

# GOATS ACROSS KANSAS SERIES

## MARKET GOAT SELECTION

Selecting the proper prospect is the most important step to a good project animal. The criteria you should consider for selection of a prospect meat goat should include the following priorities:

- Muscle
- Weight/Pounds of product
- Skeletal Quality
  - Structure
  - Balance
- Correct level of finish\*\*\*

\*\*\*Not necessarily a consideration when selecting the project as they are still growing at this stage, this is more of a something to keep in mind as you get closer to the endpoint with your project.

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This information is crucial to know when selecting your prospect in order to determine the direction you will be taking your project and to achieve your goals. The type of goat you select will have a major impact on the project animal's results. A winning project is a combination of proper selection, nutritional management, health management, and grooming, combined with quality showmanship.

### **Muscle:**

This is one of the most important traits for market goats and must be given strong consideration. To determine muscle, you can evaluate a number of different areas of the animal.

The loin is a good indicator of muscle throughout. Forearm circumference will correlate to the loin eye area and is another area of evaluation. The goat should have a wide, thick back and loin that are naturally firm and hard handling. A wide, symmetrically oval shape on each side of the backbone that carries forward over the rack or chine is desirable. The goat should show a wedge shape from front to rear when viewed down the top from behind. Usually a goat that walks and stands wide will be heavier muscled. The hindquarters should show a deep, heavily muscled leg and rump. A long, deeply attached muscle that shows expression in the stifle is desirable. The goat should be thickest from stifle to stifle when viewed from the rear. A goat should be wide the through the chest floor and have a forearm muscle that exhibits a prominent bulge. Areas to evaluate for muscle:

- Fore-arm
- Chest Floor
- Rack
- Loin
- Hip
- Leg
- Base Width



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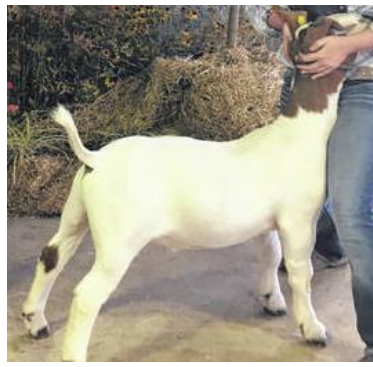


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Examples of heavy muscled goats from the side (images above)



Examples of light muscled goats from the side (images above)



Example of a wide chested, big forearmed goat with the correct turn of rib and body shape (image above)

## Weight/Pounds of Product:

The finish weight of meat goats seems can vary greatly.

- 1) not all animals can be fed to the same finished weight because differences in frame size
- 2) the breeds of goats and their crosses impact the amount of muscle and the finished weight of the goat
- 3) goats are marketed in the commercial market at a variety of different finish weights depending upon consumers' demands.
  - In general, most shows require a minimum weight of 60 pounds; and some shows have a maximum weight. Goats will typically gain approximately 2-3 pounds per week with a proper nutrition program.

## Handling Tips:

- Muscle and finish can be estimated from the outside
- Rack and loin for muscle and freshness (hard to the touch, full and square shape)



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## Skeletal quality:

- Very similar to all other species
  - Organized front end assembly
  - Strong level top line
  - Length of topline
  - Youthful yet powerful chest and round rib cage
  - Proportional
  - Sound structure



Examples of goats with a competitive look and skeletal quality (images to the left)



Examples of poor balanced goats (images to the left)

## Correct Level of Finish:

- Goats deposit fat internally before externally.
- Ideal fat condition is thin, yet still uniform over rib, loin, and shoulder
- Fat thickness over loin at the 13<sup>th</sup> rib: 0.8-0.12 inches
- Areas to evaluate for fat:
  - Chest floor - deeper chested=more fat
  - Fore-rib/behind the shoulder – soft/bulging fat pocket=more fat
  - Lower body - extremely deep sided (wastey lower third) =more fat
  - Handle quality – soft=more fat



Example of a market goat with the appropriate amount of fat cover and a fresh look (image above)



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## Additional Resources:

Mississippi State University-A Quick Guide to Club Goat Selection:

<https://extension.msstate.edu/sites/default/files/pdf//AQuickGuidetoClubGoatSelection-2018.pdf>

Washington State University-Selecting a 4-H/FFA Meat Goat Project Animal:

<https://extension.wsu.edu/animalag/content/selecting-a-4-hffa-meat-goat-project-animal/>

University of Kentucky- Judging Meat Goats: <https://afs.ca.uky.edu/livestock/presentation/Judging-Meat-Goats>

Livestock Judging Guide: <https://gibson.tennessee.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/71/2020/03/4H-Livestock-Livestock-Judging-Guide-Module-9.pdf>

A Pacific Northwest Extension Publication-Judging Meat Goats and Oral Reasons 101:

<https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/2050/2023/02/Judging-Meat-Goats-and-Oral-Reasons-101-PNW678.pdf>



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