



Are you an entrepreneur?

Start thinking of goat raising as you would any other business venture.

What is an entrepreneur? The definition, according to the Oxford American Dictionary, is a person who organizes and manages a commercial undertaking, especially one involving commercial risk. Risk is the operative word. Having a great idea and the passion to turn it into a business is only part of the equation. How that idea is formulated, marketed, shared, and implemented is the difference between having a unique idea and building a successful company.

What does this have to do with raising goats? We all know that there is "risk" involved with goat tending. If most new goat producers survive the first year's learning curve without losing goats, they consider themselves lucky. Once you've acquired some good goat genetics, have kids on the ground and ready for market, what next? How do you get into the "business" of raising goats. How do you take that first kid crop and turn it into a business venture?

Did you do your homework before you purchased your first goat? Most don't. Several people get into the goat "business" without even having their fences & pens in

place. Goats are like that... you see one you like and you just have to bring it home.

If you haven't researched the markets in your area, you should. I've talked to many people interested in goats that ask: Can I make money raising goats? My reply: Do you know the market in your area? If you want to raise commercial goats, what is the closest slaughter market near you? Do you want to raise breeding stock and sell fullbloods to others? How many other goat producers are there in your area currently raising the breed of goat that you are considering? If you want to raise goats, but don't want to think about people eating your goats, then raising breeding stock is an option. But you will still have surplus buck kids that won't be stud buck material, so you will also have to know where you can sell your wethers.

My point is this: You need to research your markets. Know your territory. Start thinking of goat raising as you would any other business venture.

Develop a business plan: where you want to be next year, where you want to be 5 years from now; set goals. One goal would be to increase the number of goats in your herd (this can be short term). Another to improve the genetics of your herd (long term through selective breeding). A goal that all goat producers should have is to increase the public awareness of the goat industry.



By doing so, we improve our market potential.

Once you have thought about your goals (and sometimes we get the best inspiration while leaning on a fence), set your sights toward achieving them. Focus, focus, maintain focus.

With the face pace of today's world, we often put off the paperwork and planning in order to get the actual doing done. Great businesses do take planning and lots of work to achieve fruition. When you are President, Secretary/Treasurer and Chief poop shoveler, it's hard to do the paperwork and research. But if you want to be in the "business" of raising goats, create goals, educate yourself on

the best production methods, determine your markets and advertise your product.

Sometimes we have to create our own markets... especially with goats. Educate those around you to the benefits of raising goats, eating goat meat and by doing so you are creating customers for yourself.

Pause to reflect occasionally, lean on the fence and look into the future of the goat industry. It's so bright, you oughta be wearing shades!

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