

Central Washington Animal Agriculture Team



Fact Sheet # 1010-2003

Training, Grooming and Showing Market Goats

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SHOWMANSHIP: EXPECTATIONS

Showmanship:

Showmanship can be defined by an effective presentation of your market goat. You are judged on your ability to:

- 1) Control your goat
- 2) Present your goat
 - a. Bring out its best characteristics
 - b. Show out the faults of your goat so they are less obvious to the judge
 - c. **MAKE YOUR GOAT LOOK ITS BEST**
- 3) Knowledge of your goat and the meat goat industry.

With this in mind, you must commit yourself to hard work and practice in advance to arrive at the fair with a goat that is well trained and groomed, and to have the confidence in yourself needed to compete successfully.

My Perspective on Judges and Showmanship Styles:

Each judge has a slightly different philosophy and style when it comes to evaluating showmanship. Meat goat projects are relatively new to the Pacific Northwest (PNW) and gaining in popularity. Many meat goat showmanship styles and guidelines are being developed and adapted from the traditional showmanship of dairy goats. With this being said, many different judging styles are seen in today's show rings. One judge is no more correct than another, but because of these differences it is critical to attend the

judge's demonstration, ask questions, and watch the judging of other classes if possible. As an exhibitor, parent, leader, advisor, or spectator you do not have to agree with the judge; however it is good sportsmanship and within the "Showing Code of Ethics" to respect the decision of the judge.

Because of these large differences between judges and styles it is critical for show personnel and superintendents to hire a judge that compliments the style of the show and request a showmanship clinic from the judge. Most judges are willing to conduct a showmanship clinic prior to showmanship classes and answer any questions an exhibitor or leader may have. The judges will outline what they expect from the exhibitors from the grooming and showing aspect. This makes for a positive experience for all involved in the show, including the judge. There are things exhibitors can also do to be prepared for whatever style of judge shows up at their fair. As a showperson in today's show rings it is critical that you have a well-trained goat, know the basics of showmanship, have knowledge of your goat and the market goat industry, and be prepared to listen to "what the judge is looking for" AND be willing to modify your showmanship style to meet the request of the judge.

BEFORE THE SHOW

Rules/Regulations:

It is your responsibility, as an exhibitor, to read the general and special rules governing the show you are attending. By sending in your entry form you are agreeing to abide by and uphold the rules of the show. If you are unwilling or unable to fulfill these obligations, it is best that you do not exhibit at that show.

Show Box Equipment:

• Show Box	• Fitting Stand
• Electric shears*	• 20- and 23-tooth combs with cutters*
• Small Animal Clippers	• Soft brush for grooming
• Goat blanket and/or sock	• Collar
• Hoof trimmers	• Livestock Soap
• Hot air blower or towels	
*optional	

Dehorning:

Many shows require that goats be dehorned. If your goat has horns when you purchase it, contact your local veterinarian about “dehorning” your goat. Be sure to schedule dehorning early, so the animal has proper time to heal prior to the show.

Training:

Time: Spend time with your goat—clean their pen, provide them with feed and water, and they will quickly learn you are “OK” and they will become your friend. I believe in “training” an animal, not “breaking” an animal. Therefore, you must start preparing for the show months before the actual date. Gain your goat’s trust, and you will be rewarded with friendship and success from your goat. There is no “Quick-Fix” for hard work and time when training an animal.

Collar Training: Collar training is a great way to train your goat to handling, while gaining valuable exercise needed by your market goat to develop muscle definition. Each time you handle your goat, handle the goat’s legs and practice leading your goat. The goat will quickly become accustomed to you handling it, and the training of your goat for showmanship will be easier.

Practice Showing: Practice showing your goat with someone acting as the judge, remembering to keep the goat’s head held high and feet positioned correctly. The goat will quickly learn its job and what you expect of it. Reward your goat when it performs as expected and return it to its pen. Do not overwork your goat, which will create bad habits and fatigue for both you and the goat.

Trimming:

Hooves: Trim the goat’s hooves about one (1) week prior to the show. This will allow the goat to heal if

you accidentally cut into the quick and the goat becomes temporarily lame. Remember, the general public will be viewing your goat and developing opinions about the goat industry in general—so we want our goats to be healthy and happy.

Grooming:

As stated earlier, some shows in the PNW have different rules and requirements, so be sure to read the rules in well in advance. With the newness and inexperience in market goat showmanship seek out people or resources that can help aid you with the latest trends and styles. Refer to handout: “New York State 4-H Meat Goat Project Fact Sheet #22: Getting Your Meat Kid Ready for a Show” by Dr. Tatiana Stanton

AT THE SHOW

Dress:

Exhibitors should not only dress neatly, but they also need to pay attention to appropriateness of their dress. Remember, you will be bending over and squatting down at times, so wear clothes that are comfortable and appropriate. **YOU ARE SHOWING YOUR GOAT—NOT YOURSELF.** You do not want to wear cloths that distract from your goat. Some good rules of thumb concerning dress code are:

- 1) Leather boots or shoes for safety.
- 2) Clean jeans and slacks. No faded or ripped jeans.
- 3) Button-down shirts or polo shirts—**Conservatively buttoned up.**
- 4) No hats

Showing:

Before the Show: Evaluate the show ring prior to showmanship, paying close attention to where low spots are located. You want to make sure the goat’s front feet don’t end up in the low spots. You always want to set the goat going uphill .

Leading: Lead the goat from the left side with the right hand when possible. Keep the goat between you and the judge. Keep the goat’s front shoulder even with your leg and the goat’s head in front of your body.

Lining Up: If the judge pulls you into line, your goat’s shoulder should line up with the shoulder of the first goat in line. Keep your goat parallel to the other goats. If the judge lines you up head-to-tail, always line up straight behind the goat at the front of the line. **KEEP THE LINES STRAIGHT**—this will make it easier for the judge to evaluate and compare goats.

Setting Up: Set the goat up so that the legs are square. Keeping the goat's head straight over its body. The goat should look eye appealing and alert. You should remain standing at all times.

General: Know where the judge is and stay alert. The judge may handle your goat at any moment or ask you to move to another place in the show ring. ENTER THE RING SHOWING YOUR GOAT AND LEAVE SHOWING YOUR GOAT. First impressions are critical, especially in large shows. Only stop showing if the judge informs you that you may do so.

CONCLUSION

Finally, remember the goals of showmanship are to learn about your goat and the meat goat industry, to showcase meat goats and chevon products in a competitive event for the general public to observe and learn from, and last, but not least—HAVE FUN. If you have done your best—leave the ring with your head held high, despite your placing. Learn from your successes and mistakes, watch other showpersons, and improve your skills for the next time you enter the show ring. Showmanship is a constant learning experience, because showmanship styles and philosophies are constantly changing all over the country. And last, but not least; REMEMBER GOOD SHOWMANSHIP ETHICS—Win with graciousness and lose with dignity—then everyone a winner.