

Pygora Goat Shearing

Introduction:

Goats are one of the most versatile livestock in an agricultural setting. They may be kept for fiber, meat, and milk, and have some waste management benefits as well. The Pygora goat is a fiber goat purposely bred to produce fine fiber for hand spinning. It is the only fiber goat developed in America and Pygora fleece, which comes in a range of colors, does not coarsen as the goat ages. In addition, Pygoras generally are affectionate and have engaging personalities, a manageable size and good health.

The only goat that may bear the name Pygora is a goat registered with the Pygora Breeders Association (PBA). In addition, all Pygora goats must conform to the Pygora Breed Standard, which includes conformation, color/patterns and fleece characteristics.

Best Management Practices:

Overview Pygora Goat Shearing

(Adapted from *Raising Happy Healthy Pygora Goats* pgs. 124-131 by Terri L. Kistler)

Note: Before starting shearing, clean the grooming area to help ensure no debris gets into the sheared fleece.

- 1.) Assess the goat. Make sure to have blown out as much debris as possible from the coat, directing the air flow along the coat instead of into the coat to avoid blowing matter deeper into the fleece.
- 2.) When the fleece is as clean as possible, start by shearing a strip along the backbone from the tail head to the withers. Usually, this strip contains a lot of guard hair and should be discarded.
- 3.) Continue to shear from the opening along the backbone down the goat's sides. As you shear, keep the blades parallel to the side of the goat as you will be less likely to cut the goat. Take into consideration the weather when shearing. If it is warm out, you can shear closer to the skin. If it colder outside, leave a little more fleece on the goat.
- 4.) Be aware when shearing along the goat's underbelly for where the goat's teats, udder, penis or testicles are located to avoid cutting them. Also, use caution when shearing around the hind legs to avoid cutting the tendon that runs down the back of the leg.
- 5.) Due to the conformation of the front shoulders, shear up and down rather than across to avoid cuts to the goat.
- 6.) Finish by shearing the neck and chest of your goat. Be aware if the goat has wattles and where they are located to avoid cutting the wattles.

Note: After shearing, make sure the goat has adequate bedding and a sheltered place out of the cold and wet. You also can put a goat coat on the animal. After several days, remove the goat coat; leaving a coat on a Pygora while it is growing fleece results in a badly-matted fleece under the coat.

Note: If the goat is injured during the shearing process, inspect and clean the wound. If the cut is deep, notify your veterinarian to administer stitches. If it is just a surface injury, put Neosporin or EMT Gel on the wound. Monitor the affected area to ensure proper healing.

Resources

The Pygora Breeders Association is a great resource for extensive information regarding your Pygora Goat.

<http://www.pygoragoats.org/>

Kistler, T. (2013). Shearing a Pygora. In *Raising Happy, Healthy Pygora Goats* (pp. 124-131). United States.

The Massachusetts Sheep and Woolcraft Fair information may be found at www.masheepwool.org. The fair features not only sheep, but other fiber-bearers such as goats and is held at the Cummington Fairgrounds in Cummington, MA.

More general information about raising goats may be found in the Mass Agriculture in the Classroom winter 2006 newsletter

at: <http://www.umass.edu/umext/mac/Newsletters/Winter%202006.htm>

Massachusetts 4-H at www.mass4h.org has a goat program. There is also a goat camp held at the Cummington Fairgrounds in Cummington, MA. A contact for Massachusetts 4H information is: Carrie Chickering-Sears Director of Community Education in Animal Agriculture University of Massachusetts Amherst Veterinary & Animal Science Dept. 111 North Maple Street Hadley, MA 01035 Phone: 413-549-3257 ccsears@umext.umass.edu

This factsheet was prepared by Kelly Kraemer.

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