

Goatvetoz Spring Newsletter

Goat Veterinary Consultancies - goatvetoz

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Should I give my pregnant or recently kidded doe a worm drench?

Does that have recently kidded or are heavily pregnant lose their normal immunity to worms. This immunity isn't strong in goats, unlike sheep and cattle. This means any worm larvae that have been hibernating in the gut wall come out and become egg laying adults. Also more of the worm larvae that are eaten develop into adults. Hence these does are producing large numbers of worm eggs ready to infect the next generation i.e. the kids. This is a very successful evolutionary strategy developed by the worm.

Ideally you would take faecal samples and get a worm egg count after kidding as every worm drench you give your goats means you are one step closer to getting drench resistant worms on your farm. However prior to putting pregnant does into a rested kidding paddock and weaning kids into a new paddock are times when a strategic worm drench is probably needed. These are times of high stress when goats can go down with worms very quickly. Check their worm egg counts or FAMACHA scores regularly

even if you strategically drench them as worm burdens can develop quickly in spring and summer.

Barbers pole worms

Barbers pole worms, or *Haemonchus contortus* are one of the main causes of death in goats. Deaths can be quite sudden if you aren't keeping a close eye on your goats. The clinical signs are lethargy, poor exercise tolerance, pale mucous membranes, going down and reluctant to rise. Sometimes goats are just found dead in the paddock. Severe cases will develop bottle jaw as shown below. These signs are due to the severe anaemia and protein loss leading to fluid accumulation in the lower portions of the body like under the jaw.



The female *Haemonchus contortus* worms have a lancet at the top of their mouths that they use to make a wound in the lining of the goat's abomasum or 4th stomach and then they drink up the blood that seeps out. They use these blood meals to lay lots of egg (up to 10,000 a day each). This is

Abomasal Bloat

This can be a major problem in kids reared on milk replacers. It occurs in kids from around 10 days to 6 weeks of age. The main clinical sign is extreme enlargement of the abdomen. The fourth stomach or abomasum is filled with gas and kids are in obvious pain as demonstrated by the kids grinding their teeth. Often kids are just found dead.

The exact cause of abomasal bloat is still being investigated but *Sarcina* and *Clostridial* bacterial infections of the abomasal walls are suspected. Poor hygiene of milk feeding equipment is often a factor as well. Urgent veterinary treatment is needed. The photo below shows a kid with abomasal bloat.



how the barbers pole worm gets its name as the white uterus full of eggs, wraps around the red gut full of blood as a spiral like a barbers pole. If goat survive the anaemia then they will lose condition due to the protein lost with the blood. Goat owners need to check their goats regularly using the FAMACHA technique as shown in the photo below.



In times when it is warm and wet then this needs to be done weekly.

It is vital to pick up heavy infestations of barbers pole worms early before bottle jaw develops as many goats with bottle jaw can die or they may need a blood transfusion, which is expensive.

What should you do if you have an anaemic goat- first take a faecal sample to confirm it is barbers pole worms and to get a before treatment worm egg count then drench the goat with a worm drench you know works on the goats on your farm (based on DrenchCheck or worm egg counts before and 14 days after drenching and checking you have a 95% reduction). There is no need to wait until you get the results back so drench as soon as you have taken the faecal samples. Ideally use 2 worm drenches from different drench families or combine one drench with

Copper Oxide Wire Particle (COWP) bolus. Ask your vet for a prescription so you are using the higher dose rates needed for goats. More info is found on this webpage <http://www.wormboss.com.au/worms/roundworms/barbers-pole-worm.php>. Iron supplements may be needed as well.

Bioworma

Bioworma is a new product on the market to help with worm control. It basically the spores of a natural fungus that eats worm larvae that is now being commercially produced. Research in goats shows it kills 86% of the worm larvae in the faeces of goats. It does not kill the worm larvae already on the pasture or inside the goat. However it does kill the larvae of drench resistant worms. The spores don't hatch inside the goats.

Bioworma takes time to work as you must wait until all the worm larvae on the pasture has died and the worms in the gut must first be effectively treated. It is expensive and must be fed daily but is a very useful tool in the war on worms. I recommend it during quarantine of new goats so that drench resistant worms are not introduced. Barbers pole worms last on average 70 days before dying (maximum of 90 days) so feed for this many days before allowing these new goats onto your pastures.

Vomiting Goats

Ruminants generally don't vomit. Goats can however spit out their cud if it tastes strange e.g. if they had sudden access to grain or some unusual feed source. This is a sign of rumen acidosis which can have serious consequences such as laminitis or Vitamin B1 deficiency. You can confirm rumen acidosis by testing the pH of the cud that has been spat out.

Another cause of vomiting in goats is access to poisonous plants such as azaleas, rhododendrons and pieris. If you have a vomiting goat check the vomit carefully for any signs of these plants i.e. the leaves. There is no antidote but you can give the goat activated charcoal. The photo below is a rhododendron



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