



All about

Choosing Livestock

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Choosing Livestock

Introduction

The term livestock is defined as “domesticated animals raised intentionally in an agricultural setting for their food.” Livestock refers to a broad span of animals, and include pigs, cattle, goats, sheep, deer, and llamas.

General Description

Most livestock are raised for their meat production. Another reason for raising livestock is the production of dairy products. Most dairy products come from the mammalian livestock and are then made into cheese, butter, yogurt, etc. Fiber is another item that livestock is raised for. Sheep and goats produce wool that is made into clothing. Some animals, such as cows and deer, are used for producing leather. Horses, donkeys, and yaks are sometimes raised for their strength to help plow fields and pull wagons to transport goods. Livestock is also raised to have them graze the land to help control weeds and overgrowth.

Deciding How Many to Buy

When deciding which and how much livestock to buy, a few things need to be considered. First, you need to determine what kind of space you have available to house the livestock. You don't want to buy a lot of livestock and not have enough room to house all of it. Second, you need to determine what you are planning to use your livestock for. If you planning on raising cattle for beef, then you will want to have more than one head of cattle. If you just want to have a lamb to exhibit or to keep as a pet, then only one or two should be bought. And lastly, you need to think about the monetary part of raising livestock. Livestock are not cheap animals to take care of. You should consideration all the feeds that you must purchase, which can be very costly. Also, you need to think about the costs associated with vaccinations and any other illnesses that may arise and require treatment.



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Deciding Where to Buy

A Few Words about Breeders

When purchasing livestock, it is recommended that you shop through a breeder to get the best quality for your money. When you purchase livestock from a breeder, you usually don't have to worry about the livestock having any health issues. Breeders tend to take care of any problems that arise and make sure that the animals are healthy and ready to go. You are less likely to purchase a diseased animal from a breeder.

A Few Words about Auctions

Buying livestock from an auction or auction house could be a disaster. Auctions do not require that the animal be tested or vaccinated. Therefore, you don't know whether the animal you are purchasing has any sort of a disease or infection. If, by chance, you did purchase an animal and it was infected, then you would risk taking the infection or disease back to the rest of the animals on the farm. Most people do not recommend buying livestock from an auction since you don't know any history or past problems with the animal.



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What to Look For

Physical Characteristics

When looking to purchase livestock, you need to check over parts of the animal. The head of the animal should be a uniform shape. There shouldn't be any signs of being lopsided or other deformities. Another point to look at is the ears. Both ears should be even and the same length and height. The legs of the animal should be straight and the same length. The legs shouldn't bow in or curve outward. They should be even when standing still. The back of the animal should be fairly straight. There can be some slight curvature but not a major amount. The stomach and chest of the animal should be fairly rounded. If it's not rounded, then this could show symptoms of malnourishment. Finally, the animal needs to show a good muscle structure. You don't want to purchase animals that have a lot of fat on them. The more fat the animal has, the less the value of the animal is.

Breed Characteristics

Some animal breeds have certain characteristics unique to them. One of these is a Hampshire pig. These pigs are normally black with a white belt on them near the front legs. Another example of a breed characteristic is the Black Angus cow. These cows are solid black with no other color showing. If there is another color showing, then they cannot be considered true Black Angus.

Genetic Characteristics

When searching for livestock, you should make sure that the animal has no genetic problems. Most often, if an animal has a genetic problem, there will be some sort of a physical disability or deformation. One example is a cow with only one horn. This could be a result of a genetic problem.



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