

About Goat Milk

Interested in goat milk? Read some basics about goat milk's digestibility and nutritional value to see if it's for you.

By Carol Ekarius© Rhoda Peacher

Nubian goats, like the one show here, is one of the best dairy breeds. Not so very long ago, there was little interest in goat dairying in the United States, but according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the milk goat/dairy industry is now flourishing, and it is mainly in the hands of small-scale producers.

On any scale, dairying is a fairly serious undertaking, requiring a much greater commitment than keeping goats for pets or meat production, but it can be rewarding for those willing to put in the effort.

If you keep dairy goats, you can have your own fresh milk, produce your own butter, cheese, ice cream or yogurt, and for those who enjoy some pampering, even prepare your own luxurious soaps and potions.

A larger herd affords the opportunity for the entrepreneurial-minded to create a profitable venture.

About goat's milk

Goat's milk is similar to cow's milk in texture, but chemically speaking, there are some differences. Like cow's milk, it is a good source of protein, calcium and other nutrients. It is similar in total fat concentration, but lower in cholesterol. Overall, it has higher concentrations of a number of vitamins.

It's Easier to Digest

No one is quite sure why, but people (including babies) who have trouble digesting cow's milk seem to have an easier time digesting goat milk.

The reason may be that goat's milk has smaller fat globules, which may be more easily digested. Goat's milk only contains trace amounts of casein, the protein that causes fat globules to clump together and is the most common allergen in cow's milk.

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Average Content of Goat, Cow and Human Milk

Here is some detailed information on differences according to the American Dairy Goat Association (ADGA)

Nutrient (%)	Goat	Cow	Human
Protein (%)	3.0	3.1	1.1
Fat (%)	3.8	3.6	4.0
Calories/100 ml	70	69	68
Cholesterol (mg/100 ml)	12	15	20
Calcium (%)	0.19	0.18	0.04
Iron (%)	0.07	0.06	0.2
Phosphorous (%)	0.27	0.27	0.06
Vitamin A (i.u./gram fat)	392	132	
Vitamin B1/thiamin (µg/100 ml)	68	45	17
Riboflavin (µg/100 ml)	21	0	15
Vitamin C (µg/100 ml)	22	3	26

How much milk will my goat produce?

The answer: It will vary, based on the breed, the age and genetics of the individual animal, the quality and quantity of feed, the time in lactation (early, mid or late) and environmental factors, such as the weather.

But, as a rule of thumb: A low producer will give about two quarts per day for around six months; A modest producer will do two to three quarts per day and can keep producing for 10 months; A high producer will give three to four quarts per day, and An exceptionally high producer may go as high as seven quarts in the peak of her lactation.

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This article contains excerpts from "Milk that Goat: Dairying 101" by Carol Ekarius. It appears in Popular Farming Series: Goats, a publication with in-depth information for those who own or would like to own goats. Buy one online or call (800) PET-BOOK (738-2665).

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