

# Preparing your does for kidding season

## **Drying off your does (i.e., to stop your doe from making milk)**

The best way to dry your goat is to start reducing her energy intake, if you are feeding Lucerne take it away and supplement with grass or straw at least 2 weeks before the dry off date. If she is a very high yielding goat, I have found that by milking her every second day also decreases milk. Never take her water away. In this way the milk should reduce rapidly and be at a level where you can just stop milking. If the goat has a history of mastitis, it is a good idea to milk her out completely, sterilize the teat tip with surgical spirits and insert a dry cow antibiotic as prescribed by your veterinarian.

## Pre-kid vaccination

### **What is a vaccine?**

A vaccine is a product that contains a dead or alive weakened disease – causing organism or toxic substance. When the product is administered to the animal, the animal will build up a resistance or antibodies against that specific organism or toxin. The immunised animal is then protected against the organism (disease) or poisonous substance when exposed to it.

### **What is a dead vaccine?**

An inactivated vaccine (or dead vaccine) consists of virus particles, bacteria, or other pathogens which are grown in culture and then killed using a method such as heat or formaldehyde. It is always a good idea to discuss a vaccination program with your veterinarian. Remember that when you use a dead vaccine a booster shot must be given 4-6 weeks later. Read the instructions on the vaccine pamphlet and use only as prescribed. Important safety measures to consider:

- When you buy vaccine make sure it was stored at the right temperature.
- On your way home store in coolbox.
- When you use the vaccine, do not expose to sunlight or heat.
- Sterilize your equipment by boiling it, never use disinfectants.
- Use a separate sharp needle for every animal if possible.
- Never mix vaccines.
- Shake the bottle every time before you fill the syringe.
- Make sure that you vaccinate the right dose, a smaller dose will develop a weak immunity.

### **Vaccination and dosing program**

Vaccinate your does 8-6 weeks before kidding with a multi vaccine like Multivax P or Multivax P plus, it will immunise your does and supply anti bodies to the kids against your Clostridiums (pulpy kidney, blood gut, tetanus etc.) blood as well as Pasteurella.

The vaccination will not only protect the doe against the disease/organism, but also the kid, because the anti-bodies will be secreted in the colostrum. That is why it is so important that the kid consumes at least 500ml of colostrum in the first 24 hours.

### **Blue udder vaccine**

All does old and young requires a blue udder vaccine 8 weeks before kidding and booster shot 4 weeks later.

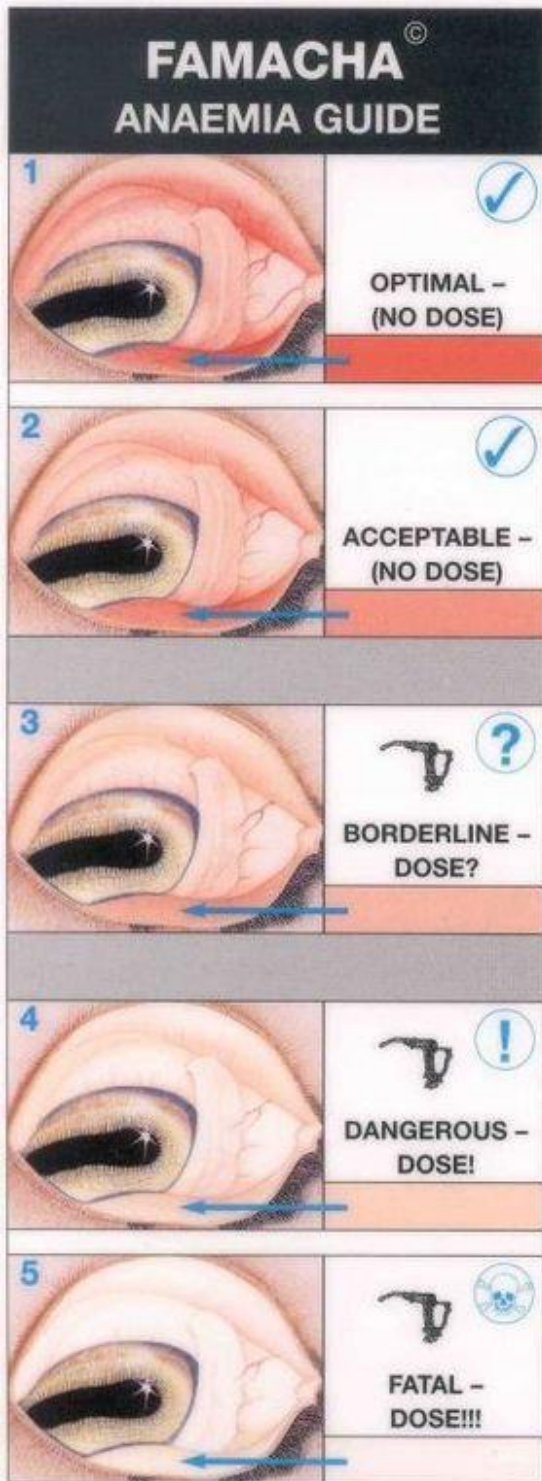
### **Dosing**

I don't believe in dosing, just for the sake of dosing. Either send faecal samples to a laboratory for analysis or make use of the FAMACHA method where you individually inspect each animal's eye membrane and then dose accordingly.

### **Famacha (Eye to eye: diagnosing internal parasites)**

Looking into a sheep's eyes does not appear to offer much to a veterinary surgeon or a farmer. So why are more and more farmers, vets and animal health workers doing this? Surprisingly, the answer is that the eyes are a good way of revealing the presence of stomach worms. By examining the colour of the inside of the lower eyelid of a sheep or goat, you can tell how badly the animal is suffering from bloodsucking stomach-worms. Parasitic stomach-worms result in heavy losses in flocks: they make the host animal anaemic, and the paler the colour of the lower eyelid, the more serious is the infestation and the more urgent the need to treat the animal.

A bright red colour of the eyelid indicates either that the animal has few or no worms, or that the sheep or goat has the capacity to tolerate its worms. An almost white eyelid colour is the warning sign of very severe anaemia, as the worms present in the FAMACHA, the simple test for worm stomach are in such numbers that they are draining the animal of its blood. If left untreated, such an animal will soon die.



To see how it's done please visit this link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=15TGB3CmIJc>

Pre-kid

We must remember that the raising of the kid/s starts before birth; 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 the does was on a poor level of nutrition kids that are born will be weak and their chances on survival will not be good. Goats tend to deposit more of their body fat in their body cavity, rather than beneath their skin as most other farm animals do and with milk goats being so fertile and twins and triplets common, space for the digestive system becomes very limited. It is therefore very important that the does are in the right body condition, body condition score of 2.5- 3 is ideal. I recommend that you have your does scanned (ultrasound) if possible and feed according to the number of kids they are expecting. Remember twins and triplets take up a lot of stomach space, leaving very little space for the digestive system.

If the does are too fat or too lean you risk, your does getting pregnancy toxaemia (ketosis).

I recommend that you place the does in a separate enclosure a few days prior to kidding. Especially the does that you know are expecting twins and more. It also makes it easier to decide when to intervene in a case of dystocia (difficult birth). Never intervene too soon, my rule of thumb is, wait at least 1 hour after the water has burst. Always wear gloves and use lots of lubricant I use liquid paraffin.

### **Ketosis (Pregnancy Toxaemia)**

- This is a metabolic disorder in late pregnancy 140 days
- 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 on poor-quality food she cannot consume enough fodder to provide in all her needs.
- When blood glucose levels are too low to supply in 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.

### **Treatment**

- Response on treatment if not detected very early, is not very good. But always well worth the attempt.
- Give does a readily usable form of energy, such as glucose, propylene Glycol 50ml x 2 per day or molasses diluted in water.
- Calcium boro-gluconate, subcutaneous or intravenous, 40-60 ml deposit in quantities of 10 ml
- Treating goats with symptoms of ketosis with Vit B complex can also be beneficial.

### **Prevention**

- Does should be lean not thin.
- Feed good- quality fodder the last 2 months of pregnancy..
- Scan goats and supplement fodder in cases of twin and triplet.

- In last 2 -3 weeks of pregnancy, supplement with palatable high energy concentrate.
- Feed does expecting twin and triplets a chocolate mealie mix of molasses meal, 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. We must remember that we have very little rumen space and what we feed the goat must of high quality and high nutritional value.
- Exercise should be offered and forced if necessary.

### **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.
- This usually occurs at or around kidding or just after kidding. It is not a common problem with goats and most likely occurs at age range of 4-6 years.
- 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.

#### **Symptoms**

- Because calcium is essential for muscle tone, goats appear unsteady.
- Goats are weak, lie down, stop eating goes into coma.

#### **Treatment**

- Reacts very well on Calcium borogluconate treatment.
- Intravenously or subcutaneous..
- After treatment the goat's body normally adjust and mobilises its own calcium from the bones..

#### **Prevention**

- If calcium high fodder (like lucerne) is fed prior to kidding, the bodies control mechanisms register this high input. Adequate quantities are absorbed in the bone, but it also reduces the metabolisation into blood calcium. The calcium lost in the milk depletes the reserves, resulting in low blood calcium and milk fever.
- When drying up your goats take away Lucerne or any high Calcium fodder, you need to force the body to metabolise Calcium from the bone into blood calcium.

## **The raising of kids**

After the kid is born, immediately treat the umbilical cord with a disinfectant like Iodine. Allow the does to clean her kid/s, make sure that the kid/s consumes at least 500mm of colostrum in the first 24 hours after birth. If the kid struggle to feed assist it, if the teats are hanging to low or are to big

assist by putting colostrum in a bottle and feed with a teat. It is very important to get the sucking reflex going ASAP.

I prefer to leave the kids for at least 3 days with their mother, to make sure that they are strong and have a strong sucking reflex when they are converted to bottle feeding.

Treat the kid like you would treat your own baby. With care, tenderness and superior hygiene must be in place.

Personally, I prefer to simulate nature by rather feeding the kids more times per day in smaller quantities. It however needs to be practical under your circumstances.

### **Feeding**

- Be sure that your hands are clean.
- Always sterilize your bottles and teats, use a clean teat with every kid.
- Always quarantine kids with Orf, diarrhoea or any other disease.
- After you have handled sick animals make sure that your hands or equipment is sterilized before you handle your healthy kids.
- Have two buckets available one with clean water to rinse the teat after feeding the kid and on with a dilution with baby bottle sterilant (disinfectant) to put the teats in after rinsing and before using again.
- Feed the milk at about body temperature 38°C.
- It is important to always feed at the same temperature.
- To prevent diarrhoea, you can add a probiotic like Bio Rem to the milk.
- Depending on the mass of the kid feed 200-300ml of milk 3 times per day.
- Do not over feed as it can also cause diarrhoea.
- Introduce solid feed as from week two.
- Always make sure that there is always fresh drinking water available.
- Supply heating for the kids, heaters, or infra-red lamps.
- Remember we are not just raising a kid we are also growing and developing the rumen.
- We have found with research by feeding less milk at a time and having good quality lucerne or any other soft hay available as well as a high protein creep pellets (we use a 18% lamb creep pellet) available the kids start nibbling as from week two.
- I feed 3 x 300ml for the first 4 weeks.
- From week 5, I only feed 2 x 500ml / day.
- Week 7 onwards only 1 x 500ml
- If kids are reared on a milk surrogate, please follow the mixing instructions.
- Wean the kids at 15kg+ mass and be sure that they are eating well.
- Investing in feeding your maidens well, they should weigh at least 32-35kg at 7 months of age when they are going to be mated. You will get your investment back in milk production in their first lactation.

### **Kid health regime**

- Vaccinate your kids at 3-4 weeks of age with Multivax P and give a booster shot 4 weeks later.
- If *Corynebacterium pseudotuberculosis*- caseous lymphadenitis (cheesy gland abscess) is a problem in your herd vaccinate with Glanvac 3.
- It is important to deworm your kids when you wean them. Deworm for both round worms and Milk Tapeworm.