

Goat Farmer interview questions

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What to expect

Goat Farmer interviews typically assess practical husbandry skills, animal health knowledge, and your ability to manage daily operations. Employers look for calm handling, biosecurity awareness and commercial sense.

- **Technical knowledge:** Questions on breeding, nutrition, herd health and milking routines.
- **Behavioural:** Past examples of handling animal health issues, team work and problem solving.
- **Scenario-based:** Hypothetical farm situations such as disease outbreak, drought or equipment failure.
- **Safety and compliance:** Questions on biosecurity, NLIS, animal welfare and farm safety.
- **Client-facing:** How you manage buyer relationships and negotiate sales of livestock or produce.

Typically a phone or video screen, then a practical on-farm assessment where you handle goats and discuss herd management. A final face-to-face interview with the farm manager and owner follows, often including a farm walk.

1. Walk me through your daily routine when managing a dairy goat herd.

Why they ask

Assesses your understanding of milking schedules, animal health checks, feeding and record keeping.

How to structure your answer

A process question: start with the first task of the day, then step through milking, health observation, feeding, and any afternoon or evening tasks. Finish with record keeping and preparation for the next day.

Example answer

"I start at 4:30am with a herd check, looking for any signs of illness or injury. Then I bring the does into the milking shed for the morning milking, checking udder health and milk quality as I go. After milking, I move the herd to fresh pasture and set out supplementary hay or grain based on condition scores. Throughout the day I monitor water, fences and pasture, and handle any health treatments. The afternoon milking follows the same routine, and I finish by recording milk volumes, health notes and any tasks for the next day."

2. Tell me about a time you had to deal with a sick animal or disease outbreak in your herd.

Why they ask

Tests your animal health knowledge, decision making under pressure and biosecurity practice.

How to structure your answer

A behavioural question: use STAR. Describe the situation, what you observed, the action you took, and the outcome.

Example answer

"Last winter, I noticed three goats in one paddock were off their feed and had scours. I isolated them immediately and contacted the vet. While waiting, I collected faecal samples and reviewed recent feed changes. The vet diagnosed coccidiosis, and we treated the affected goats and the rest of the mob with a coccidiostat. I cleaned water troughs and spread lime in the paddock. All goats recovered, and I introduced a regular faecal monitoring schedule to catch issues early."

3. You notice several goats showing signs of lameness in one paddock. What do you do?

Why they ask

Assesses your judgement under pressure and ability to handle a common health problem.

How to structure your answer

A scenario question: assess the situation, isolate affected animals, identify the cause, treat and prevent. Show you think about the whole herd and the farm system.

Example answer

"First, I would quietly pen the affected goats so I can examine them closely. I would check their feet for footrot, foot abscess or injury, and look at the paddock for stones, mud or sharp objects. If it looks like footrot, I would isolate and treat with the vet's advice, then run the rest of the herd through the footbath. I would also review drainage and grazing rotation, because wet, muddy ground makes lameness worse. I would monitor the mob daily and record treatments to track recovery."

4. How do you manage breeding cycles and select for improved milk or fibre production?

Why they ask

Tests your technical knowledge of genetics and herd improvement.

How to structure your answer

A technical question: explain your planning, record keeping, selection criteria and use of tools like Breedplan.

Example answer

"I plan breeding to align with seasonal feed and market demand. For dairy, I want does that kid easily and produce consistent milk volume and butterfat. I use Breedplan estimated breeding values for milk, fertility and health traits, and I condition score does before joining. I keep detailed records of kidding ease, mothering ability and production, and I cull any does with ongoing health or fertility problems. Over time, this builds a herd that suits my system and the processor's requirements."

5. What steps do you take to ensure biosecurity and animal welfare on your farm?

Why they ask

Checks your compliance knowledge and commitment to welfare standards.

How to structure your answer

A safety and compliance question: list the key practices, explain why they matter, and give an example of how you implement them.

Example answer

"I start with a Property Identification Code and NLIS tags for all goats, and I record every movement. New animals are quarantined for at least three weeks and checked by a vet before joining the herd. I keep a visitor log and provide footbaths at entry points. For welfare, I ensure shade, water and low-stress handling, and I follow the Australian Animal Welfare Standards for livestock. I also maintain a farm biosecurity plan and review it each year."

6. How would you handle a buyer who is unhappy with the quality of a recent fibre or livestock delivery?

Why they ask

Assesses your client-facing and negotiation skills.

How to structure your answer

A client-facing question: listen, investigate, take responsibility, resolve and prevent. Show you value the relationship.

Example answer

"I would listen to the buyer's concerns without interrupting, then ask for specific details and photos if possible. I would check my own records and the delivery conditions. If the issue is on my side, I would offer a fair solution such as a replacement or a credit on the next order. Then I would review my sorting, handling and transport procedures to prevent it happening again. I would follow up a week later to confirm they are satisfied and to keep the relationship strong."