

Dairy Goats: A Growing Industry



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The dairy goat industry in the U.S. has grown significantly in the past 20 years. Between the growing trend of homesteading and producers looking to expand into more diverse markets, many are seeing the benefits goats bring with their smaller, easy-to-manage size. More

consumers are also discovering the diverse products dairy goats produce such as their milk, cheese, lotion and more.

Although we have seen the number of dairy farms shrinking in Wisconsin and other states, the number of dairy goats has been on the rise. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's last census done in 2017, dairy goat herds have increased in all 48 states, with the number of operations more than doubling. The number rose 61 percent between 2007 and 2017. Out of all the states, Wisconsin had the largest increase with 47,000 animals.

As new producers get into raising dairy goats and others expand their current herd size, Crystal Creek® is here to help with our ration balancing services and wide range of nutrition and animal health products.

Ration Balancing Services

Crystal Creek® provides ration balancing and consulting services to producers. We utilize goat specific ration balancing software that considers many factors that influence a goat's overall performance. By doing so, we can better predict dairy goat production and producer profitability.

With the ration balancing software, nutritionists select between animal specifications and environmental factors. Some animal specs include goat breed, age, and body. As you can see in Figure 1, milk production and components are also entered in. The environmental factors that are considered are temperature and wind speed, as well as the activity level. All this information is important in order to properly balance a ration to meet requirements and production goals.

Once the animal specifications and environmental factors are entered, nutritionists balance diets to ensure all nutrient requirements are met. The software also predicts if production goals will potentially be met or exceeded based off metabolizable energy and protein. By utilizing software that considers all the factors that impact the health and production of a dairy goat, Crystal Creek® can better predict and influence performance.

Figure 1

Breed Type		Dairy	
Primary Breed		Alpine	100%
Secondary Breed			
Lactation Number	n	2.00	
Age (actual average)	months	36.00	
Mean FBW	lb.	105.8	
Standard Reference Weight at BCS 2.5	lb.	114.6	
Weeks of Lactation	n	6.00	
Days Pregnant	days	0	
Daily Milk Production	lb.	5.51	liters
Milk Fat	% w/w	3.50	% w/v
Milk Total Protein	% w/w	3.10	% w/v
Milk True Protein	% w/w	2.85	% w/v
Milk Urea	mg/dl	25.00	MUN mg/dl
BCS (0-5)		2.50	
Target BCS (or expected)		3.00	
Days to Reach Target BCS (or expected)	days	100	
Kids Birth weight	lb.	7.72	
ADG	lb./day	-0.01	

Feeding dairy goats like they are small cows is an outdated and ineffective approach to goat ration balancing. Crystal Creek's ration balancing software helps guide the decision-making process for nutritionists, however it is also very important to spend more time looking at the goats and seeing how they respond to the diet. This allows us to offer producers the most effective and profitable approach to dairy goat nutrition.

Nutrition Products

Along with our ration balancing services, Crystal Creek® offers producers a quality nutrition line for their goats. The Crystal Creek® 37% Goat Pellet is a superior protein pellet that offers a flexible feeding rate. Crystal Creek® also offers a highly fortified 2:1 goat mineral for all stages. Both are excellent options for goat producers, regardless of their operation size. The pelleted and the granular mineral are formulated with ingredients that are high quality and bioavailable to the animal.

100% Polysaccharide Chelate Trace Minerals:

Key trace mineral formulation is done solely with chelated polysaccharide trace minerals. Chelated trace minerals are highly bioavailable to the animal with absorption rates over 90%. This is in comparison to cheaper options used by other companies like oxides and sulfates. These cheaper sources are generally 10% to 50% bioavailable to the animal. This is significantly lower than the chelated trace mineral options. Research shows many benefits to the animals when chelated minerals are used, such as improved ADG, feed efficiency, and immune function.

100% Selenium Yeast Fortification:

Selenium Yeast is another highly bioavailable ingredient whereas other common selenium sources like sodium selenite are less than 25% bioavailable. Selenium is important for immune function, muscle growth, the prevention of white muscle disease, and feed efficiency. Formulating with 100% Selenium Yeast is consistent with Crystal Creek's strategy to fully support optimum performance with excellent nutrition.

Strong Vitamin Fortification:

The Crystal Creek® Goat Nutrition line is fortified with significant levels of vitamins A, D and E to meet requirements. These levels will support a dairy goat's high production demand. Strong vitamin levels also support optimum immune function and help reduce the risk of challenges such as mastitis or respiratory issues.

Health Products

Crystal Creek® offers a variety of supplements and topical products that can be used daily or used strategically depending on needs. Below are a few products out of several that are available.

Udder Care

Udder Fancy™ - A beeswax-based salve containing healing plant oils that provides a moisture barrier and promotes healthy tissue when teats become chapped or cracked. A great product to have on hand, especially during cold, dry winter months.

Veterinary Dairy Liniment™ - Uses contrast therapy to help reduce pain and inflammation. The natural wintergreen in this liniment initially warms the tissue increasing circulation and blood flow, while the menthol and camphor components cool and assist the lymphatic system with drainage.

Stress

Aloe products (available in pellet, meal and liquid form) - These products contain natural ingredients that are proven to decrease inflammation, stimulate immune function and promote nutrient absorption. Utilizing any of these products during difficult events, such as birth or mastitis cases, can have a positive impact on recovery and overall production.

Transition and Post-partum

Cow Quench™ - An oral drench given to does experiencing pregnancy toxemia. This product contains glycerin which has been proven to help provide energy. It also contains electrolytes to rehydrate and natural plant extracts to support appetite.

Fresh-N-Drink™ - This product has flexible feeding rates and is designed to be given to the doe after kidding to help promote a smoother transition into production. The ingredients in this product provide energy and calcium needed by does that have just given birth.

Crystal Creek® is here to offer dairy goat producers the tools and knowledge they need to be successful in this fast-growing industry. High quality nutrition and products paired with effective strategies will help producers to be profitable and sustainable. Give Crystal Creek® a call today to learn more.

References available upon request.