

H.H Homestead

Goat Milk Herd Share Fact Sheet

What is a herd share?

It is illegal in the State of Michigan to sell raw milk or even pasteurized milk from a non-Grade A dairy. However, it is legal for anyone to drink milk from their own dairy animals. We understand that not everyone has the time or facilities to keep their own dairy goats, and so our herd share program allows customers to purchase a share of our herd, and thus receive the milk produced by “their” goats. We feed, house, and milk the animals, and you pay us for producing your milk.

Do you allow visitors to see your milking operation?

We invite anyone considering purchasing our dairy shares to come to the farm and see the goats and our husbandry practices for themselves before committing to the share; we have nothing to hide. We usually milk our goats at 7:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., but please call, text or email us to let us know if you are coming so that we can make sure we are available when you show up.

How do you handle your milk?

We wash the udders of our goats, discard the first stripping of milk from each teat, and milk by hand into clean stainless steel pails. We strain the milk through a filter to remove hair, hay, and other impurities and then cool it in the refrigerator. We thoroughly wash the buckets after each milking and let them air-dry to avoid picking up bacteria from a towel. Our family drinks our own milk raw and therefore we make sure that our production practices are very clean.

Do you pasteurize your milk?

Because we keep our milk clean and our animals are healthy, we do not believe that there is any reason to pasteurize our milk. We drink it raw and the milk in the herd shares will be raw as well. Shareholders are of course welcome to pasteurize the milk at home if they are concerned, but most of the dangers of raw milk are due to sick animals or unsanitary production practices that we are able to avoid on our small farm. Pasteurization became necessary when the dairy industry grew so large that consumers had no idea where their milk was coming from. Back in the days when milk cans sat by the road waiting for the milkman to pick them up, dead rats were sometimes found in milk from the farm, and tuberculosis was common in cattle, pasteurization became mandatory to protect consumers. One medical doctor in 1941 wrote, “Pasteurization is not even necessary if milk has been produced under absolutely sanitary conditions.” We believe

that there is no danger in raw milk from healthy animals that is produced in a clean setting; in fact, raw milk contains many beneficial bacteria that help prevent the growth of pathogens

How much milk will I get in a herd share?

For the 2021 season, we are selling our herd shares based on the number of gallons available per week. You will indicate on your herd share agreement your preferred number of gallons per week. Shareholders will have the option to purchase extra milk during peak season. A minimum of 1/2 gallon is required to secure a weekly share. As milk production decreases in the fall, we may have to decrease the amount of milk that each shareholder receives, and will have to conclude the season once does dry off (stop producing milk) for the year.

How much does the herd share cost?

We have factored the cost of our labor, feed, and veterinary bills into the price we charge per gallon. Our milk price is \$10 a gallon. If you choose to get one gallon a week, you will pay \$10; a 2-gallon herd share is \$20/week; a 3- gallon herd share is \$30/week; and a 4-gallon share is \$40/week. A half-gallon share will be \$5 per week.

To ensure that shareholders actually come each week, we will charge a non refundable payment of \$20.00 due when the contract is signed. In addition, the entire months worth of milk will be due at the first pickup.

For example, Suzie buys 1 share. Suzie will owe \$20.00 when signing the contract a one time annual fee. Suzie will then bring cash or check for a total of \$40.00 on her designated day at the beginning of each month. This will entitle Suzie to 4 gallons of milk for the month.

What day of the week is the pickup?

Because milk production is constant throughout the week, it would be ideal for us to stagger our herd share customers throughout the week to even out demand. Each shareholder will select their preferred pick-up day and give us a 2-hour time slot when they can come and get their milk. If available, fresh eggs can be set out for an additional charge of \$3.00 per dozen.

How long will the season last?

Peak milk production is from March to September; during this time we will be able to supply the maximum amount of milk to our shareholders. Once the goats breed in the fall, milk production will decline and shares will be reduced or postponed until the following season.

What containers does the milk come in?

We distribute our milk in quart or half-gallon glass canning jars with metal lids. If you prefer to bring your own containers, you may. We do not offer disposable plastic containers.

How should I clean the jars?

Please wash your jars and lids by hand with warm water and an unscented dish soap; strong scented soaps or dishwasher detergent can leave an unpalatable odor on the jars that may give the milk a strange taste. It is not necessary to sanitize the jars, but we do ask that they be returned clean. Please leave the lids off the jars after washing to allow them to air out.

Why choose herd shares?

A herd share, like a CSA, is one of the best ways you can support your local farmers. It guarantees that you will be able to get milk each week, and assures us that we will have a market for our milk.

Our raw milk is delicious (no "goaty" flavor) and tastes like extra-good quality cow milk. Some people who have trouble digesting pasteurized, homogenized cow's milk find that they they can enjoy raw goat milk with no negative side effects. Raw milk also makes excellent cheese and yogurt. Plus, by purchasing a herd share from our farm, you are helping to provide a home for our healthy, happy goats and not supporting giant mega-dairy.