

32 Kids

Land Counting



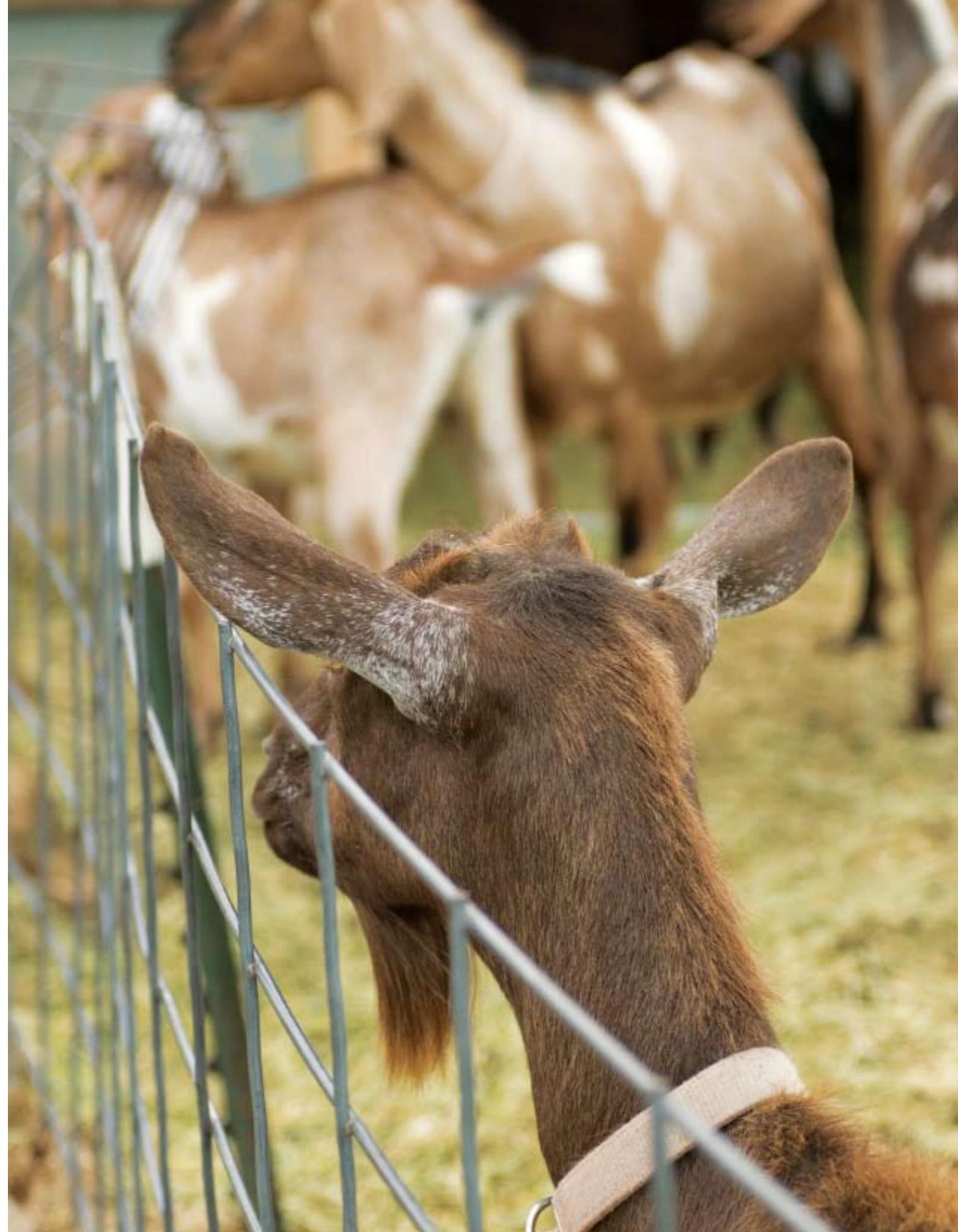
Lori Tigner's desire to live simply has led her to build a thriving farm, a blossoming soap business and a self-reliant lifestyle.

BY BROOKE LINDQUIST
PHOTOGRAPHY BY POVY KENDAL ATCHISON

Sitting at the table in her cozy kitchen, Lori Tigner's face glows as she talks about the pure satisfaction of collecting a basket of eggs or a bucket of goat milk. "It's like you've discovered gold," she says. Thanks to Arlo, Christopher, Daisy and the 29 other goats she keeps, Lori's known among folks in the foothills west of Denver as the "Goat Mom." In reality, she's the owner of Westfarm Goats, a 3-acre farm where Lori and her husband live simply raising animals, tending gardens and producing artisan soaps from fresh goat milk.

Lori first got to know goats in the early 1990s when she worked part-time at an Oklahoma museum that kept a couple. "It was love at first sight," she says. "From that moment on, I knew I had to have goats in my life." At the time, Lori was participating in weeklong historic reenactments, and she was captivated by the early 20th century's simplicity. Hoping to bring some of that simplicity into her modern life, she and her then-husband handbuilt a log house with no electricity or plumbing—except cold water in the kitchen sink—on a corner of her grandparents' farm in southeast Colorado. The family referred to it as Westfarm.

ABOVE: Forrest, a 12-year-old with ADHD and sensory processing disorder, visits Westfarm Goats every Saturday to help Lori with her chores. "This is the first time he's ever been able to stick with something," his mother says. "The physical labor, the life lessons, his increased responsibility and confidence—I'm continually blown away."
OPPOSITE: Baby Belle watches eagerly as Lori begins serving dinner.





“When we do what we want to do,
other people get to see what’s possible.”

— LORI TIGNER

At Westfarm, Lori dug into the simple life, creating a self-reliant homestead. In addition to goats, she kept a donkey, a Jersey milk cow, hogs, sheep, ducks, geese, chickens, peacocks, guineas and turkeys. She spent five years living in the log house, gathering wood, washing all of her clothes by hand, spinning wool, collecting her food from her animals and a garden, and teaching classes at the local community college to cover her few remaining expenses. Eventually, Lori divorced and relocated to her current farm between Morrison and Conifer, Colorado, where she and the goats—and a new husband—continue to build a legacy under the Westfarm banner.

LIVING HER SELF-RELIANT DREAM

Lori rises every day before 5 a.m. and eats breakfast, then feeds her 32 goats, two sheep, 12 bantam chickens, 21 hens and two roosters. She milks about six goats, eats a second breakfast, then heads down the mountain to teach at a community college. Upon returning home, she does the evening chores—feeding, milking more goats and collecting eggs—then has supper with her husband and reads or knits before falling into bed.

“I do what I’m passionate about, and I don’t care what other people think,” Lori says. Her dream is self-reliance, and she’s living it. “I love that at the end of the day I can say, ‘I did this. We—the animals and I—we did this.’ I can feed myself and feed my family.” The joy she experiences, whether from something silly the goats have done or from creating a particularly beautiful bar of goat milk soap, keeps her going.

“I think a lot of people are unhappy because they don’t realize how fulfilling it is to be able to do something by yourself,” Lori muses, as she pulls on her boots.

BROOKE LINDQUIST is a Denver-based writer. When she’s not writing or doing yoga, she can be found up on the trails with her dog Hailey.

AT LEFT, CLOCKWISE: Lori’s best milk-producing goat, Avalon, gets a good view from atop a dog carrier that doubles as a baby goat house. Lori collects goat milk to turn into silky soap. Lori says collecting eggs feels like finding a hidden treasure.

RIGHT TOP TO BOTTOM: The goats gather quickly when dinner time rolls around. Lori sells her deliciously scented goat milk soap at her local farmer’s market.





The Dish on Soap

About five years ago, when Lori's goat milk supply surpassed demand, she read a few books, did some experimenting, and created refreshing soaps that work magic on chapped skin. She uses herbs she grows in her garden, honey from a local mountain producer, high-quality essential oils and olive, sunflower, apricot kernel, rice bran, soybean and coconut oils. She also uses a variety of molds to create soaps that are as much a work of art as a body-care product. Lori loves picking out different molds and designing soaps with seasonal themes. "The fun part is making them look and smell pretty," she says. "It's like a chemistry experiment, figuring out which essential oils work together." Lori sells her soaps online, as well as through her area farmer's markets. She says of her soaps, "Here at the farm we try to live simply. My hope is that our products fit with your lifestyle of living simply, too." Learn more: westfarmgoats.com

RESOURCES

FURTHER READING

Living with Goats: Everything You Need to Know to Raise Your Own Backyard Herd by Margaret Hathaway

Goats: Small-Scale Herding for Pleasure and Profit by Sue Weaver

The Field Guide to Goats by Cheryl Kimball

Milk Soapmaking: The Smart and Simple Guide to Making Lovely Soap by Anne L. Watson

Home Cheese Making: Recipes for 75 Delicious Cheeses by Ricki Carroll (available at naturalhomemagazine.com/shopping)

WEBSITES

GoatFinder.com
goatfinder.com
nationwide listing of goats for sale

Dairy Goat Journal
dairygoatjournal.com
bimonthly magazine on raising goats

American Goat Society
americangoat.com
registry for all breeds of dairy goats

American Livestock Breeds Conservancy
albc-usa.org
information on heritage goat breeds

Raising Goats blog
raising-goats.blogspot.com

GOAT MILK CHEESE AND SOAP RECIPES
"Easy Homemade Soap"
grit.com/tools/easy-homemade-soap.aspx

"Goats Milk Soap Recipe"
suite101.com/pages/article_old.cfm/rural_country_living/52076

"How to Make Goat Cheese and Goat Soap"
keeping-goats.com/Dairy-Goat-make-cheese-soap.html

SEE PAGE 34 FOR A SIMPLE HOMEMADE GOAT CHEESE RECIPE