

## The Intricacies of Keeping Goats & Chickens in the Same Yard

<http://www.betterhensandgardens.com/intricacies-keeping-goats-chickens-yard/>

You have a barn, you have a yard, you have multiple animals, and you need to maximize usage of your space - throw 'em all together and be done with it, right? Well, not necessarily.

Some animals can be boarded together with little trouble (sheep and goats), some animals should always have their own territory (pigs), and still others can share space as long as considerations are made - that's where goats and chickens come into play. If you want to keep your goats and chickens together, keep the following things in mind.

### Food

The biggest issue you'll face when your goats and chickens live together is keeping them out of each other's food.

Goats love chicken feed, but it's imperative you keep them clear of it. If your goats get into chicken feed, they may end up suffering from diarrhea and bloat - and if it's severe enough, it **can be fatal**.



Chickens aren't likely to suffer any ill effects from eating goat feed. However, they aren't particular about where they leave their droppings - and if they happen to be perched on the edge of the goat manger, it's liable to land in the goats' hay. Goats won't eat soiled hay, meaning you'll have to throw it out and give them a fresh batch. Wasted hay means wasted money.

You can remedy this problem a number of ways. Start by keeping chicken feed in a hanging feeder inside their coop. Make sure the coop has openings just large enough for your chickens to get in and out, but small enough that goats can't enter. Feed any grain to your goats before you release the chickens in the morning and after you lock them up at night. Store your goats' hay in a manger with a top so the chickens cannot get in it to lay or roost.

### **Housing**

It's perfectly fine to let chickens and goats free range together, but they do need a place of their own when not turned out. You'll need to give the chickens a place to live free of the goats where they can be warm and protected from predators. The goats require a shelter free of the chickens, as roosting birds will leave droppings on whatever is below and scratch up soiled bedding.



### **Be Sure To Close Coop Doors - Curious Goats Would Climb Right In & Eat Chicken Feed**

The yard itself doesn't need to be anything special - just make sure it's fenced well. Goat panels with four-inch openings should work well if you have larger breeds. If you have dwarves or pygmies, go for panels with smaller openings (two x four inch) to keep your kids from breaking loose. While the goat panels are nice, electric wire or netting may be more likely to keep your animals in and predators out in the same time. If you do decide to go the electric route, a 5000-volt charger will work for both the goats and the chickens.

### **Injury**

The most common injury you'll see if you keep your goats and chickens together is a squashed chicken foot. Goats aren't particularly mindful of where they step, and if a chicken isn't quick enough, such things are bound to happen. Goats may get a sharp peck on the muzzle, but that's probably the most trouble they'll get from their chicken friends.

### **Disease**

Diseases are another thing entirely. Coccidiosis is a common concern among goat and chicken owners. However, coccidia is host specific, meaning it cannot be spread from chickens to goats and vice-versa. Cryptosporidiosis, caused by the protozoan cryptosporidium, is an intestinal parasite that affects both

birds and mammals. It is **not** host specific, meaning chickens can get crypto from infected goats, and goats can get crypto from infected chickens. Cryptosporidiosis is not uncommon in confined young chickens, and can be fatal to kids.

Salmonella bacteria live in the intestines of chickens and since chickens leave droppings anywhere, it can easily be spread. If a doe rests in soiled bedding, her udder can become contaminated. A kid that subsequently nurses from said udder can get a lethal dose of salmonella.

Keep your goat shed, chicken coop, and yard as clean as possible. If any of your animals begin showing signs of illness, quarantine them and call a vet immediately. The sooner they are treated, the more likely they are to survive.

### **Why Keep Them Together at All?**

With all the extra work involved, you might wonder why you should even bother keeping chickens and goats together at all. Chickens are good for cutting down on food waste from goats - they pick up grain the goats drop. Chickens also eat bugs and parasites that make their homes around the goats' pen. Both animals provide the other with companionship - sometimes even forming strong interspecies bonds.



By providing them with separate housing, encouraging the chickens to sleep in their coop at night, but allowing them to share the same pastures during the day, a lot of people keep their chickens and goats together with few problems.