

PRE-KID AND RAISING OF KIDS

We must remember that the raising of the kid/s starts before birth; and approximately 72% of the kid's development takes place in the last 6 weeks of gestation. It is thus very important that the doe is fed accordingly. If a doe's nutrition is inadequate, kids will be weak from birth and their chances of survival poor. Goats tend to deposit more of their body fat in the body cavity, rather than beneath the skin as is the case with most other farm animals. Also, as milk goats tend to be extremely fertile with twins and triplets common, space for the digestive system becomes very limited. It is, therefore, very important that does are in the right body condition (body condition score of 2.5- 3 being ideal). I recommend that does are scanned (ultra sound) if possible, and fed according to the number of kids due. Once again remember that twins and triplets take up a lot of stomach space, leaving very little space for the digestive system.

If does become too fat or too lean, this raises the risk of pregnancy toxemia (ketosis). I recommend that does are placed in a separate enclosure a few days prior to kidding or straight after kidding. This is specially important for the does that are expecting twins and more, and also makes it easier to monitor and intervene in a case of dystocia (difficult birth). In this regard my rule is never to intervene too soon, but rather wait at least 1 hour after the water has burst. When assisting, always wear gloves and use lots of lubricant. I use liquid paraffin.

Remove mother and kids as soon as possible out of the adult area put in pens that are clean, remember that most diarrheal diseases are transferred by faeces. Kids are inquisitive and tend to suck or nibble on objects that is contaminated with E. coli or coccidial oocysts.

Ketosis (Pregnancy Toxaemia) (domsiekte)

- This is a metabolic disorder in late pregnancy
140 days

- High risk when goats are either too thin or too fat.
- A doe in late pregnancy needs extra energy, as she has to maintain her own body, as well as the developing kids in the uterus
- In late pregnancy the uterus and its contents take up a large amount of space. If supplied with poor quality food, a doe will not be able to consume enough fodder to meet all her own and growing kids' needs..
- When blood glucose levels are too low to supply the doe and kid's needs, body fat is metabolised into blood glucose, with this chemical process, ketones are released into her blood stream.

Symptoms.

- Lethargy and loss of appetite lie down, grinding of teeth and moaning, usually dies within a week if not treated.
- Lies flat on it's stomach, with it's head flung backwards.

Treatment.

- If not detected early, response to treatment is not very good. It is, however, always well worth the attempt.
- Give the affected doe a readily usable form of energy, such as glucose, propylene Glycol 50ml x 2 – 4 times per day or molasses diluted in water.

- Calcium boro-gluconate, subcutaneous or intravenous, 40-60 ml deposit in quantities of 10 ml
- Supplementation with Vit B complex can also be beneficial.

Prevention.

- Does should be lean not thin
- Of course it is always important to feed good quality fodder, but this is especially important during the last 2 months of pregnancy. and particularly important for does carrying twins and triplets
- In last 2 -3 weeks of pregnancy, supplement with palatable high energy concentrate
- Contact your fodder supplier and ask about vita –trans a supplement that can be added to your goats fodder. Meadow mixes for Fairview a pre-kid pellet, that contains vita - trans
- It is always, if possible, a good practise to have your does scanned. To know how many if any kids they are expecting.
- All does, but especially does expecting twins and triplets benefit from a “chocolate- mealie” mix of molasses meal and, mealie meal. A good recipe is 100kg of coarse mealie meal, 100kg of Molasses meal and 50kg of Molatek bypass. Molatek Bypass contains bypass protein which is very important. If you can't get Molatek Bypass you can replace it with Soy oil cake. Mix and feed at 500g/goat per day. Once

again, always remember that we have very little rumen space, and feed must be high quality and contain high nutritional value.

- Exercise should be offered and forced if necessary.

Then there is also the risk of Milk fever

Milk fever.

- Milk fever or Hypocalcaemia, means low blood calcium.
- This does not mean that the goat is deficient in calcium, the bones are full of it, and it only means that the blood calcium level is too low.
- After kidding the goat suddenly has to produce 3 L plus milk. Milk is high in calcium and this represents a heavy loss in blood calcium
- This usually occurs in the age range of 4-6 years, and around or just after kidding. It is not a common problem with goats.

Symptoms.

- Because calcium is essential for muscle tone, goats appear unsteady
- Goats are weak, lie down, stop eating goes into coma
- Can sometimes be confused with pregnancy toxaemia.

Treatment.

- Goats with this condition respond very well to Calcium borogluconate treatment.
- Intravenously or subcutaneous.
- After treatment the goat's body normally adjusts and mobilises its own calcium from the bones.

Prevention.

- If high-calcium fodder is fed prior to kidding, the body's control mechanisms register this high input. Adequate quantities are absorbed in the bone, but it also reduces the absorption of calcium salt from the intestine. If this persists after kidding, the calcium lost in the milk depletes the reserves, resulting in low blood calcium and milk fever.
- If a ration low in calcium is fed prior to kidding the goat's body adjusts to the change and metabolises calcium from the bone - hence milk fever does not occur.

THE RAISING OF KIDS

Raise your kids in an area that has been sterilised. Never raise kids in an area where adult goats are as adult goats.

After the kid is born, immediately treat the umbilical cord with a disinfectant like Iodine. Allow the does to clean her kid/s, and ensure that the kid/s consume at least 500mm of colostrum in the first 24 hours after birth. If a kid struggles to feed, it should be assisted. If the teats are hanging too low or are too big, then the problem can be solved by expressing colostrum into a bottle and feeding with a teat. It is very important to get the sucking reflex going as soon as possible. I prefer to leave kids with their mothers for at least 3 days. This helps to ensure that they are strong, and have a good sucking reflex

when they are converted to bottle feeding. Treat the kid as you would treat your own baby - with care, tenderness, and always follow superior hygiene procedures.

Personally I prefer to simulate nature by feeding the kids smaller quantities more often per day. Practical circumstances may not always allow for this, however.

FEEDING

- Always make sure that your hands are clean.
- Always sterilize bottles and teats, and use a clean teat with every kid.
- Make sure that the hole in the teat is not too big. The milk should not flow out freely, but rather the kid's sucking reflex should draw the milk at a comfortable rate.
- Always quarantine kids with Orf, diarrhoea or any other disease.
- After working with sick animals, make sure that both hands and equipment are sterilized before handling healthy kids.
- Have two buckets available; one with clean water to rinse the teat after feeding a kid, and one containing a dilution of baby bottle sterilant (disinfectant) to immerse the teats after rinsing and again before re-use.
- Feed the milk at about body temperature (38°C)
- If kids are reared on a milk surrogate please follow the mixing instructions.
- It is important to always feed at the same temperature
- To prevent diarrhoea a probiotic like Bio Rem can be added to the milk.
- Depending on the mass of the kid, feed 200-300ml of milk 3 times per day.
- Do not over-feed as this can also cause diarrhoea
- Introduce solid feed from week two

- Always make sure that there is ample fresh drinking water available at all times
- Supply heating for the kids, for example use heaters or infra red lamps.
- Remember we are not just raising a kid we are also growing and developing the rumen
- Research has confirmed that feeding less milk at one time, coinciding with the feeding of good quality lucerne or any other soft hay, as well as a ready availability of high protein creep pellets (we use a 18% lamb creep pellet) - will facilitate the kids nibbling from about week two.
- I feed 3 x 300ml for the first 4 weeks
- From week 5, only feed 2 x 500ml / day
- Week 7 onwards only 1 x 500ml
- Wean the kids at 15kg+ mass and be sure that they are eating well at this time.
- Invest in feeding your maidens well, in which case they should ideally weigh at least 32-35kg at 7 months of age when ready for mating. This normally ensures good return on the investment in terms of milk production in their first lactation.

KID HEALTH REGIMEN

- Vaccinate your does 8-6 weeks before kidding with a multi vaccine like Multivax P. This will provide antibody protection for your does and kids against Clostridium causing, pulpy kidney, blood gut, tetanus, as well as Pasteurella
- Vaccinate kids at 3 weeks of age with Multivax P and give a booster shot 4 weeks later
- If Corynebacterium pseudotuberculosis- caseous lymphadenitis (cheesy gland abscesses) is a problem in your herd vaccinate with Glanvac 3.
- If kids get milk scours, (usually presents as light yellow or white and smells sour), this is usually caused by over feeding or not mixing the milk surrogate correctly. In these cases, remove all milk and only feed

a supplement like Replensol, or alternatively a glucose mix with electrolytes for at least 24 hours

- Coccidiosis, usually presents itself as watery bloody diarrhoea as from week 2 or 3. Treat with sulphamethazine or any other anticoccidials.
- Dose the kids at weaning for intestinal parasites.
- Milk tape worm can be a big problem in kids
- Have a good look at the kids faeces, if there are small white pieces in the droppings, it is milk tape worm.