

Tips and Tricks to Fabulous Fiber Goats



Image courtesy of Erica Peterson
Image is cropped.



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Purpose of this packet.

The purpose of this packet is to provide basic information to 4-H members and other interested parties about fiber goats. Many members, especially those just beginning, are unsure of where to start or what to learn in regards to a fiber goats 4-H project. This packet discusses different breeds and types, diseases, and specific issues related to the project. While this packet is by no means all-inclusive of what is required to raise fiber goats it is a good starting point.

This packet will encompass topics such as disease and treatment, types, and other related information that will work to better the reader's understanding of their project. The primary goal is to help facilitate a more confident and prepared member that will continue to develop skills and greater personal and project growth in their desired project area.

This packet was developed in 2020 for families beginning in the fiber goat project area.

Common Terminology

1. Buck: Uncasterated male goat
2. Dehair: Removal of guard hairs from cashmere
3. Density: Amount of fibers per square inch in fleece
4. Doe: Female goat
5. Cashmere: Produced by all goats at varying degrees except Angora goats; Very fine fiber
6. Cashmere Comb: Comb utilized to harvest cashmere from goats; 16 metal rods with curved, sharp ends with adjustable slider to accommodate fleece density
7. Crossbreed: Goat with two or more breeds in bloodline
8. Cull: Removing an animal from your herd due to lack of need for that animal in program
9. Fleece: Wool coat of one goat
10. Kemp: Primary hair that rejects dye; lowers fleece value; straight, coarse, hollow, brittle
11. Kidding: Birthing process of goats
12. Lock: Cluster of fleece fibers clinging to one another
13. Luster: Brightness of fleece; Brightness is light being reflected from fleece
14. Micron: Refers to fiber's fineness; Smaller microns means finer wool; 1/1,000 of a mm.
15. Mohair: Fiber produced by Angora goats; fine to medium fiber
16. Purebreed: Goat with only one breed in bloodline
17. Skirting the fleece: Removal of stained, matted, short, kemp, coarse fiber from fleece
18. Staple: Single fiber
19. Wether: Castrated male goat

Parts of a Fiber Goat

Knowing the parts of your goat is vital to a variety of needs you and your goat will have in and outside the showring. Inside the ring it will allow you to make identifications of the physiological parts of your animal should you be asked to by the judge. Outside the show ring, you will be able to help make diagnosis of diseases and illnesses, improve your breeding stock, increase fleece and fiber quality, and a variety of other things vital to having a productive project.

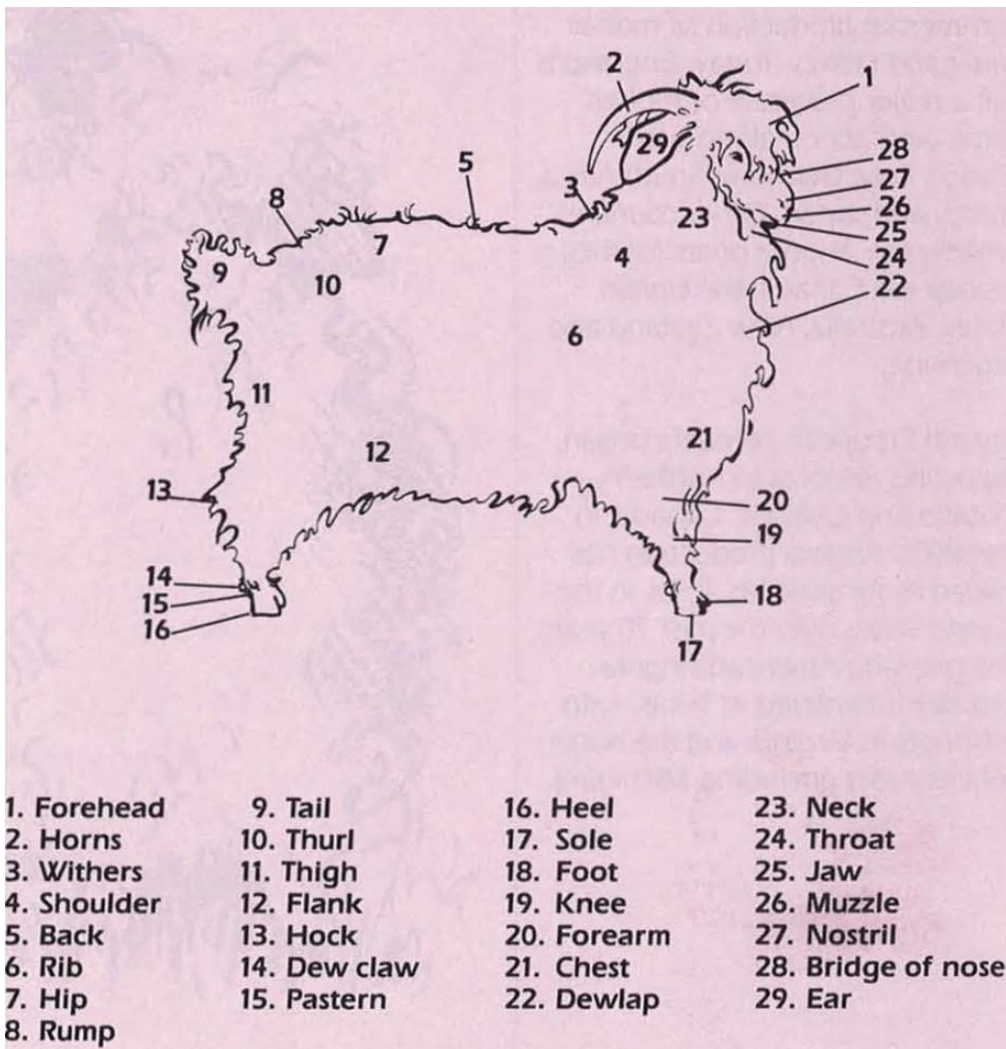


Image courtesy of Michigan State University "Your 4-H Angora Goat Project"
Image is cropped

Ear Notching Identification

Rather than use an ear tag as identification for a goat, some choose to use ear notching to identify their animal. Different notches in varying spots on the ear(s) are added together to equal the number that animal is in the herd. While these animals may not have any tag present in their ear(s), they are still required to have a scrapie identification number. This can be applied to your animal without a tag by tattooing a scrapie identification number on to the ear of your animal. While tattooing may occur at any age, notching should occur at about a week old. Below is an example of ear notching for identification.

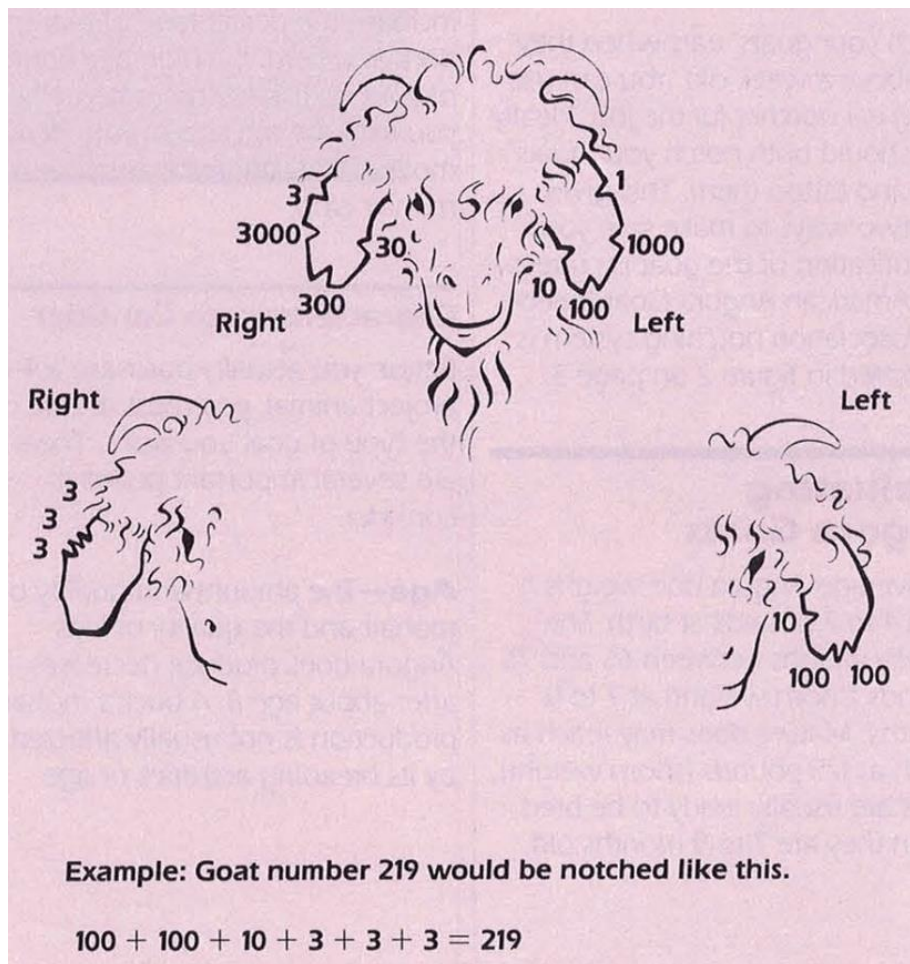


Image courtesy of Michigan State University "Your 4-H Angora Goat Project"

Common Diseases and Treatments

In the table below are some listed common diseases and ailments found or heard of in fiber goats as well as a handful of pertinent details in each column. This list is far from all-inclusive and is just a sampling of what can be found, both of diseases/ailments and in the following columns. In columns two through five are common details related to that disease/ailment.

Disease	Symptoms	Treatment	Prevention	Other Details
Caprine Arthritis Encephalitis (CAE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Joint swelling -Atrophied muscles -Seizures -Hindquarter weakness -Death 	-There is no treatment for CAE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Test goats for CAE -Do not bring untested goats onto farm -Sporadic testing of your own herd -Cull goats with CAE. 	-It's a retrovirus
Caseous Lymphadenitis (CL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Abscesses on lymph nodes -Cheese-like consistency in puss -If internal, abscesses on organs and inside lymph nodes -Fever 	-There is no treatment for CL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Vaccination -Do not bring untested goats onto farm -Sporadic testing of your own herd -Cull goats with CL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -There are two forms of this, the internal form and the external form -It is caused by a bacteria and can survive in the soil
Chlamydiosis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Weak kids -Stillbirths -Abortion -Retained 	-Antibiotics at discretion of veterinarian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Herd testing -Require recent testing of other goats before 	-This CAN spread to humans

	placenta -Sometimes polyarthritis and conjunctivitis		coming to your farm and herd	
Flystrike	-Picking at affected areas -Agitation -Damp, matted appearing fleece -Foul smell -Flies buzzing around particular animal often	-Gently shear or clip off affected areas -Remove goat from herd -Clean affected area(s) and dress -Application of a wound coating such as Blue Kote -Antibiotics at discretion of veterinarian	-Hang fly traps in barn and congregation areas -Open air living area since flies dislike wind -Keep feces and urine trimmed from fleece	-Throw fleece with flies eggs and maggots in trash in a bag to help control spread -Seasons that are warmer increase chance of flystrike -Eggs hatch and consume flesh under skin
Fleecerot	-Soft, tender skin -Blue-hued skin in affected areas -Sometimes bad smell -Very wet appearing area(s) on fleece	-Shearing or hand clipping carefully -Dry out affected area(s)	-Provide shelter for goats in rainy weather -Allow goats to dry out fleece after rain	-Commonly seen on the leg fiber due to proximity to wet ground -Rot is caused by bacterial overgrowth in fleece

***DISCLAIMER:** Authors are not veterinarians and only provide this information as a personal reference. They are not responsible for outcomes. Consult a veterinarian for veterinary advice and treatment.*

Breeds

In the fiber goat world, there are only a handful of recognized breeds and a multitude of crossbreeds, all with a wide variety of purposes and uses. There are also crossbreeds and fiber classifications that have their own associations and shows but are not considered purebreds. Their capabilities vary equally as they do widely. Below are five breeds and types of fiber goats selected to show the reader a variety of goats that have different uses or combinations of uses. Listed after are some characteristics to the breed or type that make it unique, breed characteristics, or are strong suits of that breed.

Angora



Image courtesy of Gold Dust Hills Ranch
<https://golddusthillsranch.wixsite.com/mysite/our-bucks-and->

- This breed produces what is called mohair and have a rather rapid growth rate of about one inch a month.
- Colored angoras are not generally considered acceptable in the American Angora Goat Breeders Association (AAGBA) purebred registry, however, they are with the Colored Angora Goat Breeders Association (CAGBA).
- Angora goats have a particularly high nutritional need because of the rapid growth rate of their fiber.
- They are considered to be rather delicate in the goat world due to their susceptibility to parasites and lack of hardiness.

Cashmere



Image courtesy of Black Lotus Farms
https://www.blacklocust.com/BLF_Shiraz-L.jpg
Image is cropped

- This is not a breed, but is instead a micron count classification. Any type of fiber goat can be a Cashmere except an Angora, which does not produce this fiber.
- What most people think of as a soft, fine, and down-crimp undercoat beneath the guard hairs is what is called cashmere.
- All goats produce some level of cashmere, however most goats do not produce enough quantity or a good enough quality to be classified as a cashmere goat
- The cashmere fleece comes in during the summer and fall months.

Pygora



Image Courtesy of Pawsitive Plantation Pygoras
<https://www.pawsitiveplantationpygoras.com/the-girls>
Image is cropped

- This breed of goat was created by crossing a Pygmy goat and an Angora goat
- Pygora goats were originally bred in Oregon City, Oregon.
- They may not have 75% or more of Pygmy or Angora goat present in their bloodline if they are to be registered with the Pygora Breeders Association.
 - Because of this, Pygoras can be bred to either other Pygoras or goats that are members of the National Pygmy Goat Association or American Angora Goat Breeders Association and be registerable as Pygoras.
- There are five pattern classifications: Caramel, black, white, agouti, and random markings.

Miscellaneous Breeds

Below are two types/breeds of fiber goat. These breeds are not as common as the three previously listed but are still accepted in show.

Nigora



Image courtesy of Gold Dust Hills Ranch
<https://golddusthillsranch.wixsite.com/mysite/our-bucks-and-does>

- A Nigora is a crossbreed between a Nigerian Dwarf and a mini swiss type dairy goat or an Angora goat.
- Due to their dairy goat lineage, this breed can produce a respectable amount of milk in addition to a wonderful fleece.
- The breed originates from Oregon.
- All colors and patterns presented are acceptable for the Nigora goat.

Cashgora



Image courtesy of Laughing Goat Fiber Farms
https://laughinggoatfiber.com/jello_1-2/

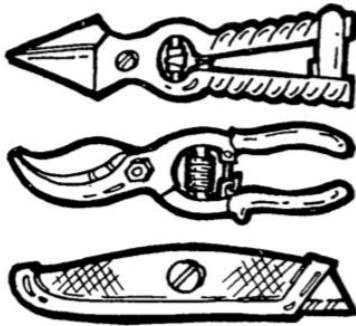
- This is a cross between an Angora goat and a goat that produces cashmere
 - Angoras do not produce cashmere.
- Even if an Angora and cashmere producing goat produce a kid that kid will not be considered a Cashgora until the fiber has been examined and deemed of quality to be considered Cashgora.
- They are not heavy fiber producers, generating on average between under four ounces and up to 14 ounces a year, however, their fleece is well loved by those who use it.
- Average micron count for this goat is between 18 and 23 microns.

Grooming and Shearing

Hoof Correctness and Trimming

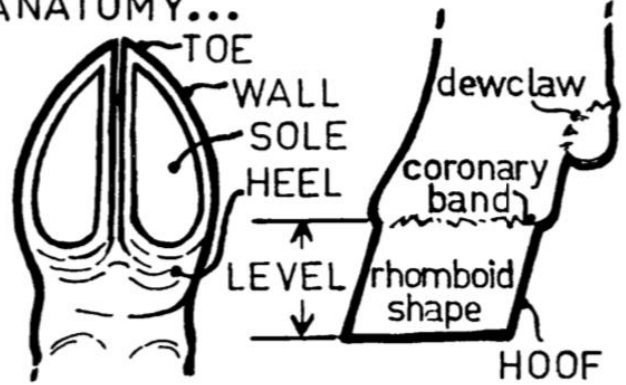
The hooves of your animal are the foundation on which they stand. When the foundation is strong, so is your animal. When the foundation is weak, so is your animal. Improperly trimmed hooves can affect how the structure of your animal appears. Trimming hooves can be tricky for first time goat owners; however, it is important for them to know that it is just like trimming your fingernails. As long as you are mindful and not catching their quick, it is painless. For this activity, you will need foot trimmers, also called foot shearers, and blood stop in case you catch their quick. It is normal for the goat to kick during this or try to pull away when grabbing a back leg, but don't worry, this is just their natural instinct as they are prey animals. Below is a diagram on what they should look like and how to trim your goat's feet.

TOOLS...



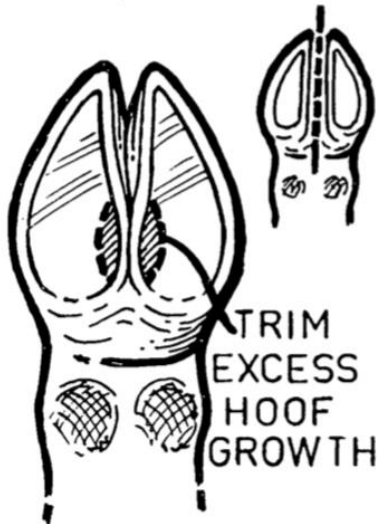
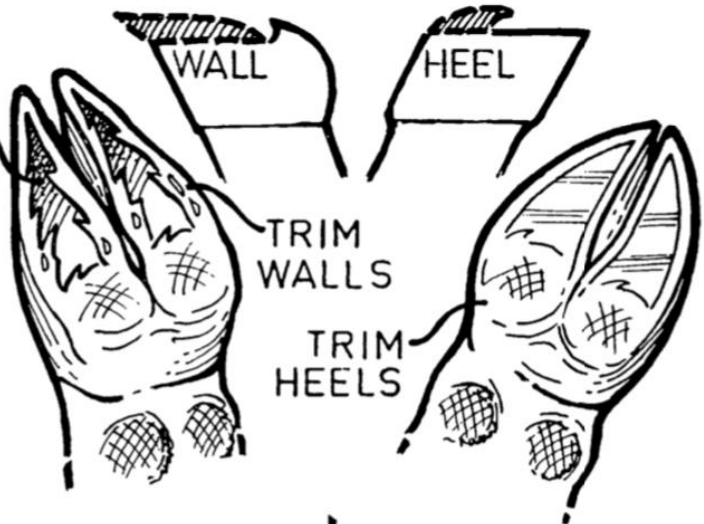
foot rot shears or pruning shears and utility knife

ANATOMY...



OVERGROWN

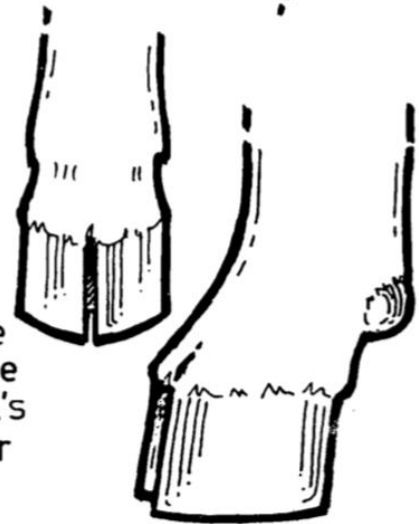
DIG OUT DIRT



TRIM EXCESS HOOF GROWTH

* if the hoofs are trimmed regularly the job is much easier

* if the goat bleeds use some iodine and make sure the animal's tetanus booster is up to date



PROPER TRIM

Image courtesy of Oregon State University Extension Service
Image is cropped

Shearing and Combing

With some breeds, types/classifications, and crossbreeds of fiber goats you will shear your animal once to twice a year while with others, they will require periodic combing throughout the year. It is important to know which category your goat falls into, which can be found out by visiting your breed association web page or by talking to a leader or local breeder. Once combed or sheared you should clean the fiber of any debris, such as guard hairs, hay, or thistles which can lower the quality and value of the fiber. After combing or shearing and cleaning of the fiber, it should be kept in a cool, dry location to prevent molding or any other event that could damage or lower its quality. Below are images of some combs used to harvest fiber.



Image courtesy of B.C. 4-H Beef
Member Manual



Image courtesy of Klaus Post
Image is cropped

Fast Facts

- Despite what looks like wool on these goats with coats that are referred to as fleeces, they are not directly related to sheep, but distantly. They have as much relation to a sheep as any other goat breed.
- Texas ranks third in world mohair (Angora fleece) production.
- Pygora goats produce three classification types of fiber: Type A (looks like mohair), type B (mix of cashmere and mohair), and type C (looks like cashmere in the undercoat).
- Despite popular saying, goats do not have four stomachs. They have one stomach with four compartments.
- First generation Pygoras are not considered to be true pygoras, but their offspring can be if bred to another Pygora or one of its parent breeds.
- The Pycazz is the newest of the fiber breeds, having only come on to the scene in recent decades.
- Pygora goats can produce a liter of milk a day when in milk which is a substantial amount for a non-dairy goat.
- Some breeds (such as some Pygoras) and types (such as the Cashmere) must qualify based on their own merits to be accepted into their breed/type registry.
- Even though they are fiber breeds of goat, these animals are still judged on their overall conformation in addition to their fleece quality being judged.

Getting Ready For the Clackamas County Fair

The Clackamas County Fair is held in August. Information pertaining to the show can be found in the Clackamas County Fair book. Rules are subject to change and should be checked in the fair book. It is the responsibility of the member to stay up-to-date on these rules. Below is information pertaining to fair:

General Information

- Members are expected to set-up, paint, and decorate their pen areas.
- Members **MUST** participate in showmanship.
- Good sportsmanship and herdsmanship are strongly emphasized.
- Members are expected to care for animals themselves, including shearing, feeding, and caring for the animal, both at home and at fair.
 - Club members or members from another club enrolled in 4-H may help with these tasks but the sole responsibility falls on the member.
- **MUST HAVE A SCRAPIES TAG or identification in accordance with the USDA Scrapie Eradication Program.**

Wethers and Breeding Does

- Grade and purebred fiber goats will all be shown together, however wethers will have their own confirmation classes.
- Bucks are not permitted.
- Hay nets are not permitted due to the risk of strangulation but some hay bags are permissible.
- Collars are not to be left on animals penned with horned animals due to strangulation risk.
- Exhibitors are permitted to bring one fleece to fair.
 - Fleece must come from an animal they own and have been shorn, collected, or combed within the previous 12 months.
- Fleeces must be in an open top box for viewing by the judge.

Market Bag

- The market bag **MUST** be the work of the exhibitor.
- The fleece must weigh between four ounces and one pound in its package.
- Exhibitor may enter two bags but each bag must come from different animals.

For information on individual classes please see the Clackamas County Fair book

Resources

1. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Quebec_angora_goat.jpg
2. <https://www.canr.msu.edu/uploads/236/67137/4H1480Your4-HAngoraGoatProject1-20.pdf>
3. <https://www.tractorsupply.com/tsc/cms/life-out-here/the-barn/animal-medication-for-goats/goat-health-conditions-and-caprine-arthritis-encephalitis>
4. <https://www.texvetpets.org/article/caseous-lymphadenitis/>
5. <https://www.tennesseeatgoats.com/articles2/caseouslymphadenitis.html>
6. <https://www.merckvetmanual.com/generalized-conditions/chlamydiosis/overview-of-chlamydiosis>
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8. <http://www.infovets.com/books/smrm/F/F770.htm>
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14. <https://pba-pygora.org/BreedStandard.html>
15. <https://pba-pygora.org/ColorChart.html>
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17. <https://www.petworlds.net/nigora-goat/>
18. https://laughinggoatfiber.com/jello_1-2/
19. <http://shoulderacheandthecloset.blogspot.com/2008/10/cashgora-what-on-earth.html?m=hgora+facts&sources=bI&ots=krJvTzIWb7&sig=ACfU3U2rIEpLRHH4i0sG4DiWaQy5ReW54g&hI=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwvXImJHmAhVLoZ4KHaMMDBkQ6AEwC3oECAoQAQ#v=onepage&q=Cashgora%20facts&f=false>
20. <http://books.google.com/books?id=dSUqAzuwS2QC&pg=PA354&Ipg=PA354&dq=Cashgora+facts&sources=bI&ots=krJvTzIWb7&sig=ACfU3U2rIEpLRHH4i0sG4DiWaQy5ReW54g&hI=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwvXImJHmAhVLoZ4KHaMMDBkQ6AEwC3oECAoQAQ#v=onepage&q=Cashgora%20facts&f=false>
21. <https://www.blacklocust.com/>
22. <https://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/downloads/8w32r575j>
23. <https://www.southmalahat4h.ca/beefandswine/upload/docs/404%20Beef%20Member%20Manual%201996.pdf>
24. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hairbrush_with_metal_bristles.jpg
25. <https://fitness-gear-equipment.knoji.com/facts-and-information-on-angora-goats/>
26. <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/10551/ms1fiber.pdf>
27. <https://www.roysfarm.com/pygora-goat/>
28. <https://cashmeregoatassociation.org/post.php?pid=10>

4-H Reference Books:

1. Goat Resource Handbook by The Ohio State University Extension

Note: These books are available to check-out or purchase from the Clackamas County 4-H Extension Office in Oregon City.