Raising goats teaches valuable lessons. Goats are popular additions to small farms and homesteading family’s back yards. Goats are a versatile animals that can provide, milk, meat, and weed control. Some breeds of goat are raised for fiber, that is spun into yarn. They are mostly easy to keep, friendly and comical additions to the family farm. And, goats can be a handful! After raising goats, breeding, and caring for goats for fifteen years, I have compiled a list of 9 truths about
raising goats. I felt you should know some behind the scenes, real life experience from the goat barn.

There is No Such Thing as a Dumb Goat

1. Goats will be directly in the path of where you want to walk, will stand in the feed bowl you wish to fill, and generally be jumping in your face when you are in the pen. Except for the time that you need to catch one for a health check or to treat an illness or injury. The goats can smell a lead rope coming from 500 feet away. The Herd Boss will tense and the herd will pick up on this body language. They will work as a team to scatter the herd so you can not catch any of them. It will look like the goats are just frantically running from you, but believe me, they have a well orchestrated plan that will end with you sprawled in the mud with no goat at the end of the lead rope.
Raising goats can be fairly easy but you need to remember that they have a mischief streak a mile wide! You will learn to watch for potential danger to the goat and your belongings and learn to not leave things to chance.

2. A goat with horns will be able to shove her head through a small fence opening. She will not be able to remove her head however and will be stuck standing there until you rescue her. This is particularly important to be aware of when anything is low hanging like a hay feeder. Goats can become stuck and hang themselves.

3. Goats are herd animals and even if you have two goats, they may attempt to escape to locate a herd. If the fencing is not strong and tall enough to keep them in, they will repeatedly escape. The height of the fencing will depend on the size and breed of goat you choose. I have had a pygmy goat jump over a
four foot fence as if it was nothing.

4. Goats prefer to forage rather than graze on grass. If you let the goats out to graze in your yard, you will probably find them eating the bushes, vegetable garden or your neighbors flower bed.

You Will Wonder at Times Why You Decided to Start Raising Goats

5. Stopping by the barn, for a quick moment while wearing clean clothes will require time set aside to go back to the house and change your clothes before heading to the appointment or meeting. During the fall mating season, the
buck will try everything imaginable to rub his smelly body against your pants, no matter how hard you try to avoid him touching you. The goat who never jumps up will jump on you if you are wearing clean clothes.

6. Trying to pull a reluctant goat out of the stall using a lead rope and collar will get you nowhere, with a strained back. Learn to work with the animal and its natural tendencies and not against. Goats are unusually strong animals.

7. Goats will go on a hunger strike if they have to walk across wet ground to get to the hay.

Raising Goats and Having Babies!

8. While waiting for a pregnant doe to deliver, on her expected due date, nothing will happen. When you take a break to use the bathroom or eat a meal, the doe will deliver one or two perfect kids in record time and you will miss the whole thing.
The kids will be the cutest things since sliced bread. You will be totally smitten with each one. This may lead to you considering goat breeding as a side hobby, so that you can have more baby goats arrive on the farm.

**Raising Goats and Learning Lessons**

9. If you leave the feed shed or room open while the goats are out of their pen, they will know! You will find a party going on in the feed room with containers opened, and goats trying to eat as much grain as they can before they are found. It is extremely hard to convince them that the party is over. This is a great lesson in behavior management, your behavior not theirs. You will learn to not leave the feed room open.

Raising goats will show you where all of your farming weaknesses are. If you have a broken fence board, the goats will be happy to point that out to you. It will be the gaping hole where they left to visit the neighborhood across the way.

You know the one. Its the neighborhood with the gate at the entrance and all the yards are full of well tended flower beds and grass. Oh and it will also be the one with the homeowner standing in the front yard waving wildly at your goats and yelling.

The goats will remind you that you haven’t yet given them a ride in your car. They will stand on the hood and have a head butting match. Which will remind you of why you can’t have nice things.
Goats will enrich your homestead life, drive you nuts, and make you laugh. Provide your goats with plenty of sunshine, fresh air, a suitable stall or housing, and quality forage. Use grain sparingly, unless feeding lactating does and kids. Your goats will reward you with years of good farming fun and plenty of behavior lessons along the way.
For further information read _Goat Care and Maintenance_