

MARKET, DAIRY & PYGMY GOAT JUDGE EXPECTATIONS

Summarized by Patti Gylling

Conformation Judging is the same for any type of goat. I will be comparing your animal to the "ideal" for its breed or function. An outstanding goat has more traits closer to "ideal" than others in its class. In a market class, I look for an animal that is structurally correct, with volume and body capacity (length, depth and width), muscling and condition. Quality market goats must have suitable size with good growth rates and maximum meat yields. I also look for "balanced" animals, well muscled over the loin, shoulders, hindquarters and neck. The finish or condition should not be excessive - not too much "fat".

Dairy animals are judged on their general appearance, mammary system, dairy character, and body capacity. Pygmy goats are judged similar to dairy animals, but with focus on their breed standards and characteristics, looking again at the "ideal" animal. Refer to ADGA, APGA, ABGA, USBGA, and other sources to teach you more about the "ideals". Knowing the strong points of your goat will help you in fit and show!

Fitting and Showing is the highlight of exhibiting goats. Once you are in the show ring it is your goal to show off months of hard work and share with me what you have learned about your project. Showmanship is the same, no matter your breed or project. You must show that you have worked with your goat.

The appearance of your animal, including its condition, hair, hoof trimming (recently done), clipping (body clipping is preferred for market class), clipping of the tail area and ears, and cleanliness (especially the legs, feet, tail, ears and nose) is important. Showmanship, including leading, posing and showing, moving from one side to another, showing your animal to its "best advantage" at all times, changing position in a line-up, poise, alertness and a courteous attitude is also important. Once stopped, you will have the front feet of your animal square under its body. The back legs are either square (market/meat breeds) or slightly back and spread (dairy). Pygmies will depend on the age and purpose of the goat. You are also evaluated on *your* appearance. You should be clean and dressed to represent 4-H or FFA. Refer to your county's dress code, if any.

I must emphasize again *showing your animal to its best advantage*. You may be asked to show someone else's goat, quickly noting its faults and showing it to "hide" them from me. Remember that most animals look great standing a bit uphill. I will be looking for showmen who are alert, with "one eye on their animal and one on me!" The top showmen will be "natural" and smooth, keep trying, and are positive no matter where they are in a line up.

Knowledge of your project is also important. I may ask you about parts of your goat, terminology, feeding, preventive medicine, breed standards and traits, and show preparation. Current 4-H publications, books, your leaders and websites will be helpful as you prepare for your upcoming shows. I look forward to meeting you and seeing the outcome of all your hard work! Enjoy yourselves!

Useful Resources:

ADGA Dairy Goat Score Card and ADGA Dairy Goat Showmanship Score Card
Boer goats websites and links, i.e., USBGA, ABGA and related sites and handbooks
Pygmies: APGA website and links
Texas Agricultural Extension Service AS 3-4.060 10/98 (4-H Meat Goat Guide)
Current WSU publications