



First, I wouldn't drop grain on anyone in late gestation or early lactation. The body is accustomed to nutrients from the grain blend (whatever it is you feed) and making a big change like dropping grain, can lead to metabolic issues. My goats have never been fed grain, ever.

You need a good reason to switch out to this. It's not cheaper. This information is specific to our working does.

You can have productive girls without grain but it is a lot more work. Folks need to do their research and understand the way to calculate protein and learn to use body condition scoring to monitor how their goats are doing on a feed program. Good things to know regardless of the feed program but particularly important when switching to something that isn't conventional.

I am currently working with Big Sky Organic Alfalfa pellets. I like the size. When kids get into mamas feed the bigger pellets are more likely to cause choking issues. (We had choking with another, larger organic alfalfa pellet in kids)

I use about 1 cup of alfalfa pellets to about 1 tablespoon each of Black Oil Sunflower seeds, raw pumpkin seeds and raw coconut. I feed 2-4 cups, twice a day to each milking doe depending on how much they each need. My heavier milkers need more than the lower producing girls.

They also get chopped carrots usually once a day in the morning

They ALWAYS have hay. I was buying a local grass from a friend who was hay farming. It was really nicely grown with no chemicals. It is lower nutrition so it was my "filler". They always have it around. Always. The BULK of the winter diet is whatever hay my hay dealer has that has tested the best for protein % and calcium/phos ratio and is the greenest, best stem to leaf ratio. But *not* straight alfalfa (I can't get organic and it's heavily GMO. I avoid GMO. Buying a grass/legume blend means they are unable to use the worst of the chemicals). Most years it is a 2nd or maybe 3rd cut orchard but this season he had a great orchard/alfalfa blend. It is really important to have really high quality hay if you aren't doing grain. They need like 12-14% overall dietary protein. If the hay/browse is low quality you can't make up for it in hay pellets (which is what alfalfa pellets are. well alfalfa is a legume. but anyway they are considered a hay pellet.)

Around here the local grass hays are more like 6-8% protein so even in summer when the browse is good they do get the higher quality hay at night, just limited. (in winter it's basically unlimited higher quality hay)

I used Chaffhaye when I didn't have the alf/orch blend hay.

I recently switched to Alfahaye.

I still use a little every day on the stand but when I have only a grass hay (orchard is a grass hay) i used it a lot more to up the protein and nutrients.

My feeding changes based on what I can get for my hay (the bulk of the diet for them)

So when the best hay (the color, protein, calcium/phos ratio, lower sugar, nicely leafed but not messy, not too stemmy ect) is Orchard grass only then they get more Alfahaye (I used to use Chaffhaye)

You also need a really good mineral program. One thing in a bagged "Goat" feed is that they include vit/min added to it.

My pregnant girls get Fertrell Goat Nutribalancer mixed in the alfalfa pellets blend at the rate on the bag and they always have Sweetlix Meat Maker 16:8 loose out free choice. I do use BoSe a couple times a year for selenium. They have kelp out free choice as well.

2020 was our first milk test year. I had to cut my milking to once a day about half way through test this season. We had to evacuate our farm for wildfires and were gone two weeks so milking OAD was the only thing I could do in the situation.

Even with half of the lactation at once a day, I still had one hit 1000# and another was 940# (she usually milks more than her sister but she had a rough delivery and I started milking her a little late for our normal.)

Everyone on test earned BF and Protein stars and several will earn production even on Once a Day milking (so about half volume). We stuck with milk test although it wasn't easy and doesn't really give accurate numbers with only once a day milking (most milk at least twice a day for test) but reviewing the numbers gives an idea for the possibilities of lactation with no grain.

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