



At Black Beauty Ranch, a resident goat seems to smile when her feed arrives.

Getting their goats

THE NINE BABY GOATS who arrived at Black Beauty Ranch in early June were greeted with one predominant noise: squeals from excited staff members. “We usually take in animals in the later part of their lives when nobody wants them. So this is a treat, for us to get to see babies,” says ranch director Noelle Almrud.

The kids arrived alongside nine adult goats, three sheep and three potbellied pigs, all rescued from a property in Habersham County, Georgia. They had been living with more than 300 other farm animals, dogs and cats in crowded, unsanitary conditions and without veterinary care. Now, though, they’ll have care from a vet and plenty of space, water and food.

That’s particularly important for one mama goat. Named Unihorn for her single horn, the emaciated mom arrived in dire condition with her baby. “I don’t even know how this mom was able to have a kid,” says Katie Birk, senior animal

caregiver. “Her hooves were curled over. She had a skin condition, so she had hardly any hair.” She’s also nearly toothless. “She must’ve given everything for her baby to survive.”

More changes are in store for Unihorn and the other goats: They’ll soon move to a new pasture, nearly five acres designed just for them. “We’ll have some dirt mounds in there, to add some elevation to their pasture, and lots of trees,” says Birk. Along with staggered wood platforms, the enclosure will include concrete elements to help wear down their hooves and a large barn where these social animals can gather.

Until then, the animals are adjusting to their new lives. One in particular seems to be delighted. “There is one who always stands in the middle of all of the feed and just picks up her head and smiles, like ‘Thanks for the food!’” says Birk. “She has the sweetest little smile.”

—*Kelly L. Williams*

Smaller than the average bear

WITH HIS SMALL STATURE, the black bear who came to the Fund for Animals Wildlife Center in May seemed about a year old. California Fish and Wildlife wardens were concerned about his condition—he was emaciated, with severe hair loss caused by mange. At the center, staff began medication and started him on a nutritious diet. When a veterinarian checked the bear’s progress, staff learned their age estimate hadn’t been quite right.

“The condition of his teeth made our vet think that he was 3 or even 4 years old,” says animal care manager Christine Barton. “She thought he was possibly a stunted baby, probably the runt of a family, and just didn’t get the same nutrition as everybody else.” Her team remedied that lack of nutrition by offering up a feast. Each day, the bear enjoyed more



than 15 pounds of food: a mix of fruit, vegetables, nuts and fish.

Though the bear will always be small in stature, by mid-July he had jumped from 50 to 115 pounds and his fur was coming in. He was released back to his home in the Angeles National Forest. “Hopefully his time at the center was a nice little boost and will keep him healthy and strong,” says Barton. —*K.W.*

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