

Goatvetoz Autumn Newsletter

Goat Veterinary Consultancies - goatvetoz

Autumn 2017

Autumn worms

As we have a warm and wet summer and autumn in many areas of Australia, these are perfect conditions for building up worm numbers. The main gastrointestinal worms we worry about in goats are these:

Teladorsagia circumcincta (was called *Ostertagia*, brown stomach worm)

Trichostrongylus spp. (black scour worms)

Haemonchus contortus (barber's pole worms)

Worm larval numbers can be very high in wet autumns and so you need to know the worm levels in your goats.

You can work out the worm levels by getting worm egg counts done on fresh faeces. Commercial laboratories offer a postal service but post off early in the week. See [here](http://www.wormboss.com.au/tests-tools/professional-service-providers.php) for a list of Australian labs (<http://www.wormboss.com.au/tests-tools/professional-service-providers.php>). I also offer this service, but only for clients, as I am not set up to do large numbers.

How do you know when a doe will kid?

Run your hand down tail vertebrae of the rump - thumb one side fingers the other. In the last 4 weeks the vertebrae rise up and the ligaments either side going out 45 degree- see lines on photo below- start to get softer and softer. When all the ligaments have gone i.e. your thumb and fingers meet all way down under vertebrae, then doe will kid in 12-24 hours. Checking literally takes only 60 seconds twice a day. When the ligaments have totally disappeared, then lock your doe in a pen with clean straw or bedding. Monitor closely. I suggest setting up a baby monitor or a CCTV system so you can monitor from the comfort of your house. If a goat has been down on its side straining severely for 20 minutes, it needs to be checked by someone who knows what they are doing and using gloves and lots of disinfectant and lubricant. Calling a vet early means you are more likely to save

Horse worm treatments

Don't use these in goats. Instead work with your vet to get small amounts of sheep worm drenches and a prescription for the recommended higher dose rate. We have no evidence that horse wormer work in goats even if it has the same active ingredient. The base (filler) is also critical, especially as the active may not be evenly spread within it. An experiment was done in the other direction, i.e. horses were given an injectable sheep worm treatment (moxidectin) orally at double the dose rate normally found in horse worming syringes - BUT this resulted in only a 72% reduction in worm egg counts i.e. just enough to help but also to speed up the development of drench resistance. When a properly registered horse worming syringe containing moridectin was used afterwards it showed the normal 100% egg count reduction 7 days later and 99.5% reduction at day 22 so existing drench resistance wasn't the cause of the only 72% reduction. If you are going to use something not recommended by your vet at least take a worm egg count 10-14 days later to check it worked. You need at least a 95% reduction or preferably higher. At 95% - 5 worms out of every 100 have survived and go on to breed more

both the mother and the kid.

In commercial herds, the vast majority of does manage to kid without human help. However feral goat herds are male dominated indicating that does have a higher mortality rate than males. This could be due to females having a greater susceptibility to worms or to kidding issues. However in general, difficult kiddings are only around 4%. You should monitor dead kids and record any with swollen heads or that are stained dirty yellow as these are signs of difficult births. Simple post-mortems on kids can also tell you a lot of information but wear protective clothing and gloves.



Why can't I use sheep worm drenches on my goats?

All worm drenches are registered in Australia by the APVMA (apvma.gov.au) and in order to do so for dairy goats they must provide research data on milk residues. Unfortunately it

costs many thousands of \$ to do these milk residue tests and the dairy goat market and hence potential sales, are sometimes not considered by the manufacturers to be large enough to cover these costs. There is no way to force a manufacturer to register their product for dairy goats if they don't want to. Meat and Livestock Australia have covered the costs for both meat and milk residue data for goats for Caprimec and could do so for others but the manufacturer must be on side as only they can apply for registration for goats with the APVMA. I have made many submissions about the difficulties of access to veterinary medicines for dairy goats and these are all on my website. Last year I spoke in person to the Productivity Commission in support of my written submission on this subject.

In all states except Victoria, a worm drench not registered for use in goats needs a veterinary prescription to use on another species such as goats. In Victoria you can use a sheep drench on another species but only at the same dose rate and with the proviso that you do not cause any residues, so you

still need a vet's prescription as worms drenches for goats need to be at a higher dose rate. A vet can only prescribe if they have seen your goats or visited your farm in the last 6-12 months. A vet must state the dose and withholding period on the prescription. If there is a DO NOT statement on the label a vet cannot over-ride it in a prescription. Vet have some leeway, but only for 1 goat in any herd.

Residues are important for goats as any detections of residues can lose access to overseas markets. If a veterinary medicine is not registered for use in goats then there is no Maximum Residue Limit and hence goats must have NO residue. Meat levels are checked every year and unfortunately 2% of samples had moxidectin detected last financial year. State authorities would have investigated the goat producer (and the vet if there was a prescription).

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