

HSFGR - Porch Packet

Common Accidents Goats Get Themselves Into



**Practical Risks Every Owner
Should Know - Goat Shenanigans**

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Understanding the most common situations goats get themselves into helps owners prevent injuries before they happen.

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Practical Risks Every Owner Should Know

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Head Stuck in Fences

One of the most common goat emergencies involves animals pushing their heads through fencing to reach something on the other side - feed, vegetation, or another goat -they might not need it, but they want it.

Horned goats may push through easily but then become trapped when trying to pull back out. Even disbudded goats can become stuck in fencing that is too wide or poorly sized.

Potential risks include:

- exhaustion from struggling
- neck or spinal injury
- predators targeting a trapped goat
- dehydration if the animal remains stuck for long periods

Fencing should be selected carefully for goats, and owners should regularly walk fence lines to identify areas where animals might push through.

Grain & Overeating

Goats naturally enjoy grain, but excessive consumption can quickly lead to **serious digestive problems**.

If a goat gains access to a feed bin, spilled grain, or an unsecured bag, it may continue eating long after it should stop. This can cause conditions such as:

- rumen acidosis
- severe bloat
- digestive shutdown
- death in severe cases

All grain and concentrated feed should be stored in **secure containers** and fed in controlled portions.

Chicken Feed Is Dangerous for Goats

Goats should **never have access to chicken feed**.

Many poultry feeds contain additives formulated specifically for poultry nutrition, including medications or compounds that are not safe for goats. Some poultry rations have historically contained **arsenic-based additives**, which were used in certain feeds to promote growth or control parasites in poultry.

Even when arsenic is not present, poultry feed often contains **higher levels of minerals, medications, or protein sources that can be harmful to goats** when consumed in large amounts.

Because goats are curious and persistent feeders, they will readily consume chicken feed if given the opportunity.

For safety:

- keep chicken feeders out of goat reach
- avoid mixed housing where goats can access poultry rations
- store poultry feed securely

Preventing access is far easier than treating poisoning or digestive complications.

Twine and Hay Bale Hazards

Hay bales often come wrapped in plastic twine or natural fiber string. These strings can get wrapped around feet and cut off blood circulation. Goats are like babies, they don't literally eat everything but use their mouths to explore everything out of curiosity. Twine can be a fun chewy for goats.

If swallowed, twine can become lodged in the digestive system and cause:

- intestinal blockage
- internal injury
- digestive shutdown

Twine should be removed from hay bales immediately and kept out of goat pens or pastures.

Hay bales, Large Round, can be deadly for goats. Goats will eat the lower area of a large round bale causing a mushroom effect. It is only a matter of time before the bale tips over and lands on your goat(s) burying them under that top load of hay. Goats have been known to eat the centers out of the bales creating a nice cozy space until they either get stuck or it collapses. Always use care with round bales & goats.

Horns, Heads, Buckets and Kids

Horned goats can occasionally become trapped in feeders, fencing, or structures when turning their heads or attempting to pull away.

Situations that increase this risk include:

- narrow feeder openings
- fencing that widens toward the outside
- climbing structures with gaps

Facilities should be designed with horned animals in mind when applicable. Young goats are extremely curious and often investigate buckets or containers. Deep water buckets, tubs, or troughs can pose a risk and even death if a small kid climbs in and cannot climb back out.

Safer options include:

- shallow water containers
- secured buckets
- troughs designed for livestock use

All goats, horned or not, can get their heads stuck in bucket handles. While funny as it can be it can pose a serious risk if there is no help to get out of the situation.

Environmental Hazards

Goats explore their surroundings constantly, which means everyday farm items can become unexpected risks.

Potential hazards include: loose boards or unstable structures, open grain containers, exposed nails, fencing wire or sharp edges, steep slopes or unstable climbing surfaces. Regular pasture and barn inspections help identify these risks before they become accidents.

Prevention, The Best Protection

Most goat accidents happen when curiosity meets an unsafe environment. Careful facility design, secure feed storage, and routine checks around the barn & pasture can prevent many of these situations entirely.

Understanding how goats interact with their surroundings allows owners to build environments that keep goats safe while still allowing them to explore, climb, and behave naturally.