

I've Caught the Goat Fever!

An Account of the Disease
That's Sweeping the Nation

An Essay Written By Olivia Quertermous

Goat Fever: An illness associated with a person's love of the Caprine species of goats. The disease is incurable, and the people subjected to this illness suffer from the symptoms of: uncontrollable urge to buy anything with goats, always wanting more goats, and not being able to pass up opportunities to be with goats (no impulse control)

Hi! My name is Olivia Quertermous. I'm twelve years old and I'm from the small town of Vienna, Illinois. I started with my journey in the goat world in 2020, the summer between my 4th and 5th grade year. This May marks 2 years of raising goats at our farm. When I started out, my family didn't have intentions on showing goats, they were just for a hobby. We'd just gotten rid of donkeys, and wanted something more involving. At first, we had two mixed Nigerian Dwarf goat does, and a very skinny Boer-Nubian mixed doe. We saved the Boer-Nubian doe from probably being slaughtered after a sale. She successfully produced five kids for us, 3 does and two bucks. Sadly, two of the babies she had died in infancy from White Muscle Disease. The wether I am bringing is her only surviving son. I was inspired to start my show journey by my peers. My cousin had been showing Boer goats for two years already, and a classmate of mine had been showing all kinds of livestock with his family since he was five. I helped my cousin with her goats, and decided that I wanted to start doing that too. We started to sell off our dairy goats and transitioned into raising Boer goats. Last year was my first year showing. I only showed one doe, born in April, but she won her class at the show we went to, and I won showmanship as well. This year, I'm showing 5 goats, and my aged doe just won her class at my most recent show two weekends ago. I have this event and two more shows this summer, and I plan on showing goats far into my future.

I am a member of the Johnson County Clever Clovers 4-H Club in my hometown. I have been involved with 4-H since I was five years old, and I plan to stay involved with 4-H until I age out at 18. I've shown animals in 4-H since I was seven, starting out with dogs, then horses, and now goats and I also show chickens. Not only do I show animals in 4-H, I have made multiple projects, and became a State Fair Delegate last year, and took Reserve Champion my first year at state. 4-H has opened up so many opportunities for me to go places and do things, and I plan to stay with my 4-H group, and join FFA in high school.

The breed of goat I raise are Boer goats. They are meat goats, which means they are raised for their meat. Boer goats are the best goats to produce for meat, and they are one of the most profitable goats being produced. Boer goats are very fun to raise, as they are very friendly goats, and they are playful, sometimes acting a little like a dog. This breed is also very popular in the show business right now, so when you sell them, they tend to bring more money than your average goat.

Things I like to do with my goats are let them out to run with me, walk them around, and a multitude of other things. For the babies we raise, while I clean their stall, I will let them out to play and jump, and it's so fun to watch them. Other people will ask if I can let them out because they love seeing them jump and run around. Sometimes, I will go on walks in our field and my goats on pasture will run after me and follow me around. Once, I walked through our field and

was looking for something, and my goats stayed with me the whole time. We like to give our goats old play equipment (usually for little kids) and they love it! My show doe from last year, now a year old and way too big for this piece of equipment, still tries to climb it because she played on it with her siblings when she was a baby. It's one rewarding thing (I think) to watch my goats enjoy themselves and have fun, like goats should. In the show industry, we are so focused on getting our goats to look a certain way that we often forget to let them be goats! Some people don't let their goats have hay, but they need that! Goats are ruminants, and hay is a big part of their diet, unless they are getting grass. Some don't let their goats get exercise and they get lazy and tend to be picked on by a herd of active goats. We had an experience like that, and this poor goat didn't even eat that much grass! Her pens had been mowed because she didn't eat the grass and wasn't offered hay that often at her old home. She's adapted now, but I don't want that to happen again, because she was bullied for the longest time because of it. I strive for my goats to always be able to be a goat, regardless of if they are getting ready for a show or just out on pasture for the season.

I plan to continue with goats for many years, and I want to raise goats when I'm older for profit. I would like to have a farm, with a variety of animals, and goats are going to be the first thing I get on that farm. I want my children to be able to show goats, and grow up doing what they love, which might just be livestock showmanship.

Goats are awesome animals to have. Even though they take lots of work, it's totally worth the time and effort. Now, I am constantly looking for things that involve goats, have goats on them, or just have anything to do with goats. I guess you can say I've caught the Goat Fever!