



The Goat Source

December 2005 Vol. 2, No. 12

Hello, Here is your December issue of The Goat Source News. Thanks for subscribing!

The New Year is almost here. It has been a fun year for me – learning new things on the web and hearing from people all over the world. Christmas is fast approaching – think about giving the gift of a goat to a family in need through [Heifer International](#). I have given a share of a goat to my nieces every year - they get a card from Heifer that shows what the gift will be used for and somewhere a family gets a boost up from poverty. Check out the Heifer website for gift giving options and inspirational stories about families that have been helped with the gift of a goat!! Happy Holidays!!

What's News This Month...

- Gates and Latches
- Quiz of the month...
- Quick Identification for your goats
- Classified Advertising
- Answer to the Quiz
- Hints and Tips

Gates and Latches

We all have different setups for our animals. One of the most aggravating things is a gate that is hard to open or shut or that requires an octopus to operate! This month we will discuss solving this problem with an easy to install, rugged gate.

Some of the most common (and nasty) gates are what I call “Shoulder gate”. These are usually made of pallets or panels and require you to pick them up to move them, which means if you have anything in your hands (hay or a bucket of water) you have to put it down to open the gate, fend off the animals, pick up the feed, fend off the animals, go thru the gate, etc... You get the picture!! If you need a quick temporary gate, I would use a piece of cattle or hog panel, cut to size and hung slightly off the ground with “quick links” on one side. Use a snap connector for the latch. This is only a temporary fix! Replace with a real gate ASAP!!

The gate I prefer is a tube gate of the right size for the opening, with mesh or panel welded on or a panel attached with hose clamps. Depending on what you need the gate for, the size can vary greatly. 4 feet is good for a walk through gate. 12 feet is the minimum for a drive thru gate and I would recommend larger. You can get a small wheel to put on the latch end of the gate so it doesn't sag.

Buy walk through tube gate panels with the gate built right in and already hung. The gate is hung on pins welded to the frame and most have a hole drilled in the top of the pin to put a cotter key in so the gate won't come off accidentally. The latches on these gates differ. Try to find one that can be opened with one hand from the outside. They will have a safety chain on them that hooks into a slot on the gate frame. Don't depend on this chain – any curious goat could undo it! Be sure to set the whole panel up on wooden blocks so it doesn't rust out the bottom pipes. I had to learn this the hard way – manure is very acid and will eat right through these pipes.

Tube gates not set into a panel can be hung on a braced post with the pins that come with it. Drill two holes in the post with a bit and brace or a large wood drill. Place the holes so that the gate will be held securely both top and bottom and screw the hinge pins in. The hinge brackets are adjustable on most of these gates. You will need a socket and driver and a pair of vise grips, to tighten the bolts down after you adjust them. The latch will depend on the kind of post you have. A railroad tie provides a flat surface that you can lag bolt a chain link gate latch to. If the post is not flat, you will have to improvise. Spacing is critical – there shouldn't be room for a goat to get her head stuck. A safety chain is a good addition to keep the gate shut if the main latch fails or doesn't shut properly. Be sure the safety chain doesn't touch the hot wire on the fence when you unhook it or you will get a nasty jolt!

Most livestock supply houses will carry a variety of gates. Look for the sale flyers to come out. Light weight gates are not expensive and are suitable for goats. The heavier gates are good for horses or cows. You can build wooden gates, but I find that they don't last very long and unless you paint them every year or so, they look tacky! Even though steel prices have gone up, tube gates are still a good buy!

Quiz for the Month...

Which President of the US had a goat as a pet?

Quick Identification for Your Goats

With an inexpensive metal stamping set, you can make ID tags for your goats that will slip on a chain collar. Use a washer with a hole large enough to slide over the chain and a smooth finish. The metal stamps that I have include the alphabet and numerals 0-9. I put the animals name, ID number and tattoos on one side. The other side can hold date of birth and any other information you want. Place the washer on an anvil or similar metal surface and tap the letters in with a hammer. Practice will make it easy to get everything lined up just right. These are especially handy when you are showing and have two goats in one class – the handler can just look at the washer for the info they need to tell the judge. You can make a tag just for the show season with fresh dates, etc and toss it back into the washer can after show season is over.

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Answer to the December Quiz...

President Benjamin Harrison's son Russell Harrison had a pet goat named Old Whiskers. This goat was so ornery that one day the President was forced to chase him down Pennsylvania Avenue when he decided to run away with the Harrison grandchildren.

See a picture of “Old Whiskers”- Click on the link...

<http://www.presidentialpetmuseum.com/photos/Pets/wagon.jpg>

Hints and Tips:

%@#&^ Mice!! If you have animal feed you will probably have mice! They have been really bad this year. A friend came up with a great way to trap them! Put your baited trap (the regular snap type) in the bottom of a small bowl. The mouse has to jump down in on the trap to get to the bait and “SNAP”!! This works great especially with the smaller ones as they are to light weight to set off the trap by just walking over the trigger.

Forty five days after breeding, you can ultrasound your goats to see if they are pregnant. Before the vet comes out, close clip the udder area, paying special attention to the area between the side of the udder and the flank. This is the place where the probe will be and it needs close contact to the skin to work. When I clip them, I do the whole udder, the tail and the backs of the legs down to the hocks. Use a rug blade that leaves a little hair, except on the udder. Use a forty close clip blade for the udder and flank area.

Save money on your supplies – Order with a friend and split the shipping. I have done this when ordering kidding supplies and it can save quite a bit of money if you can get two or three friends to order together!!

That's all for now!! See you next month....

Leslie, The Goat Source

P.S. Check out the new pages on my website – Free downloads and articles about goat topics. Happy holidays!!

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