

# 4-H PACK GOAT SUPPLEMENT



## Pack Goat Requirements

### Dairy/Meat Breeds

Under 1 year of age	no pack and obstacles
Over 1 year- Under 2 years	no weight in pack and obstacles
Over 2 years-Under 3 years	10 pounds and obstacles
Over 3 years-Under 4 years	20 pounds and obstacles
Over 4 years and up	30 pounds and obstacles

### Pygmy Requirements

Under 1 year of age	no pack and obstacles
Over 1 year- Under 2 years	no weight in pack and obstacles
Over 2 years-Under 3 years	5 pounds and obstacles
Over 3 years-Under 4 years	10 pounds and obstacles
Over 4 years and up	15 pounds and obstacles

## What is goat packing?

Goat packing involves placing a pack on a goat. Then, you and this gentle creature embark upon an adventure with the goat carrying most of the gear. Not carrying as much on your back is a way to enhance your out-of-door experience. Pack goats can be your best friend on the trail. They are willing, hiking companions and enjoy the company of people. Proper training is a primary key to successful goat packing. Goats are intelligent and curious creatures, but they need positive training to know what they are supposed to do for you. Keeping a pack goat at home requires a time commitment – the reward is a less strenuous hike and the pleasure of being around these wonderful loving creatures.

## How much can a goat carry?

A mature goat can easily carry 1/4 of their total body weight. Fully conditioned packers can reach up to 1/3 of their body weight. A large fully grown wether can easily carry 40 to 60 pounds of gear. That's a lot of stuff, and if you need more you can just add another goat!

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

One looks for characteristics such as strong feet and legs, long legs, long body, wide and deep chest, bright eyes and shiny coat, long strides, slightly hocky, good temperament and a friendly nature.

## What is the cost of a pack goat?

Pricing may vary from breeder to breeder. From a pack goat breeder, you can expect to pay \$100 to \$175 for a beginning pack goat less than six months of age. A fully-trained pack goat can cost \$250 or more, plus the price of equipment.



**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES



[muskingum.osu.edu](http://muskingum.osu.edu)

CFAES provides research and related educational programs to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis. For

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

Land	100 sq. ft. per goat
Fencing	5 ft. high field/horse fence
Shelter	Covered, with at least 3 sides, dry and draft free.
Food	Hay/alfalfa, grain and vitamins
Water	Fresh daily
Health Care	Yearly check ups, worming six times a year, yearly vaccinations, and hooves trimmed every 3-6 weeks.
Exercise	A hike a week or walks during the week. An exercised goat is a healthy goat.

## Why goats and not llamas or horses or mules?

Goats are less expensive to purchase and to keep. Goats need less space. Generally, goats can be handled by all ages of people. Goats can negotiate in higher terrain. Goats are friendly and are willing to work for you.

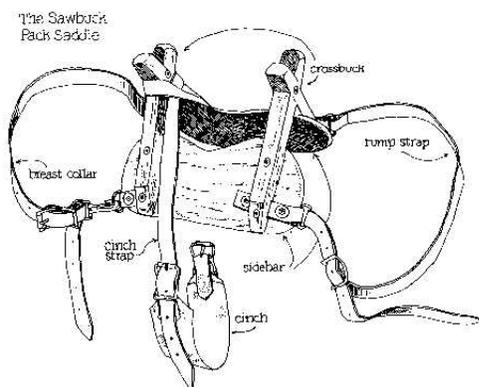
## Why doe goats as packers?

Does are usable as pack animals. Dry does can be as strong as wethers - choose a doe that is not "dairy" in character. That is, you don't want an extremely tall, long, deep doe. Choose a doe that has muscles and good strong legs. You want your pack goat to look like a working goat, not a "show goat". You can keep a doe dry - do not allow it to come into milk by not breeding it. This does not hurt the doe.

One reason for having doe pack goats may be for breeding. Another reason for doe pack goats is to have a milk goat on the trail (fresh milk on long trips can be very tasty). Gestation (carrying time of the baby) is 145 to 155 days. You can cross breed a doe; that is, use one breed of doe and breed her to another breed of buck in order to get certain characteristics from each breed. If you take a doe that is in milk on the trail, you will need to protect her udder from the brush.

## The Saddle

The saddle consists of two sidebars help together by two crossbucks. Attached to the sidebars, are the straps. The straps can be made of nylon or soft leather. The rump strap should be adjustable and should fit loosely around the rump. The breast strap should be adjustable as well and should preferably have a snap for easy placement and removal. The girth consists of the cinch strap and the cinch. The cinch wraps around the front crossback and goes down the sides of the saddle to the buckle to the cinch, which should lie right behind the goat's forelegs.



## Panniers

Panniers are bags made of a durable material such as canvas or nylon that go over the saddle in which your goat carries your gear. The panniers are attached to the saddle with straps to help to keep them from flying up or off when jumping or swimming. Panniers may be as large as 16 inches long, 16 inches deep and 7 inches wide. They are used to carry 20%-30% of your goat's body weight.



## Day Packs

A day pack is basically just panniers with the straps connected to them, instead of the saddle. A saddle is not needed when using this type of pack. Day packs are often used for training purposes and also for light packing trips. A day pack can hold no more than 20% of the goat's body weight.



## Obstacles and Commands

Obstacles - These obstacles will be expected of you in the corresponding classes

- jump over log
- Jump up on a platform
- walk over tarp
- walk through water
- bridge
- teeter totter
- tie a slip knot
- Have them walk over objects, such as bricks, logs and etc.

Commands

- Go
- Stop
- Up or jump
- Stay
- Back

## 1<sup>st</sup> year Requirements

**Leading:** For the first year your goat will *not* be required to wear a pack for this class. He will, however, be expected to lead willingly with either a halter or collar and a lead strap. The goat should not have to be pulled around the ring but should walk calmly and willingly by your side. This is an important thing to teach your animal. On the trail a stubborn will not only be a waste of your time but can also be a dangerous and will make your packing experiences unpleasant.

**Go and Stop commands:** The goat must also know the commands go and stop. You should not have to pull on the lead to get the goat to go forward or to make him stop. He should know the commands. This can come in very handy if you don't have a lead on your goat while you are hiking. By teaching him these basic commands you can make your goat move and stop when you aren't beside him or can't get to him.

**Tarp:** The tarp is used to teach the animal to walk on unfamiliar items. It is very important that your goat will lead anywhere you ask him to while on the trail. By teaching him to walk over a tarp it helps to "desensitize" the animal to walking on strange objects. Your goat should not plant his feet when asked to walk over the tarp, but should walk willingly.

**Pick up foot:** That last requirement for you first year is that your goat will stand quietly while he allows you to pick up his foot. You will stand inside of a marked circle with your goat to perform this step. The animal should stand still and shouldn't step out of the circle at any time while you are doing this. You may ask, "Why is this important for him to know?" Actually, it is more important than what you think. What happens if your goat begins to limp while you are on the trail? You probably are first going to assume that something is wrong with his foot. You don't want a goat that is moving around trying to get away while you attempt to examine his hoof. A goat that willingly allows you to handle him and remains quiet while you are doing it is a necessity while on the trail.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Requirements

*Must do 1<sup>st</sup> year requirements as well as the following:*

**Wear pack saddle and panniers:** This year your goat will be required to wear a pack saddle along with panniers **or** a day pack with no weight in them. (No other packing gear permitted.) This is just showing that your goat is accustomed to saddle and pack and is in the beginning stages of becoming an experienced packer. We require no weights this year for the fact that the goat is still young and growing.

**Up/jump command:** Your goat should know the *up/jump* command, as it will be used quite frequently on the trail. You can use whichever command you wish as long as your goat knows what he is being asked to do. We don't recommend using them interchangeably as it may confuse the animal. For the 4-H pack class your goat will need to know this command for both the ledge jump obstacle and the jumps. You are expected to give this command when you are performing an obstacle, which requires your animal to jump over or onto something.

**Ledge jump:** You will be required to jump your goat up onto a pallet that will be elevated by bricks. You will walk your goat over to that pallet and give the up/jump command. Which ever you prefer. Your goat should then jump up onto the pallet with no further urging from you. Make your goat stand there for a brief moment before asking him to jump off of the pallet and back to the ground. The ledge jump is used to simulate a goat jumping onto a ledge while in the wilderness or loading him into your vehicle for transporting. While hiking, being able to jump up onto a ledge can be a form of protection for your goat trying to escape a predator. It is natural for a goat to jump onto a ledge for protection and is something that even wild goats do. Because goats are by nature good jumpers, we don't think you should have too much trouble teaching your goat this maneuver.

**Tie:** For this you will 1) need to know how to tie a slip knot or some other knot that can be untied quickly in case of an emergency. 2) Your goat must stand still while you tie it and after you have finished. You will first walk your goat over to the post and tie him to it. Then you will walk all the way around your goat while he is still tied and back to the position where you started. Your goat should stand quietly the whole time you are walking around him. A goat absolutely must know how to stand still when he is tied. There will be many instances when you will have to tie your goat while out packing. Putting on and taking off that pack is just an example. A goat that will not stand still can be quite difficult to saddle. It is also a way of keeping your goat from wandering off. Teaching a goat to tie well is something that you will definitely benefit from.

**Bridge:** This obstacle you will simply walk your animal to the bridge and then walk over it. We put this into the course to not only show your goat will walk over a bridge if you ever come to one, but also that your animal is willing to follow you over any obstacle that you may encounter while on the trail. Teaching your goat to get used to different situations and obstacle will be a great help to you while packing.

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Requirements

*Must do 1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> year requirements as well as the following:*

**Wear a pack saddle and the panniers with weight:** Your goat will be required to wear a pack saddle and panniers or day pack with equally distributed weight in the panniers. Once again the pack is showing that your animal is accustomed to carrying something on its back, and by adding weight it is showing that your animal will carry a load willingly.

**Back command:** This year your goat will be required to know the *back* command. You will start by leading your goat to the back obstacle and turning him around so he is ready to back through the course. Begin by giving the back command. You should not have to pull forcefully on the lead to get your animal to back. Gentle backward tugs on the lead are permitted as you give that command. When you get to the turn, carefully continue backing your animal around that turn and through that rest of the obstacle. When you reach the end, give your goat a pat for a job well done and continue on the rest of the course. Teaching your goat to back is another one of the few commands that will be profitable to you on the trail. It can come in handy if you are confined to an area and the only way you can go is back! Be patient when teaching this command. It usually is one of the hardest to teach your pack goat, but with practice and time he'll get it.

**Remove and replace pack:** This obstacle will be performed along with the "tie" obstacle. First you will tie your goat to the post where the "tie" obstacle is done. Then you will walk around your animal and stop back in the position where you started. You have just performed the required "tie" step. Now you will perform the "remove and replace pack" step. For those of you who are using a pack saddle and panniers, start by removing just the panniers; do **not remove** the saddle. Walk to the other side of the goat and put the panniers back on your animal. For those of you that are using a day pack, remove the pack and walk to the other side of the goat and put it back on. If your day pack cinch is on only one side, then walk all the way around the goat before placing the pack on the goat and re-cinch it. It is probably very obvious why your goat should learn how to stand still while being saddled and unsaddled. If he didn't, you would have quite a hard time getting that saddle on him. It will be to your benefit to make sure your animal stands patiently.

## 4<sup>th</sup> Year Requirements

*Must do 1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> year requirements as well as the following:*

**Wear pack saddle and panniers with weight:** Your goat will be required to wear a pack saddle and panniers or day pack with equally distributed weight in the panniers. Once again the pack is showing that your animal is accustomed to carrying something on its back, and by adding weight, it is showing that your animal will carry a load willingly.

**Jumps:** For the jumps; walk or trot your animal up to the obstacle and give the *up* or *jump* command. Once the goat has jumped over the obstacle, continue on with the rest of the course. You will have two jumps that your goat will have to master in the course. A goat that will jump on command is important when on the trail. A fallen tree or small ditches are obstacles that would usually hinder your progress on the trail; however, a goat that will jump these will save you time trying to find another route out around such obstacles.

**Water:** Walking through water is one of the most important things that you can teach your goat to do. Most goats will try to jump small creeks and streams, as most do not like water. However, jumping will not work when you come to a river or other larger water source. Your goat is going to have to wade or swim through it, and you will not want to drag him the whole way. For the obstacle in the pack program you will not be required to swim any rivers. However, you will have to make your goat walk through a pool of water. A pool will be set up with a couple of inches of water in it. When you come to the pool, walk beside of it as your goat wades through the water.

**Teeter Totter:** The teeter-totter is just another example of teaching your animal to walk over unstable ground. For this obstacle, simply walk your animal up and over the teeter-totter.

## 5<sup>th</sup> Year Requirements

*Must do 1<sup>st</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> year requirement as well as the following:*

**Wear a pack saddle and panniers with weight:** Your goat will be required to wear a pack saddle and panniers or a day pack with equally distributed weight in the panniers.

**No lead:** For the 5<sup>th</sup> year, you will have to go through the whole course without a lead rope on your goat. Walking without a lead and still having control over your animal is an absolute must while on the trail. You may leave the lead clipped to your goat's halter or collar but the end of it **must** be draped over the saddle and at **no** time while going through the course are you to use it to help guide your animal in any way.

## 6<sup>th</sup> Year Requirements

*Must do 1<sup>st</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> year requirement as well as the following:*

**Wear a pack saddle and panniers with weight:** Your goat will be required to wear a pack saddle and panniers or a day pack with equally distributed weight in the panniers.

**Add a goat:** This year you will be required to add a goat to your pack string. You will continue to use the previous goat and will do the same obstacle as before. The only difference is that you will have an extra goat tied to your saddle that will follow behind your other goat through the course. You will lead your original goat as in year 1-5 and again the course will be the same. Your "add-on" goat is to be tied to your other goat with another lead rope and should follow the lead goat willingly. Your lead goat should not have to pull your add-on goat through the course. Your add on goat can be any age. No packing gear is required on your add-on goat, but is allowed. Only your original goat **must** be wearing packing gear.

## Advanced

Goat of 1 year and up may be used, **but can not be used in classes 2-6.** This class is for advanced pack goats doing requirements of classes 1-4. Advanced obstacles will be added and determined at the fair. Pack saddle and weight are required for the age of the goat.

## Acknowledgements:

*The Pack Goat* by John Mionczynski  
*4-H Harness Goat Project Manual*  
Vicki Reed, Extension Educator, 4-H Youth Development  
Adam Black and Meagan Bennett  
Muskingum County Goat Committee



Updated 2015

Muskingum County Extension Office  
225 Underwood St  
Zanesville, OH 43701  
Phone: 740-454-0144