type of slacks, jeans, or another type of pants that are nice clean and have no rips, tears, or stains showing. You also need to wear a clean shirt that can either be long sleeve or short sleeve that is long enough to be tucked in at the waist with no rips or tears. It is best to wear normal colors that do not distract from your goat but could be a contrast to the color of your goat. Example: If an exhibitor shows dark colored goats such as black or dark agouti, by having lighter colored clothes, the judge can see the goat better when they are set up in front of the exhibitor.

What Not to Wear in the Show Ring

As an exhibitor showing goats in a showmanship class, it is best not to wear open toed sandals or open toed shoes, shorts, if you're a female a very low cut top, a bare midriff, ripped or torn slacks. It is best not to wear a tank top, distracting or long jewelry. Remember you will be bending over goats to place their legs or squatting down during a class, so do not wear clothes that are too revealing. You could be seriously faulted by the judge in a showmanship class for such attire.

Grooming for Show

When you're planning to go to a show, the grooming of your goats is an important task to have done before you leave home. As an exhibitor, you know you are ready and prepared with having your clothes packed and ready but you also need to have your goat cleaned and groomed for the show before you leave home.

A Day or Two before the show

It is important to get your goat cleaned before the show. You can give your goat a good washing if the weather is warm enough. Use a safe shampoo for goats and make sure you get all the shampoo residue out of the hair. You need to get the hair coat blown out of all debris and dry. There should not be any matted hair, alfalfa hay in the hair coat, dirt, or manure on your goat when you're done. Most judges like to see a nice clean hair coat with some judiciously trimmed hair around the hooves, ears, around the rear escutcheon area, and inside the rear hocks. Have the hair coat brushed out so your goat looks clean and neat. Hoof trimming is very important to be done a few days before a show and be careful not to quick or trim too short so you don't make your goat's feet sore which might affect how they walk.

The Day of the Show

Bring your grooming tools with you to the show so you can give your goat a good blowing and brushing out of any remaining debris all over the whole body. You want to use a softer or good body brush. If you have more undercoat coming out, use a stiffer brush or undercoat rake to get as much as you can. After you're finished with all the brushing you can use a little show sheen spray to make your goat soft and shiny. Be sure to allow yourself enough time to get your goat done and yourself changed into your showmanship clothes before the showmanship classes start.

Just before you enter the ring, look over your goat and make sure the nose and around the eyes are clean and dry, and check under the tail and make sure it is clean there as well. Lastly make sure the hooves are clean. Now you are ready to enter with a smile.

Your Collar and Lead

Pygmy Goats are short to the ground so depending on how tall an exhibitor you are, you want a lead that is short enough that you can easily hold and keep control of your goat. Generally most exhibitors use a matching black collar and lead. The collar should be about 1/2" to 3/4" wide and fit around your goats neck snug enough to not slide off the head but not too tight to choke either. Most pygmy goat show leads are approximately no longer than 12" to 18" long with a smaller type snap. Dog collars work great for the goats.

Showmanship Tip: Now you as an exhibitor are ready to show to the judge your goat you have trained and how much you have learned to get ready to do a showmanship class. Remember to enjoy this experience and smile.