

## Dairy Goats

Goats were among the first animals to be domesticated by humans, as long as 10,000 years ago. Today, there are an estimated 460 million goats in the world.

Many people have experienced the love, companionship, and joy of sharing their home and lives with an animal such as a dog or cat. Those of us that have enjoyed the rich experience of spending time in the company goats understand that these animals-and all animals used for dairy and meat production-are just as sensitive, loving, and capable of suffering pain as our beloved companion animals.



At Leilani Farm Sanctuary, visitors see that goats are intelligent, curious, and affectionate. They enjoy playing head-butting games with each other, jumping on rock piles, and reaching up for fruit tree branches on their hind legs. When visitors take walks around the farm, the goat herd follows along, every step of the way. The tamest goats like to cuddle and one young goat named Freddy even sits on laps.

Goats on commercial dairy farms are typically regarded as commodities and depending on the level of care provided, can suffer from both physical and psychological disorders as dairy farms seek to maximize productivity and

profitability. It is not uncommon for dairy goats on poorly managed farms to lack adequate veterinary care, suitable housing, or proper pasture. Due to the strong lobbying efforts of agribusiness, goats and all animals used for meat and dairy production are excluded from most state anti-cruelty laws and from the federal Animal Welfare Act.

It is standard practice to dehorn dairy goats before they are ten days old. A very hot iron is used to burn the horn buds off their heads. This procedure is done for the farmers' convenience, to make it easier to milk the goat in the stanchion restraining device. Dehorning is not only painful and traumatic for the goat; it's dangerous. The kid's brain can be permanently damaged by misuse of the disbudding iron. Infection and tetanus can also result from a botched dehorning job.

Female goats (does) on dairy farms are kept in a nearly constant state of pregnancy. They are typically impregnated while confined in a small pen with an aggressive buck. After the doe gives birth, her kids are taken away from her and the milk she produces is used for human consumption. The male offspring (kids) are sold for meat.

Eliminating goat cheese and milk from our diets makes a difference in our lives of these animals. With the wide array of healthy, non-dairy products that are available at natural food stores, we can vote with our shopping dollars for compassion over cruelty.

## **A Happy Ending**

### **Story of a Dairy Goat Saved from Slaughter**

One February morning on the island of Maui, Bill, a friend of Leilani Farm Sanctuary, went for groceries at Foodland market, located just down the hill from a large dairy farm. As he walked across the parking lot, Bill heard crying coming from inside a car. In the back seat, he saw a goat hog-tied and in extreme distress. The car doors were locked, so Bill frantically waited there, making eye contact with the goat until three men approached. The men explained that they had just purchased the goat from a dairy farm and planned to butcher him that weekend for a barbeque. Bill pleaded with the men to relinquish the goat, but they refused. Unable to walk away, knowing the fate that awaited the goat, Bill decided there was no acceptable option other than buying the goat from the men.



Bill named the goat Ned and brought him to Leilani Farm Sanctuary where he has been living for the past six years. Ned, a sweet and gentle soul, seems to have forgotten his ordeal. He and his goat friends spend their days lounging under fruit trees in an orchard, grazing on lush grass in the pasture, and interacting with humans who give them endless love.