# **Do you**

# **Cud r**

When goats have undertaken a course of antibiotics, the rumen bacteria and protozoan population can be severely disrupted. Probiotics are often given to people who have long courses of antibiotics, but what about goats?

If you live near an abattoir then you may be able to get some fresh rumen contents for drenching the sick goat. If this is not possible, then you can try and get cud from a normal healthy goat. Sit quietly besides a very domesticated goat that is resting and stroke her gently on the left side of her neck. As she cuds, you can see the bolus of food come up the oesophagus. After a couple of times, be ready to grab the goat's jaws as the bolus comes up and then using your fingers, scoop out the cud.

Goatvetoz Summer Newsletter

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Every goat farm needs a sick or isolation pen. Goats are herd animals so most will dislike being separated, but this is essential as a sick goat can easily be bullied, even if it was previously a top ranking herd animal. Also, until the disease or health issue is known it may well be contagious and hence any nose to nose contact should be avoided between the sick goat and all others. Ideally an isolation pen should be a separate building or have separate ventilation. The goat will settle better if it can see other goats, so double fencing 2-3 metres apart is best. Consider a thick plastic café –type curtain between two wire fence panels (to prevent the goats from trying to eat it) or you can hang mirrors so the sick goat can see other goats.

If you have only a small back-yard and only 2 goats with no room for any additional goat structure, consider tying the well goat to a running lead or swivel tether so the sick goat can easily escape if it needs to. Sometimes it is better to closely monitor both goats than have to worry about neighbours complaining about the noise from 2 separated goats.

Ideally the floor should be concrete or other easily cleanable surface and covered in thick bedding. Remember "C" comes before "D" in the alphabet, so cleaning comes before disinfecting. It is necessary to remove all visible dirt from the floor and walls by vigorously scrubbing with water and detergent/soap. A pressure hose is ideal; just make sure all water does not go downhill to the rest of the goats’ housing and pens.

Once visually clean, then disinfect. Veterinarians have access to good disinfectant like "Virkon" but these are often not available when you need it. An excellent alternative is household bleach. Bleach should be made up in small amounts each day as it loses its power over time. The rate to make up the bleach is 1 ½ tablespoons of bleach to 1 litre (or quart) and this is known to kill salmonella, E. coli and listeria bacteria as well as flu virus and even the very infectious norovirus. [[1]](#endnote-1) The bleach solution should be applied with a disposable wipe or spray bottle and left to air-dry for 10 minutes. Do not rinse off. But never mix it with ammonia products.

# **Akabane**

While this sounds like a Japanese food or craft, it is the name of a virus that can causes deformities in newborn livestock including goats. It was first reported in Japan but is in Australia and many other countries. The main clinical sign are contracted limbs (arthrogryposis). Even when dead, the joints and legs of the affected livestock cannot be straightened.

This can lead to a difficult kidding or calving and deaths of both the mother and offspring. This is because the legs cannot get into the correct position for easy delivery.

Other clinical signs are a domed head and a brain that is smaller than normal (microencephaly) or part of the brain is absent and replaced with fluid (hydraencephaly). There was a report of abortions in sheep and especially goats in Israel.

The diagnosis of akabane can’t be generally confirmed from the dead kid. Blood samples need to be taken from the doe that gave birth, ideally 2 samples 6 weeks apart which should show high and /or rising antibody levels.

If the doe may have any Anglo-nubian in her background the brain should be removed and tested for beta-mannosidosis which also causes contracted legs. Some exotic to Australia viruses such as Cache and Schmallenber can cause similar signs as well. In some states this may mean you can get lab samples tested for free as an exotic disease exclusion. You will need prior approval but worthwhile asking.

There was an outbreak in calves in the spring of 2017 around the NSW Queensland border and some kids born in the Gold Coast hinterland.

There is no treatment and no vaccine. As these viruses are spread by biting insects such as midges, it is possible to delay matings until the late autumn when few biting insects are around.

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***Q***

The New Year is a time for everyone to set goals for 2014. Most commonly these are about your health - i.e. to lose weight or get fit. One goal goat breeders should have, is to find out whether you have had it (Q Fever) and if not, to see an experienced doctor and get vaccinated.

The Q in “Q Fever “ stands either for Query (as initially the cause was unknown) or Queensland, depending on which history you read. It is caused by a very tiny intracellular bacteria,

*Coxiella burnetii*1, named after its discoverer, the Australian Nobel Prize winning researcher, Sir Macfarlane Burnet.

All Australian vet students and meat workers must now be vaccinated for Q Fever. Goats are a known risk factor. A survey of ferals found that over 50% had antibodies to Q Fever. Most goats with Q fever have no signs, although it can cause abortions in pregnant goats. The birth fluids of infected goats are contaminated with Q Fever organisms, so if you help at kiddings, you are at high risk. See your doctor & discuss skin test/s (personally I would do both arms) & vaccination. Getting vaccinated, if you have already been exposed, causes severe side-effects.

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