

## Grain-based Feed Rations

Many types of grain mixtures will be readily available for purchase at feed supply stores. What is most important to know is the nutritional content of that ration and how it will affect the health of your animals. You should know that animals need to be fed according to the amount of “work” that they are expected to complete. Just as people need the proper food to stay healthy, animals have the same needs. A pregnant female, growing kid, or working buck or wether all have special nutritional needs.

Feed rations containing about 16% protein can be used to start most feeding programs. The protein content needed is also dependent on the quality of hay being fed. Dry (non-milking) adult females and adult wethers require less protein than milking, pregnant, or growing animals.

Top quality alfalfa hay should be fed only to those animals pregnant, growing rapidly, or milking. Bucks, wethers, and dry stock should receive a grass hay mixture. Too much calcium (found in alfalfa and grain) can cause kidney stones or excess deposits in bones leading to lameness when fed to animals not using that calcium for conversion to milk or bone growth.

This grain formula is intended for milking does, kids, and bucks under one year of age. It contains about 16% protein and weighs about 1 pound per quart.

- 150 pounds cracked or rolled corn
- 125 pounds crimped or rolled oats
- 90 pounds soybean oil meal
- 75 pounds natural protein pellet supplement (non urea, vegetable based)
- 50 pounds wheat bran
- 50 pounds molasses
- 5 pounds calcium
- 5 pounds salt (NaCl)
- 5 pounds vitamin supplement

Your goats may also need extra minerals added to the feed depending on the feed value of your hay and grain mixtures. It is important to read labels on all feed purchased.

Also important is measurement of grain being fed. Going “by eye” is only appropriate if you are experienced in feeding goats. However, your “eye” and a weight tape will tell you if your goats are gaining too much weight or are too thin.

Milking does may eat as much as a pound of grain for each two pounds of milk produced. Some adult non-milking or working animals will need very little or no grain to stay in good condition.

Included in this booklet are some sources for good grain supplements. You may use any of them or select one that provides the nutrition your animals need and that they will enjoy eating. The best feed value available will not work for your animals if they refuse to eat it.

Purchase or mix only enough grain that can be used within a month, especially in hot weather. Moldy or sour feed should never be fed to goats. If they eat it, mold will destroy bacteria in the rumen that the animal needs to digest its food and your goats will become ill.

Please consult the book “Dairy Goats for Pleasure and Profit” by Harvey Considine for additional information and valuable tips on goat nutrition. It is in our 4-H project library.