



# Dairy GOATS

**415,000**

is the number of dairy goats in the US (NASS, 2026). Dairy goats comprise 20 percent of the US goat population.

## Goat milk

and milk products are used for many purposes. Consumption is on the rise, particularly for cheese, but also as a fluid milk alternative. The goat milk-based infant formula market is experiencing significant growth. Another use of goat milk is cosmetics (e.g., soap). This market was valued at \$4.03 billion in 2023 (in the US).

While goat milk only accounts for about 2 percent of global milk consumption, it is an important source of dairy in many cultures and regions of the world. It is mostly a specialty product in the US.



## Say cheese!

Cheese made from goat's milk is called chevre. Approximately 75 percent of goat milk is made into cheese. The US imports 50 percent of the goat milk cheese it consumes.



## Nine breeds

The American Dairy Goat Association (ADGA) recognizes nine breeds of dairy goats: Alpine, Guernsey, LaMancha, Nigerian Dwarf, Nubian, Oberhasli, Saanen, Sable, and Toggenburg. The Nigerian Dwarf is the most popular registered breed. Saanen and Alpine goats usually produce the most milk, whereas the Nubian and Nigerian Dwarf produce milk with the highest butterfat content (ideal for cheese-making).

## Different than cow's milk

Cow and goat milk have similar basic nutritional profiles but differ in some key areas. Goat milk tends to be higher in fat, protein, and minerals. It is naturally homogenized. Goat milk contains smaller fat globules, making it potentially easier to digest. Goat milk and milk products are gaining popularity among those with cow milk allergies. They are viewed as more health conscience choices.



While most dairy goat operations milk does by hand, the majority of does are milked by machine in a parlor. Twice a day milking is most common. Large dairy goat operations raise dairy goats for income, whereas many small operations raise dairy goats for fun/hobby and "personal consumption."