

Goatvetoz Autumn Newsletter

Goat Veterinary Consultancies - goatvetoz

Autumn 2019

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 worms.

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 after kidding and weaning kids into a new paddock are times when a 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.



How to stimulate newborn kids to breath

Kids sometimes need a bit of help getting started breathing when first born. Rubbing them all over with a towel is best. You should wipe out all the mucous with a towel and suck out any with a large syringe or turkey baster. The very best treatment is a couple of drops of "Doxopram" under the kids tongue. You can ask your normal vet to give you some at the start of the kidding season. This is a strong respiratory stimulate and is normally used in puppies from caesareans.

However please don't tip the kids upside down. This put extra pressure of the lungs (this is why people with pneumonia are propped up on pillows to make it easier to breath). Also you don't want stomach contents coming out when the kid is unconscious as some could go into the lungs when the kid is put upright again. Don't give mouth to

Abomasal Bloat in Kids

Abomasal bloat is when the milk in bottle fed kids is digested incorrectly and gas is produced. Kids are very uncomfortable with grinding of the teeth and swollen bellies. They refuse to eat and many die.

We don't know the actual cause although there are some theories including a clostridial infection of the stomach wall similar to the disease braxy and infection with a Sarcina-like bacteria. Often when 1 kid develops this condition, more will follow but whether this is a spreading infection or kids reacting to the same management is unknown.

Prevention is feeding little and often of a high quality milk replacer. One study in lambs showed that lambs with low iron levels developed abomasal bloat 1 week later and injections of iron dextran had a preventative effect. I would be interested in the results of breeders who want to try injecting half their kids with iron and then recording the levels of abomasal bloat in both groups. Email me – goatvetoz@gmail.com

nose/mouth either as this can transmit zoonotic diseases to you such as Q fever.

Take a quick look at the kid's cornea, if it is cloudy then stop as this kid died hours ago and any revival attempt is useless.

How safe is your feed store?

There should be at least 2 goat proof barriers between your goats and any source of grain. This includes any chicken feed in the chicken houses.

Goats that get sudden access to grain get rumen acidosis and this is often fatal, even with veterinary treatment. The grain is broken down by the rumen micro-organisms that rapidly convert it into lactic acid. This acid then starts to destroy the rumen wall and also enters the blood stream and affects the goat's internal organs.

Clinical signs include:

- Cow pat like consistency faeces or scouring
- Signs of gut pain such as stretching and teeth grinding
- Sometimes they spit out their cud.
- Staggering and then in severe cases, signs of shock

The scouring and spitting out of the cud helps the goat gets rid of the grain and acid rumen contents.

There is also reduced rumen movements which you can normally hear by putting your ear to the left hand abdomen of your goats. Listen for 2 minutes and you should normally hear 3 movements, which sound like waves crashing on the sea-shore.

First aid is 100 grams of sodium bicarbonate (baking soda) given as a paste. Then contact your veterinarian as this condition has a high mortality rate with 1 in 5 affected goats dying, most in the first 24 hours but some up to 3 days later.

Even if the goat survives there can be consequences later such as laminitis with swollen coronets (where hoof meets the hair) and lameness. This laminitis then becomes chronic with extra hard and deformed hooves. Other consequences include abscesses in the liver as bacteria get through the damaged rumen wall and get into the liver via the blood supply coming from the rumen wall. There is even a report of heart damage in goats.

So check the door to your feed shed and any gates to ensure they are goat proof. Also check the feed containers as well. Old chest freezers make good grain stores. Also make sure you don't make sudden changes in the type of amount of grain ration. Make any changes very slowly i.e. over a week.

Similarly keep locked barriers between your goats and your garden or orchard – for your goats' sake as so many garden and all stone fruit trees are poisonous.

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.

Another cause of vomiting in goats is access to poisonous plants such as azaleas, rhododendrons and pieris. If you have these garden plants pull them out and replace them with something that is not poisonous like hibiscus or grevilleas. Even if you don't have these plants still consider that someone may have thrown something over the fence for your goats to eat. Save the cud and then wearing gloves look through it for the leaves of these plants.

Vomiting generally happens about 6 hours after eating some of these garden plants. There is no antidote so all you can do is give activated charcoal and your veterinarian can treat the clinical signs e.g. start a drip to treat for shock or give pain relief if grinding their teeth. .

Do you get my Tweets?

Do you use twitter on your mobile phone? What was your favourite Tweet last season? See all my tweets at www.twitter.com/goatvet

The future of the Australian cashmere goat industry looks rosy as \$200 a kg (dehaired) was achieved