



Preparation for Kidding
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Getting ready to kid should be on your radar a minimum of two months before your actual estimated start date. This allows time to: get all fences in repair, order and pickup “bad weather” feed supply, strategically set up shelters in the kidding paddock(s), clean out and lime the barn, place shallower water troughs and mineral feeders for the kids and have a complete water quality test done.

In the January issue (Goat Rancher Magazine 2020) I discussed “Kidding in the Brush”; this article was focused on a spring kidding. The does will be out browsing and forage quality could be questionable before spring growth starts. To supplement the kids with nutrition needed for growth, set up a creeper panel pen with weather proofed feeders.

I realize not every farmer/rancher plans a spring kidding as there are local producers kidding now in the mid-Atlantic and southeast USA states. Caution is needed as young kids become hypothermic very fast with cold rain chilling weather. The shelter provided should be protective from wind, drafts and rain. The does need a higher level of nutrition (suggest having hay sampled for nutritional quality); at this time of year quality is decreasing rapidly in pastureland and wood lots.

Evaluate the livestock guardian dogs for their ability to protect kids and patrol. The guardians (and herding dogs) also need a higher quality of nutrition. Those dogs are amalgamated pre-kidding in the area to be used so they can patrol and start identifying the predation pressure.

About three weeks before kidding start date, the does should be vaccinated for clostridium perfringens C and D with tetanus, fecal analysis completed, FAMACHA done, feet inspected and trimmed if needed, body condition score recorded (1 - emaciated through 9 - obese) and teeth checked. Culling should have taken place pre-breeding.

It is essential (high priority) to maintain biosecurity even when your veterinarian comes to your farm. I bought my veterinarian boots that I keep in the shop along with clean coveralls and hand wash. Disposable plastic boots (tall, 5mil or thicker) are given to each visitor to wear.

Field kidding box should contain:

- Triiodine for navel
- Navel scissors / navel clamps / regular scissors
- Ear tagger and ear tags (I prefer to use scrapie tags)
- Weigh sling and weigh scale
- Nitrile gloves
- “Write in the Rain” record book, all weather pen and pencils
- 50% Nolvasan wash for ear tags and ears
- All weather paint stick (marker)
- Hemostats and/or artery forceps
- Collar and lead rope
- Head lamp and binoculars

Emergency box (ready to grab) contains:

- Thermometer and extra weigh sling
- Two leg snares / head snare / gambrel restrainer
- Collar and lead rope

- Artificial insemination sleeves (used for cattle AI) and nitrile gloves
- 60 cc syringe with catheter tip
- Feeding tube and feeding bottle with nipple
- Nasal syringe
- OB wire / OB lube / smooth 8 inch by 1 and one half inch open-ended tube
- Sterile vaginal swabs
- Blood serum bleeding tubes / holder / needles / sharpie pen
- Syringes (3cc/5cc/10cc) and 20 gauge ½ inch hypodermic needles
- Small drying towels

Medical box should have available:

- Copper boluses (2 gram and 4 gram) and balling gun
- Thermometer / collar and lead rope
- All weather paint stick (marker)
- Antibiotics (injectable)
- Kaolin pectin / scour medication
- Dewormer and coccidia drugs
- Fortified complex vitamin B12
- Electrolyte solution / amino acid concentrate
- Probiotics and fortified iron supplement
- Mixed sizes of syringes / 20 gauge ½ inch hypodermic needles

General to have on hand:

- Colostrum and kid goat milk replacer
- Extra bottles and nipples
- Nutrient supplement with electrolytes for scours
- Small drying towels / heating pad and box
- Ketosis and milk fever products

It is highly recommended to have a close working relationship with a veterinarian and give them a heads up on your “start” kidding date. Develop a handy list of phone numbers to include: your veterinarian and a back up veterinarian, an emergency veterinarian clinic, and neighbors/friends that can help on short notice.

I have developed a handbook that has all the original drug labels in abc order, a list of diseases with suggestions to treat that disease, and the medications outlined and how they are administered. Homeopathic remedies are given for each of the problems that might be encountered. The handbook is invaluable in a time of emergency.

All of the above (three toolboxes and one handbook) are suggestions to get you initially prepared for kidding season. Always keep in mind vegetation availability and quality, climatic changes, topography, your production management system (chelated mineral/ vitamin mix and kelp meal offered free choice) and reality based time management.