

How to Blood Test Goats

Manning and Stratton Puska, [Red House Dairy Goats](#)

Raising healthy goats takes a lot of time, energy, and knowledge. Knowing how and what to feed your goats, what type of housing to provide them, how to keep them safe from injury and illness, and what medicines to provide them are all important. Routine monitoring your goat's health through laboratory blood tests is an essential part of this effort. Routine biosecurity testing for diseases, pregnancy testing, and diagnostic testing when an animal is sick can provide a lot of information to goat breeders and owners.

Step 1: Decide what tests need to be performed. While veterinarians can provide all the services mentioned above, routine biosecurity (i.e. CAE or CL) and pregnancy testing are often done at an independent lab where the goat owner or breeder draws the blood and sends the specimen directly to the lab.

Step 2: Choose the lab that can provide the testing needed. Not all labs offer all tests. There are many labs in the United States such as Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (waddl.vetmed.wsu.edu), Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory (tvmdl.tamu.edu) UC Davis Veterinary Medicine (cahfs.vetmed.ucdavis.edu) to name a few. It is important to read the instructions provided by the lab on how to submit samples. While generally the requirements are the same, each lab will have specific requirements on collecting and mailing your blood samples.

If you have read this far and are still interested in drawing your own goat's blood on page 8 is a general step-by-step guideline.

SCORECARD BREAKDOWN

Evaluate the following 4 animals on General Appearance based on the ADGA and AGS scorecard and put in placement order from 1st to 4th. Answers based on Colt Churchill evaluation can be found on the last page.



A



C



B



D

Long Distance Hauling (Continued from page 7)

directory with you. I know people from just about every state in the union. If I received a phone call in the middle of the night, I would help a struggling goat farmer without thought. That directory provides you with like-minded people that you can trust. I would not be able to help you with anything mechanical, but I can get your animals, possibly your children/ family to safety until someone else can fix your truck. Also, if you broke down reasonably close to me, I have a mechanic on speed dial that can help you.

How much time advance planning?

I am already planning next years trip to Nationals and it is 11 months away. We are only 4 hours south of Louisville. Planning for long important trips takes time and effort. Months of time are needed to get ready, as far as I am concerned. Everything from equipment to vehicle maintenance needs to be thought about. Of course, so is getting the animals ready. Deciding whether to show your animals in the spring or just leave them to rest. I often have my National show string make their debut for that year at Nationals. I may take the odd doe out if she is not finished, but if she is "hot," I want her to stay "hot" so I will often choose not to stress her.

Blood Draw (Continued from page 3)

Step 3: Gather your supplies. You will need a needle and syringe, a blood collection tube, and alcohol wipes, a hair trimmer, and a safe sharps container. We use a 3cc syringe with a 20 ga X 1" needle, a red stopper 10 ml blood collection tube, and two alcohol prep pads per blood draw.

This is a great time to find a helper! Drawing blood on a goat is a two-person job. You need to find a partner that can help hold the goat still and in the correct position. This will give you the best chance of successfully drawing blood on the first attempt. Nobody, especially your goat, wants you to poke them multiple times.



Step 3.5: Wash your hands! It's always a good idea to wash your hands with soap and water.

Step 4: Prep your goat. A good location to draw blood is from the jugular vein in the neck of your goat. The jugular vein runs parallel to, and on both sides of, the throat. To create a clean and easy to view site to draw blood from, shave a small patch of hair from the neck on one side of the throat half way between the chest and lower jaw.

Step 5: Find the jugular vein. Have your partner lift and slightly rotate the goat's head while you press and hold on the jugular vein at the base of the goat's neck with one hand. You should see and feel the vein swell. When you press and release low on the jugular vein you will notice the swell and contraction of the vein. Be sure not to mistake the throat as the vein. With your other hand feel for the vein. It will feel firm yet pliable when pressed. Practice locating the jugular vein several times before attempting to insert your needle syringe to draw blood.

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