

Preparation for the Show Ring

By Marilyn Grossman

Prepare the Goat

1. Select the goat that you plan to show. A kid should be well grown for her age. A milker should be milking appropriately for her age and size.
2. Train her to lead, and to stand calmly while a stranger touches her.
3. Clip her ahead of time so that she won't have clipper marks. White goats can be clipped later than darker colored goats.
4. Trim feet a few days ahead of time so that her feet are not tender.
5. Bathe in a gentle shampoo the day before the show and bed properly so that she stays clean. Scrub the hooves with a brush to remove all manure. Remember to clean inside the ears and under the tail.
6. Choose a chain collar of the appropriate size link to look attractive on the size of goat you are showing.
7. Right before you enter the ring, make sure that you run a brush over the goat so that she doesn't have any dust or bedding on her coat.
8. Don't overbag and make your doe uncomfortable. In today's show arena, overbagging is frowned upon.

Prepare the Handler

1. The object of the handler's dress is that the handler should be as close to invisible as possible. The judge is studying the goat, not you.
2. Wear show whites. While black pants are acceptable, dressing in all white is preferred. No shorts or Capri pants. No tank tops or scooped necklines. No open toed shoes. Remember to wear white undergarments as well.
3. If you have long hair, pin it up away from your neck and face.
4. Shower as close to show time as you can manage.
5. Try to maintain a neat and tidy appearance throughout the show.

Ringside Etiquette

1. Tie your goats so that they cannot reach other goats or get themselves tangled.
2. Don't stand by the entrance to the ring unless your class is next so that you do not get in the way of those who are trying to get into the ring.
3. Be on time for your class. Be early enough to check in with the ring steward while the class before yours is in the ring.
4. If you are in several classes back to back, make sure that you have an assistant ringside who can take the goat you just had in the ring and hand you the next one so that you do not hold up show progress.

In the Ring Etiquette

1. Keep proper spacing between you and the next exhibitor. Your goat should not be able to touch any other goat at any given time.
2. Don't talk in the ring to other exhibitors.
3. Don't speak to the judge unless the judge asks you a question.
4. Be conscious of the judge's whereabouts at all times in case he signals you to move your goat.
5. Show your goat the entire time you are in the ring. Don't stop until the class is dismissed.
6. Smile. You are supposed to be having fun.

Ring Protocol

1. Enter the ring to your left and circle in a clockwise direction. Walk slowly. If your doe stops to urinate, let her, but move again the moment she is finished. Keep the distance of one goat between you and the goat in front of you.
2. Make sure that your goat is between you and the judge at all times. When you approach the judge, and you are about to block his view of the animal, change sides by going in front of the goat to the opposite side.
3. Set the goat up quickly. Try to set her up and hold her in place. While you should continue to make sure that she is in her best position, don't fuss too much. If you continue to poke and prod, the goat will get antsy and it will become impossible to show her in the best light.
4. Know your goat's birth date and freshening date.
5. When you are in the side by side lineup, the judge will inspect each animal one at a time. When the judge examines your doe, keep a firm hold on the collar with your left hand and put your right hand on the opposite side of the goat's shoulders while you press your thigh into the doe's chest/shoulder area to keep her from moving around. If you have a particularly antsy goat, reach over the goat with your right hand and pick up the right front foot. No judge wants to be kicked or shoved around.
6. When you are in a head to tail lineup, and the judge asks you to move up or down the line, you move by walking between the line and the judge.

End of Show Etiquette

1. Pick up your trash and place it in a dumpster.
2. Dump your water buckets in the drain, don't make mud for the next guy.
3. Clean your pens or pay the appropriate fees before you leave.
4. Thank the judge and show committee for providing the show.
5. And Most Importantly – Be A Good Sport. Even if you are upset and feel that you were judged unfairly, keep it to yourself. Wait until you are back in the privacy of your own vehicle and on the way home to gripe about the day.