

# 4-H Pack Goat



## What is Goat Packing?

Goat packing is taking a gentle creature and bringing him back to his roots. With one exception, he is carrying most of your gear. With all that weight off your back, you can survive in the wilderness for more of those fleeting days of escape from this civilized world we have created for our comfort.

Pack goats can be your best of friends on the trail. You can use them for day hikes, they carry your lunch and change of clothes. Or you can train them to carry the family's gear for a weekend or more of camping in the natural beauty of our mountains.

Training is the key to successful goat packing. These intelligent, curious creatures, they have the intelligence of a three year old human. They need to be disciplined and loved. The more you pack with your goat, the more experienced it will become.

Keeping a pack goat at home requires much time in training and loving. There is no known place in Washington to rent pack goats, but that will soon change with the interest in goat packing on the rise.

This brochure will provide information that hopefully sparks an interest in you to try packing with a goat.



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This brochure is provide by the  
Four Seasons Goat Trekkers  
4H Pack Goat Club, Olympia, WA

# What is a Pack Goat ?

## What is a pack goat?

A pack goat can be a wether or a dry doe, although a doe in milk is a nice addition to the pack string for milk. The goat can be any breed of dairy goat, purebred or crossbreeds. Small breeds, such as pygmy goats are not suitable as pack goats.

## What do I look for in a pack goat?

- Strong feet
- Long legs and stride
- Long body
- Bright eyes
- Shiny coat
- Slightly hocky
- Good temperament
- Friendly
- Parents' and kid's health history

## How much can a goat carry?

A fully grown and conditioned goat can carry up to 30% of its body weight. Goats over four months and under one year can start out their training with 10% of their weight.

## What is the cost of a pack goat?

From a pack goat breeder, you can expect to pay \$100 to \$175 for a green broke goat that is six months old. A fully trained goat this is ready to pack a full load will cost \$200 to \$350. You can train your own wether purchased from a local dairy goat breeder or from an auction. It is best to get a young kid that has been bottle fed, as it will bond to you more easily and be easier to train.

## What equipment do I need?

A soft pack is used for young goats or for day hikes. A soft pack can be an altered dog pack or two backpacks with added straps. Soft packs can cost from \$30 to \$65. A pack goat saddle, called a cross buck, is used for heavier loads. The saddle, saddle pad, and panniers (the bags that hang off the cross buck) can cost up to \$250. A collar and lead is necessary with or without a pack. Packs and equipment can be bought through goat supply catalogs or through local suppliers.

## What do I need to consider if I decide to get a goat?

**Land** - 100 sq. ft. per goat

**Fencing** - 5 ft. high

**Shelter** - 20 sq. ft. per goat

**Food** - grain and hay

**Water** - fresh daily

**Health care** - worming six times a year and yearly vaccinations. Hooves checked and trimmed monthly.

**Companionship** - always keep two or more goats. Goats need human contact as well.

Cost - approx. \$15 to \$20 a month

**Exercise** - Hikes or walks twice a month, with a pack. An exercised goat is a healthier goat. Provide rocks, small bridges or log piles inside pen to play on.

**Time to train** - DO NOT acquire a pack goat and immediately put 50 pounds on his back. This is not good for the goat and will discourage it from wanting to pack again. Make it fun for him/her by slowly introducing the pack and then the weight. Conditioning is very, very important.

## Why pack goats and not llamas or horses?

Goats are less expensive to obtain and keep. Also, they need less space to stay healthy. Goats can negotiate rougher and higher terrain. Goats are also friendly and lovable. A goat can keep you warm on a cold night, just snuggle up!

## Resources

**The Pack Goat**, by John Mionczynski, Pruett Publishing Co., Boulder, CO

**Raising Milk Goats the Modern Way**, by Jerry Belanger: Garden Way Publishing, Pownal, VT: 1975

**Raising Milk Goats Successfully**, by Gail Luttmann, Williamson Publishing, Charlotte, VT: 1986

**Goat Track**, is published quarterly. Subscriptions are \$15 a year. Make checks payable to:

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## Packgoat Conformation

Conformation is what a packgoat looks like. That is, nice top line, good chest, wide ribs, etc. Packgoats need to look like they will work for you. There are a number of items that we look for in a packgoat. These include:

- **Level top line** – the back should be more or less a straight line with no bumpiness.
- **Proportion** – the measurement from the shoulder to the ground should be approximately the same as the measurement from the base of the neck to the base of the tail.
- **Chest** – the chest should be wide and deep.
- **Ribs** – on an adult packgoat, one should be able to put a finger width between each rib.
- **Legs** – legs should be thick with the front cannon bone and foreleg being approximately the same length, pasterns should be perpendicular to the ground; elbows should not “wing” out (come away from the body) when the animal is on the move; large hooves are a plus; hockiness (hocks are turned toward the inside) is also a plus.
- **Body type** – the packgoat should look muscular in appearance (not a dairy goat type) with thigh/gaskin muscles well defined; shoulders and neck should also show good muscle tone.

A packgoat does not have to be huge to be a good packer. A strong, well muscled goat is more of a plus than a huge goat. The packgoat body should not be out of proportion; that is, legs not proportioned to its body, or the chest too small for the size of the goat, or the goat too fat. When picking out a kid goat, the best thing to do is look at its parents or older brothers or sisters to see what their conformation is. If this is not possible, look for a kids that is well proportioned for its size. This means good size head; neck and chest for the size of the goat; legs that are thick with good-sized hooves; pasterns that are up high; ribs that are wide; thick thigh area; straight back. What we look for in a kid goat is a “strong” looking goat, a “sturdy” goat.

“Attitude” plays an extremely important part in a packgoat. Choose a goat that is friendly, curious, doesn’t mind being touched in all areas of his body, and one that has an alertness and brightness to its character.

# Hike Critique

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Trail name: \_\_\_\_\_ Miles long: \_\_\_\_\_

Elevation gain from trail head: \_\_\_\_\_

Where: \_\_\_\_\_

(name the park, forest or other details)

Direction from Olympia: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How far from home: \_\_\_\_\_ How long of a drive: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of facilities: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(table, water, toilets, etc.)

Weather: \_\_\_\_\_ degrees: \_\_\_\_\_

Time started out: \_\_\_\_\_ Time returned: \_\_\_\_\_

Condition of trail: \_\_\_\_\_

Recommend for a return hike:                      YES                      NO

Goats taken: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_ Pack Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

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Goats taken: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_ Pack Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

Goats taken: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_ Pack Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

Other comments:

Leader sign off:
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# Goat Record

Year \_\_\_\_\_ Goat \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Yrs \_\_\_\_\_ Mns

## Feed

### January

AM Feed    Grain \_\_\_ #    Hay \_\_\_ flakes    Alfalfa \_\_\_ flakes    Other \_\_\_\_\_

PM Feed    Grain \_\_\_ #    Hay \_\_\_ flakes    Alfalfa \_\_\_ flakes    Other \_\_\_\_\_

### February

AM Feed    Grain \_\_\_ #    Hay \_\_\_ flakes    Alfalfa \_\_\_ flakes    Other \_\_\_\_\_

PM Feed    Grain \_\_\_ #    Hay \_\_\_ flakes    Alfalfa \_\_\_ flakes    Other \_\_\_\_\_

### March

AM Feed    Grain \_\_\_ #    Hay \_\_\_ flakes    Alfalfa \_\_\_ flakes    Other \_\_\_\_\_

PM Feed    Grain \_\_\_ #    Hay \_\_\_ flakes    Alfalfa \_\_\_ flakes    Other \_\_\_\_\_

### April

AM Feed    Grain \_\_\_ #    Hay \_\_\_ flakes    Alfalfa \_\_\_ flakes    Other \_\_\_\_\_

PM Feed    Grain \_\_\_ #    Hay \_\_\_ flakes    Alfalfa \_\_\_ flakes    Other \_\_\_\_\_

### May

AM Feed    Grain \_\_\_ #    Hay \_\_\_ flakes    Alfalfa \_\_\_ flakes    Other \_\_\_\_\_

PM Feed    Grain \_\_\_ #    Hay \_\_\_ flakes    Alfalfa \_\_\_ flakes    Other \_\_\_\_\_

### June

AM Feed    Grain \_\_\_ #    Hay \_\_\_ flakes    Alfalfa \_\_\_ flakes    Other \_\_\_\_\_

PM Feed    Grain \_\_\_ #    Hay \_\_\_ flakes    Alfalfa \_\_\_ flakes    Other \_\_\_\_\_

### July

AM Feed    Grain \_\_\_ #    Hay \_\_\_ flakes    Alfalfa \_\_\_ flakes    Other \_\_\_\_\_

PM Feed    Grain \_\_\_ #    Hay \_\_\_ flakes    Alfalfa \_\_\_ flakes    Other \_\_\_\_\_

### August

AM Feed    Grain \_\_\_ #    Hay \_\_\_ flakes    Alfalfa \_\_\_ flakes    Other \_\_\_\_\_

PM Feed    Grain \_\_\_ #    Hay \_\_\_ flakes    Alfalfa \_\_\_ flakes    Other \_\_\_\_\_

### September

AM Feed    Grain \_\_\_ #    Hay \_\_\_ flakes    Alfalfa \_\_\_ flakes    Other \_\_\_\_\_

PM Feed    Grain \_\_\_ #    Hay \_\_\_ flakes    Alfalfa \_\_\_ flakes    Other \_\_\_\_\_

### October

AM Feed    Grain \_\_\_ #    Hay \_\_\_ flakes    Alfalfa \_\_\_ flakes    Other \_\_\_\_\_

PM Feed    Grain \_\_\_ #    Hay \_\_\_ flakes    Alfalfa \_\_\_ flakes    Other \_\_\_\_\_

### November

AM Feed    Grain \_\_\_ #    Hay \_\_\_ flakes    Alfalfa \_\_\_ flakes    Other \_\_\_\_\_

PM Feed    Grain \_\_\_ #    Hay \_\_\_ flakes    Alfalfa \_\_\_ flakes    Other \_\_\_\_\_

### December

AM Feed    Grain \_\_\_ #    Hay \_\_\_ flakes    Alfalfa \_\_\_ flakes    Other \_\_\_\_\_

PM Feed    Grain \_\_\_ #    Hay \_\_\_ flakes    Alfalfa \_\_\_ flakes    Other \_\_\_\_\_

### Comments

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## PACK GOAT FITTING AND SHOWING SCORECARD

1. APPEARANCE OF ANIMAL	POINTS	SUBTOTAL
<b>Condition and thriftiness</b> – showing normal growth neither too fat or too thin	10	
<b>Hair</b> – clean and properly groomed	5	
<b>Hoofs</b> – trimmed and shaped to enable animal to walk and stand naturally	5	
<b>Cleanliness</b> – clean body from stains as much as possible, with special attention to clean legs, feet, tail area, nose, and ears	5	30
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<b>2. APPEARANCE OF EXHIBITOR</b>		
<b>Clothes and person</b> – neat and clean, wearing appropriate hiking clothes and shoes for the weather.	5	35
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<b>3. SHOWING THE ANIMAL IN THE RING</b>		
<b>Leading</b> – enter, leading the animal at a normal walk around the ring in a clockwise direction, holding the lead or collar with right hand.	10	
<b>Goats should lead readily</b> and respond quickly.		
<b>When judge changes placing</b> , lead animal forward out of line, down or up to the place directed then back through the line, finally making a U-turn to get into position. You should work with your pack goat using the lead as you would on a trail, but you may hold the collar if necessary for certain maneuvers.		
<b>Exhibitors will be requested to exchange</b> animals and perform maneuvers to show ability to handle other person's goat.		
<b>Walk at a normal pace</b> , not allowing the goat to get ahead or out of control. Walk on the side away from the judge.		
<b>Pose the goat</b> with front and rear feet squarely beneath it.	5	
Do not crowd other exhibitors.		
<b>When the judge is observing the goat</b> , if it moves out of position, replace it as quickly and inconspicuously as possible.		
<b>The goat is calm</b> and responds quickly to your requests for maneuvers.	5	
<b>Poise, alertness and courteous attitude</b> are all desired at all times in the show ring, until entire class has been placed.	25	60
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<b>4. QUESTIONS</b>		
<b>The exhibitor</b> will be asked five questions concerning pack goats and hiking.	15	75
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<b>5. PACK GOAT TRAIL TEST</b>		
<b>Appropriately fitted goat pack</b> containing 10% weight or less for under one year of age, and 10% and not more than 20% of weight for over one year of age. Lead equipment should consist of working collar or halter. The ten essentials of hiking will be carried on the person in a fanny pack, back pack or vest.	5	
<b>The trail test</b> shall consist of five obstacles	25	100
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<b>TOTAL POINTS FOR FITTING AND SHOWING</b>		<b>100</b>
<b>100-90 = Blue</b>	<b>89-80 = Red</b>	<b>79-70 = White</b>

## PACK GOAT TYPE SPECIFICATIONS

	POINTS	SUBTOTAL
<b>1. STRUCTURAL CORRECTNESS</b>		
<b>Structural correctness</b> includes a wide chest and brisket.	<b>11</b>	
<b>Heart girth</b> should not tend to increase greatly to the barrel		
<b>Length of body</b> in proportion to height		
<b>Front cannon bone</b> and fore leg should be approximately the same length.	<b>7</b>	
<b>Width of leg</b> should be proportionate to thickness of body.		
Angularity in the rear, not post legged, hockiness a plus.		
<b>Back vertebrae</b> parallel to the ground and open withers, strong chine and loin	<b>8</b>	
<b>Strong pasterns</b> , perpendicular to the ground.	<b>7</b>	
<b>Strong feet</b> with tight toes		
<b>Elbows</b> do not wing out when on the move.	<b>7</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Strong</b> , easy and smooth gait with no lameness or stiffness.		
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<b>2. MUSCULARITY</b>		
<b>Includes stocky body</b> – “working” goat in appearance not dairy type.	<b>10</b>	
<b>Thigh and gaskin muscle</b> well defined.	<b>10</b>	
<b>Shoulders</b> , and neck show good muscle tone	<b>10</b>	<b>30</b>
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<b>3. ATTITUDE</b>		
<b>The pack</b> shall show a “pet quality” attitude. Friendly and willing to work.	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>
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<b>4. COORDINATION</b>		
<b>The test</b> will include an obstacle selected by the judge that the goat will go across.	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
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<b>TOTAL POINTS FOR TYPE</b>		<b>100</b>