

# THE BLEAT

A UGA Extension Newsletter for Middle Georgia Sheep and Goat Producers



## #StillFarming Through a Pandemic

By Caitlin Jackson

County Extension Coordinator/ANR Agent  
Monroe County

While this may be a tumultuous time for our nation one thing has become abundantly clear; agriculture is a necessity. Empty shelves and meat cases during the height of the pandemic hoarding forced Americans to question their food sources. Consumers were not the only ones to reevaluate as farmers and ranchers shifted to direct sales to meet new niche marketing opportunities. The #StillFarming social media movement created a perfect opportunity to highlight American agriculture and communicate that even through a pandemic farmers and ranchers continue to work hard to put food on American tables. If this true farm to table movement has inspired you to directly market sheep and goat products and bi-products to consumers we hope this issue provides useful information and guidance to continue on #StillFarming.

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# NO. DON'T EAT THAT!

by Brooklyne Wassel | Pike County

Sheep and goats make excellent additions to grazing systems for numerous reasons, but often the most appealing attribute is their dietary preference. While cattle and horses are grazers preferring grasses and legumes, sheep and goats are largely browsers. This leaning towards woody and weedy options means they can do wonders for cleaning up a pasture, but it also means they might be more likely to get themselves into trouble with toxic weeds.

Toxic weeds can come in all shapes and sizes and cause issues from lethargy to death, so they are not your average foe. Keep in mind that the word “weed” simply means a plant that is unwanted given the situation and place. A plant might be considered a weed in your pasture and still be considered an ornamental in your front yard, so when reviewing toxic weed lists, think about your animals’ access to these plants. A milkweed might make the perfect host plant in your pollinator garden, but if you have constant escapees that help themselves to the garden, the milkweed might cause issues for your livestock’s health as a toxic weed.

There are a couple of things to keep in mind before hitting the panic button and throwing on your boots to scout pastures. Animals normally choose to consume safe plant material if there is enough available. This is not always fool-proof, but it does drive home the importance of proper pasture management. Be familiar with timing of grazing management techniques such as rotational grazing. When implementing rotational grazing and integrated parasite management, you do not have to sacrifice one for the other; keep an eye on forage height and number of days before returning to a given pasture to keep parasite pressure to a minimum. This will help keep down the temptation or need to graze toxic plants.



**"WHEN  
REVIEWING TOXIC  
WEED LISTS,  
THINK ABOUT  
YOUR ANIMALS'  
ACCESS TO THESE  
PLANTS"**



Know your animal's normal behavior! Knowing your animals can be the difference between spotting a low dose of toxic ingestion in time and missing the opportunity to reverse the effects. This is not always easy for larger farms with more than a small herd or flock. Making notes such as where animals like to congregate in pastures, who's the first to come up to eat or be milked can help spot outliers in behavior.

Toxic weed lists and resources are numerous; be sure to utilize research-based information and sources. If you are unsure of a plant, take some pictures and send them to your local County Extension Agent for identification. Once you discover toxic weeds or the potential for animals to have access to toxic plants, what's the next step? You have options! Ensure animals have enough quality plant material to meet their nutritional requirement to reduce the temptation. Remember, nutrient requirement changes based on age, lactation, gestation, etc. If there is not enough quality pasture, consult your local Extension agent to create a game plan for renovating the pasture through soil testing, planting, stocking rate, and management. It may be necessary to utilize temporary fencing to block off an area of the pasture or restrict time in that area until the weeds are controlled. Chemical and mechanical control may be options depending on the weed. Your Extension agent can help you with this recommendation as well. Hopefully your pastures are full of quality forbs and browse, but if toxic weeds are present, knowing is the first, vital step.

**Here is a brief list that includes some commonly found toxic weeds to look for when walking pastures:**

- **Coffee Weed** (Senna spp.)
- **Sickle Pod** (Cassia obtusifolia)
- **Buckeye** (Aesculus spp.)
- **Dogbane** (Apocynum cannabinum)
- **Pokeweed** (Phytolacca americana)
- **Wild Cherries** (Prunus spp.)
- **Buttercup** (Ranunculus spp.)
- **Black Locust** (Robinia pseudoacacia)
- **Nightshade, Wild Jasmine** (Solanum spp.)
- **Ornamentals:** (Rhododendron spp., Asclepias spp., Asclepias spp., Euphorbia spp., Lantana camara)



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"Winter forage crops help control weeds and improve soils in addition to providing winter grazing"

## WHAT IS YOUR WINTER GRAZING PLAN?

*Written by Shanna Reynolds | Oglethorpe County*

As we enter fall and you are stocking hay in the barn, gearing up for kidding/lambing, and possibly beginning to stockpile fescue growth, I hope you are also working on plans to overseed areas with winter forage.

Stored hay can be a convenient wintering option, but convenience always comes at a price. Grazing is almost always the cheapest way to feed livestock so plan to increase profits by extending your grazing season.

I've always been told that the most successful cattlemen don't grow beef, they grow grass. This certainly can apply to our small ruminant flocks.

Although their success is very weather dependent, winter forage crops help control weeds and improve soils in addition to providing winter grazing. They are also generally high in nutritive value, making them a welcomed addition to fall kidding or lambing operations trying to support lactation.

I encourage you to start making preparations and forage adjustments now. Don't wait until your summer stands are completely gone to figure it out. If you've ever had any dealings with Extension, what I will tell you next should come as no surprise. Run a soil test.

Like any crop, forages require quite a few nutrients for adequate growth. A soil test is the only reliable method of knowing which nutrients you need and in what amounts. Your first priority should be adjusting the soil pH (acidity) to an appropriate level. Ideally, you would have already run the test before now for fall plantings, but better late than never. Personally, I've already had my soil tested, but rain has kept the lime truck from being able to deliver so my planting dates are inching later and later all the time. Go ahead and get that test done right away. Call the Extension office if you need more information on testing.

As soon as your soil samples are sent off, start seed shopping. We have a variety of quality seed options available throughout the state so you may have trouble narrowing down what to plant. Some of the more common options include small grains such as wheat, rye, or oats with rye being the most tolerant of repeated grazing.

Annual ryegrass, a completely different species than rye, is heavily relied upon by livestock producers throughout the South. It's tolerance to a wide range of soil conditions along with easy establishment makes it a popular choice. It is also one of the most economical options due to its low seeding rate. If planted early, it gives good fall cover and will generally regrow well into the spring.

Another consideration could be adding legumes such as clovers into the mix with winter annuals or an established fescue stand. Not only are they an excellent source of grazing nutrients to your animals, but clovers and other legumes fixate nitrogen into the soil and can save you from needing a second application of nitrogen fertilizer in some cases. Crimson clover has been an inexpensive go-to for me, but there are several proven varieties of clover available.

If you're comfortable with common winter grazing mixtures and want to step outside the box a little this year, you could consider some brassicas (ex: radishes, forage turnips, rape) or maybe some newer small grain varieties. My local Feed and Hardware Supply, highly recommended "Surge" Triticale to me this year. Triticale is a rye/wheat hybrid that is known to produce high quality forage and have disease and drought tolerance.

I look forward to seeing those lush green pastures this fall and through the spring. Let your local Extension agent know how they can help. You don't want to waste your time and expense of planting by not getting a good stand so give us a call if you have any questions about seeding rates, ground preparation, weed control, fertilization, or grazing intensity.



"Crimson clover has been an inexpensive go-to for me, but there are several proven varieties of clover available."



# GEORGIA DAIRY GOAT BREEDERS ASSOCIATION (GDGBA) MEMBER SURVEY

Summary by Dr. Niki Whitley | FVSU Extension Specialist

**Results for the open-ended question about needs/what UGA/Georgia Extension can do to help producers included a desire for information on (number in parentheses is the number of people responding with that topic):**

- Licensing, Grade A, Pet Food (and what it involves) (6)
- Repro/AI/ET/semen collection and resources; kidding (handling/preventing problems), breeding (for production and/or conformation)/genetics (6)
- Business management: farm recordkeeping/business prin.; business planning, sales and marketing, product pricing (4)
- Off label medication use, producer vet medicine/first aid beyond beginner level, education of vets on goats (4)
- Nutrition: feed/forage analysis int.; good crops to plant for browse/graze; signs/symptoms of mineral deficiencies (i.e. Cu/Se); land management/fencing/rotational grazing; ID poisonous plants (4);
- Parasites, worm prevention, 'old ways' of parasite control that work (3)
- General herd management; castrations, tattooing, disbudding; small scale dairying vs meat (3)
- Organic practices/certifications and organizations (2)

The Georgia Dairy Goat Breeders Association (GDGB; <https://www.georgiadairygoats.com/>) sent out a needs assessment survey for Dr. Niki Whitley to help Georgia Extension professionals at Fort Valley State University (FVSU) and University of Georgia (UGA) develop ideas for dairy-focused small ruminant programming in the state. There were approximately 68 members listed on their website (Figure 1) - only those who want to be listed are included on their website.

For the survey, 21 people responded, the majority of which had 20 or less animals in their herd (Figure 2). Sixty-two percent indicated they have a pet food license (to sell raw milk), only 1 responded yes to certified grade A. There are seven Grade A Certified goat dairies (no sheep) in the State, with only one advertising fluid milk sales on their website. For survey respondents, 57% indicated they had Nigerian Dwarf goats with Nubian and Saanen being other listed breeds.



Figure 1. GDGBA map of members from: [www.georgiadairygoats.com/members-farms](http://www.georgiadairygoats.com/members-farms)

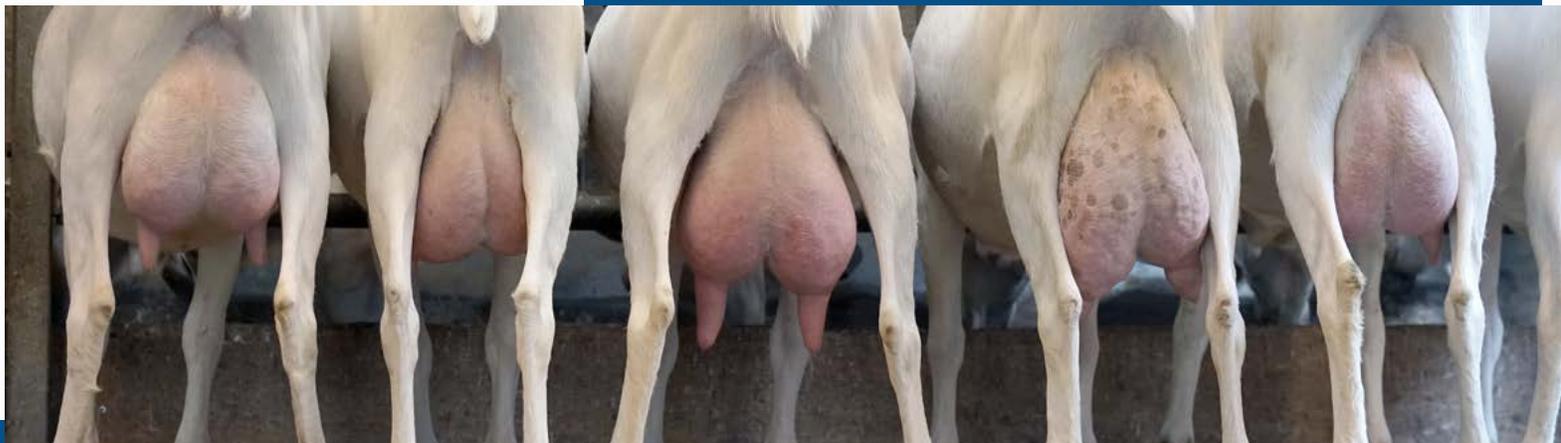
Individual responses also included information on mastitis; Who, What and Why of membership groups; Who are they and why join them/can they help? Georgia Grown, Georgia Organics, ADGA, GDGBA, Rodale Institute, American Cheese Society; internships (how/why) and volunteers (drafting volunteer job descriptions; why employ them); sanitization for the home dairy; milk-borne pathogens, soap making, in-person classes open to homesteaders, herd testing in GA so samples aren't mailed so far away (CL, CAE, Johnes, brucellosis), Spanish speaking resources and classes, education for the public regarding dairy goats and their products and working with young people to understand significance of dairy goats (help family provide food).

This information was provided by Dr. Niki Whitley at a recent “Monthly Milk Minute” meeting of UGA Extension personnel and it has generated interested among specialists and agents for providing programming and writing grants for research that would help small ruminant dairy producers. Dr. Lee Jones of the diagnostic lab in Tifton, GA indicated that his lab does the herd testing (or has a contract lab that does it) so samples would not have to be sent so far away.

Dr. Valerie Ryman at UGA indicated that she can help dairy goat producers with milk cultures and somatic cell counts, or if they want to learn more including aseptic milk collection techniques, etc. Her email is vryman@uga.edu and your local county extension agent can also help you get in touch with her.

If you want to provide ideas to add to list or have ideas for how to provide this information, please contact Dr. Niki Whitley at whitleyn@fvsu.edu or Dr. Jillian Bohlen at jfain@uga.edu or your local county extension office <https://extension.uga.edu/county-offices.html>.

**"57% indicated they had Nigerian Dwarf goats with Nubian and Saanen being other listed breeds."**



**"FOR THE SURVEY, 21 PEOPLE RESPONDED, THE MAJORITY OF WHICH HAD 20 OR LESS ANIMALS IN THEIR HERD"**

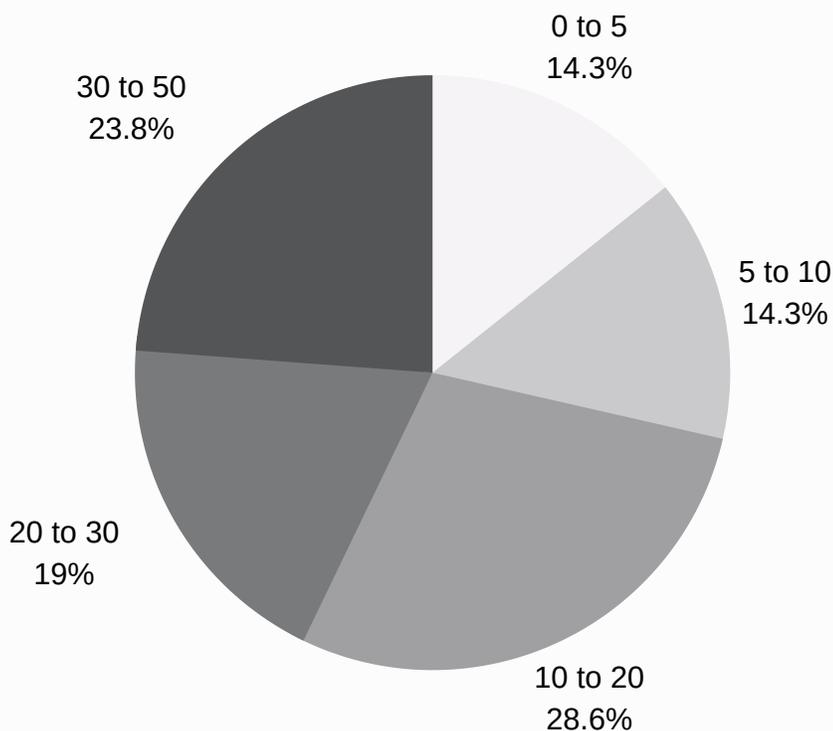


Figure 2. Number of animals in GA dairy goat herds responding to GDGBA survey.



# So.... You Want to Buy Meat Directly From a Farmer?

**A 101 EXTENSION FACT-SHEET ON BUYING MEAT LOCALLY**



**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**  
**EXTENSION**

*Lucy Ray & Jay Moon, Morgan County Extension, ANR Program  
Hailey Robinson, Lamar/Upson County ANR Agent  
Alexander Stelzleni, UGA Meat Science Specialist*

## IS IT LEGAL TO BUY MEAT DIRECTLY FROM A FARMER?

- All meat, sold by the cut, must be inspected by the USDA or State (Georgia Department of Agriculture).
- Individuals can buy an animal “on the hoof” and have it processed for personal use as Custom Exempt, by a Georgia Department of Agriculture licensed facility. Typically, in this case, the purchaser is responsible for the cost of processing the animal.
- An animal can be owned/shared by more than one person.

## WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PROCESSING?

- Goats and lambs are generally ready for harvest between 5-8 months of age depending on body condition and breed.
- Hogs are generally finished and ready for harvest at around 6 months.
- Cattle finish at 1000-1400 pounds which can take 18-22 months.
- Grass or grain finished beef, lamb, and goats are all raised on grass and most are supplemented with grain during the final or “finishing” portion of their lives.
- Grain-finished animals produce more marbling, while 100% grass finished animals often tend to have a more yellowed colored fat, caused by carotenoids from green forage.
- The choice between grass or grain-finished is personal preference.
- Before processing, let your processor know your preferences, such as...
  - Keeping variety meats
  - Thickness of steaks
  - Weight of roasts
  - Packaging quantities

Be sure to contact your local Extension office or the Georgia Department of Agriculture for updated regulation information.

## DID THE BUTCHER STEAL MY MEAT?

- Carcasses are broken down into primal cuts, and then broken down further, into sub primal & retail cuts.
- Remember that a fattier carcass yields less meat.
- Heavier muscled animals yield more meat.
- Other factors that affect the amount of meat you receive from your animal include bone-in cuts that yield more weight than boneless cuts, how much fat is discarded, and aging time. This all affects the amount of meat you receive after processing.
- There are many different options for how carcasses can be cut or processed. Be sure to educate yourself on these options. Remember, that buying a 500-pound steer does not mean that you will receive 500 pounds of ribeye steak.
- Typically, when processing an animal, you are charged by pounds of Hot Carcass Weight (HCW). Remember that number is of the total hanging weight; including lean, fat, and bone directly after harvest. Some of that weight will be discarded as undesirable trim, fat, and bone.
- Aging processes for meat adds a tenderizing and palatable effect on the meat. However, there is shrink related to water loss. Carcasses are typically aged for 7-14 days. (Consult with your processor on ideal aging time for your carcass)
- Dressing percentages are as follows:
  - Hogs ~70% live weight
  - Cattle ~60% live weight
  - Sheep/Goats ~50% live weight

## STORAGE & OTHER THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Frozen meat can last for up to a year.
- Remember you must have adequate freezer space for meat storage. Rule of thumb is 1 cubic foot of freezer space for every 35-40 pounds of packaged meat.
- Options for packaging include shrink-wrapping, butcher paper, and clear film. Processors may ask your preference.
- Edible by-products can include the tongue, liver, heart, sweetbreads, etc.
- Communicate with your processor of choice on payment and pickup.

*For more information regarding purchasing and processing meat locally, please contact your local county Extension Office.*

*Created April 2020*

*Below are example cut sheets. Keep in mind that each processor's cut sheet is unique.*

**Example Beef Cuts Sheet**

**Example Pork Cut Sheet**

Please circle one of the following:  Whole  OR  Half  OR  Quarter  
 Pounds/Roast \_\_\_\_\_ Thick/Steak \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Customer Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Cut Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Plant Purposes:** \_\_\_\_\_ **HCW:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Total pounds of Boxed Product:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Age of Animal:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Grind:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Cuts:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle one of the following:  Whole  OR  Half  
 Whole  OR  Half  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 HCW: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle one of the following choices for each primal:

**Picnic:** Whole or Half or Grind |  
**Boston Butt:** Whole or Half or Grind or Steak  
**Loin:** Bone-In or Boneless  
 Roast or Chops  
 Lbs/Rst \_\_\_\_\_ or Thickness of Chops \_\_\_\_\_"  
**Ham:** Whole or Half or Grind  
**Trim:** Ground Pork or Sausage (Mild or Hot)

**Chuck:** Shoulder (boneless) - Roast OR Steak OR Grind  
 Chuck (boneless) - Roast OR Steak OR Grind  
 Stew- \_\_\_\_\_ lbs.  
 Brisket- Whole OR Flat OR Grind  
**Rib:** Boneless: Roast OR Steak  
 Skirt Steak Yes OR Grind  
**Loin:** T-bone OR NY Strip/Tenderloin  
 Sirloin Steak-Boneless  
 Flank Steak Yes OR Grind

**Round:** Inside- London Broil OR Top Round Steak OR Cube Steak OR Grind  
 Eye- Roast OR Eye Steak OR Cube Steak OR Grind  
 Flat- Roast OR Bottom Steak OR Cube Steak OR Grind  
 Tip- Roast OR Tip Steak OR Cube Steak OR Grind  
 Ground Beef (2lb packs) - Regular (~80/20) OR Lean (~85/15)

**Special Instructions:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Various (circle items wanted): Tongue Liver Heart Or-Tails

*Thank you to the University of Georgia Meat Science & Technology Center for providing these examples.*



# HANDLING OF LIVESTOCK PRIOR TO HARVESTING

BY HAILEY ROBINSON | UPSON/LAMAR COUNTIES

Georgia Department of Agriculture (GDA) and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) have strict regulations on how to handle livestock prior to the harvesting process. These rules are set in place to execute proper handling of any and all livestock in the most humane way possible. These regulations can be found on the GDA website under; Code of Federal Regulations, 9 CFR, Chapter III, Part 313.2

## § 313.2 Handling of livestock.

- (a) Driving of livestock from the unloading ramps to the holding pens and from the holding pens to the stunning area shall be done with a minimum of excitement and discomfort to the animals. Livestock shall not be forced to move faster than a normal walking speed.
- (b) Electric prods, canvas slappers, or other implements employed to drive animals shall be used as little as possible in order to minimize excitement and injury. Any use of such implements which, in the opinion of the inspector, is excessive, is prohibited. Electrical prods attached to AC house current shall be reduced by a transformer to the lowest effective voltage not to exceed 50 volts AC.
- (c) Pipes, sharp or pointed objects, and other items which, in the opinion of the inspector, would cause injury or unnecessary pain to the animal shall not be used to drive livestock.
- (d) Disabled livestock and other animals unable to move.
  - (1) Disabled animals and other animals unable to move shall be separated from normal ambulatory animals and placed in the covered pen provided for in § 313.1(c).
  - (2) The dragging of disabled animals and other animals unable to move, while conscious, is prohibited. Stunned animals may, however, be dragged.
  - (3) Disabled animals and other animals unable to move may be moved, while conscious, on equipment suitable for such purposes; e.g., stone boats.
- (e) Animals shall have access to water in all holding pens and, if held longer than 24 hours, access to feed. There shall be sufficient room in the holding pen for animals held overnight to lie down.
- (f) Stunning methods approved in § 313.30 shall be effectively applied to animals prior to their being shackled, hoisted, thrown, cast, or cut.

All federal and state inspected facilities must follow these regulations and get evaluated periodically.

# STORING UP FOR WINTER

*Nicole Walters, Monroe County  
Family and Consumer Sciences Agent*



## COLD MEAT STORAGE RECOMMENDATIONS

*Source- [www.foodsafety.gov](http://www.foodsafety.gov)*

Fall has finally arrived and with it brings the hustle and bustle just before the holiday season. As the weather cools, some are freshening up yards and landscaping for the colder weather ahead. Others begin decorating their homes for the upcoming holiday occasions. With more time spent at home this year than usual, early holiday shopping has begun. Holiday gathering and meal planning is also underway. Although the pandemic may require gatherings in smaller numbers, we will still plan to have meals with family and friends this holiday season. As markets and grocery stores begin advertising sales on items, specifically meat, consider how long it is recommended that you store meats in the refrigerator or freezer prior to use to avoid spoilage. Listed below are recommended storage times by meat type. These recommendations are suggested when the refrigerator temperature is 40°F or below and the freezer temperature is 0°F or below.

### GROUND MEATS

Refrigerator: 1 to 2 days

Freezer: 3 to 4 months

### FRESH MEATS (STEAKS, CHOPS & ROASTS)

Refrigerator: 3 to 5 days

Freezer: 4 to 12 months

### COOKED MEAT

Refrigerator: 3 to 4 days

Freezer: 2 to 6 months

### SOUPS & STEWS (WITH MEAT ADDED)

Refrigerator: 3 to 4 days

Freezer: 2 to 3 months



## GOAT CHEESE TRUFFLES

By Ree Drummond ([www.foodnetwork.com](http://www.foodnetwork.com))

### Ingredients

- Two 8-ounce logs goat cheese
- 1/4 cup sour cream
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 cup minced fresh dill
- 1/4 cup toasted sesame seeds
- 2 tablespoons chopped walnuts
- 2 tablespoons chopped dried cherries
- 24 pretzel sticks

### Directions

1. Line a baking sheet with parchment.
2. Add the goat cheese, sour cream and salt to the bowl of a food processor and process until smooth, about 30 seconds. Using a tablespoon, scoop out some of the mixture and roll it into a ball to form a truffle. Place on the prepared baking sheet and repeat until you have 24 truffles. Transfer to the freezer to firm up, about 10 minutes.
3. Put the dill and sesame seeds into separate small bowls. Mix the walnuts and cherries in a third small bowl.
4. Roll 8 of the cheese balls in the dill, 8 in the sesame seeds and 8 in the walnut and cherry mixture. Transfer the truffles to a serving platter. Insert a pretzel stick into each truffle. If making ahead of time, cover and refrigerate the balls without the pretzel sticks, then insert the sticks right before serving.



*Planning gift lists is always fun. Give your loved ones something they can use for the rest of the year!*



## GREEN GOAT MILK SMOOTHIE

Source: [www.meyenberg.com](http://www.meyenberg.com)

### Ingredients

- 1 cup of goat milk, can be made from powdered goat milk
- 3 cups of leafy greens, lightly chopped
- 1 apple, chopped
- 1 avocado, pitted and peeled
- 1 frozen banana, peeled and chopped
- Honey or maple syrup to taste
- ¼ cup of ice, optional

### Directions

**Add all ingredients into the blender, and blend until smooth. Pour into a cup to enjoy before work, or in a jar to take your green smoothie on the go.**



## Gifts from the Farm

Search online for gift idea instructions/recipes you can make at home. Ideas include:

- Goat's Milk and Honey Soap
- Goat Cheese and Pepper Jelly Set
- Cookie Mix in a Glass Jar
- Homemade Dog Treats



# Congratulations!!!



ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR FOR 4-H AND FFA MEMBERS SHOWING LAMBS

**Mary Persons FFA**  
Willow Waldrep

**Monroe 4-H**  
Jeremiah Head  
Cohen Talton  
Lola Talton  
Jadon White

**Lamar 4-H**  
Gracen Aly Parker  
Mary McEvers

**Upton 4-H**  
Bristol Brooks

**Upton-Lee FFA**  
Ashley Wheeler



# CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

## COUNTY AGENTS

.....

### **CAITLIN JACKSON**

Monroe County

#### **CONTACT**

E-mail: [crbenn@uga.edu](mailto:crbenn@uga.edu)

Office: 478-994-7014

### **SHANNA REYNOLDS**

Oglethorpe County

#### **CONTACT**

E-mail: [shanna.reynolds@uga.edu](mailto:shanna.reynolds@uga.edu)

Office: 706-743-8341

### **HAILEY ROBINSON**

Lamar/Upson Counties

#### **CONTACT**

E-mail: [hrobinson@uga.edu](mailto:hrobinson@uga.edu)

Office: 706-647-8989

### **NICOLE WALTERS**

Monroe County

#### **CONTACT**

E-mail: [nicole.walters@uga.edu](mailto:nicole.walters@uga.edu)

Office: 478-994-7014

### **BROOKLYNE WASSEL**

Pike County

#### **CONTACT**

E-mail: [brooklyne.wassel@uga.edu](mailto:brooklyne.wassel@uga.edu)

Office: 770-567-2010

## EXTENSION SPECIALIST

.....

### **DR. NIKI WHITLEY**

Fort Valley State University Cooperative  
Extension

#### **Contact**

Phone: 478-825-6577

Cell: 478-391-4840

Email: [whitleyn@fvsu.edu](mailto:whitleyn@fvsu.edu)



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