

# Goatvetoz Summer Newsletter

Goat Veterinary Consultancies - goatvetoz

Autumn 2025

## Urinary Calculi

One of the first questions that I ask goat owners with male goats, especially wethers, that are “off colour” is are they urinating? Owners can either watch a male goat over a couple of hours or they can lock their male goat in a garage or shed with a clean concrete floor and come back later to see if there are any large wet patches on the floor.

Other signs of a urinary blockage due to a stone somewhere in the urethra include:

- A sawhorse stance with all legs outstretched
- Grit, crystals or blood in the hair at the end of the prepuce
- Grinding teeth due to pain
- Straining to urinate (although inexperienced owners can think this is constipation)

A veterinarian can confirm urinary calculi by a rectal exam, X-rays and ultrasound. There are many types of urinary calculi and not all can be picked up on X-rays.

Urinary blockage by a calculi is an emergency and

immediate veterinary treatment is needed. If not given, the bladder will burst. This may relieve the pain temporarily but will eventually be fatal.

There are a range of surgical options but each has potential complications.

Prevention is based on delaying castration until 2-3 months and adjusting the diet (depending on the type of stone). Clean fresh water is essential and salt can be used to encourage water intake. Minimizing grain and feeding pasture, barley or oaten hay helps prevent some types of stones but about one third of cases were in goats on diets with no lucerne (alfalfa) and no grain. Genetics are also a factor.

Using mineral licks or pellets with added ammonium chloride may not help all types of calculi and if used all the time. Monitoring the male goats urine pH levels is part of any prevention after a case of urinary calculi.

To learn more, watch the recorded Zoom webinar that goes into more detail. Cost is

\$48. Email me [goatvetoz@gmail.com](mailto:goatvetoz@gmail.com) and I then send an invoice. After payment, I send the Zoom link and 2 pdfs of notes.

## Pregnancy Toxaemia

It is essential that pregnant does are observed closely so that the first signs of pregnancy toxaemia e.g. not eating, swollen feet, are quickly picked up. If in doubt get a urine sample and test with a urine test strip. You can use the human ones that you buy from a chemist/drug store. You can use a plastic cup on a stick and go up to a goat lying down until they stand up then back off. Then they generally urinate then defaecate immediately after (a good time to also get a faecal sample for a worm egg count). If does have ketones in their urine they have pregnancy toxaemia and need immediate treatment with propylene glycol or glycerine plus injections from your vet. If within 7 days of due kidding date or you decide the doe's life is more important than the kids, then consider asking

the vet to induce kidding. Don't wait to see your vet as when does are down and their rumens stop working, Irish research shows 16 out of 17 of these does will die. Dairy goats are more susceptible than ferals and Australian miniatures as these breeds often abort rather than get pregnancy toxemia. Fatter does are more likely to get pregnancy toxemia. Internal fat reserves limit rumen volume so feed high density feed like high quality hay and grain mixes in the last 6 weeks of pregnancy. The nutritional needs of pregnant does increases markedly during this time for energy, protein, calcium and vitamin A.

## Farm tours & field-days

These are excellent opportunities for promoting goats and potentially selling goats. However they are a Biosecurity risk to your farm. Consider these 9 rules to minimize the risk of introducing a disease like Johne's disease or weeds.

1. Incorporate a biosecurity message in publicity fliers e.g. 'In the interest of farm biosecurity, please ensure all footwear and vehicles are free of soil'.

2. Ensure all vehicles are parked in a designated area. This can assist in containing the spread of a new pest and make monitoring for new pests much easier.
3. Incorporate boot scrapers and a foot bath at site access points.
4. Have hand sanitizer available for use.
5. Register all attendees. This facilitates trace forward/trace back.
6. Ensure the field site has biosecurity signage. Signs can remind attendees of the importance of biosecurity.
7. Remember that caterers, trade representatives and hire staff erecting marquees should also comply with your biosecurity guidelines.
8. Monitor the car park area for any new weeds for up to a year
9. Limit access by people to pastures used by goats.

## Do you use X, Threads or Tumbler?

See all my tweets at <https://x.com/goatvet> If you have decided to leave Twitter/X you can follow me on Bluesky, Tumblr or Threads as goatvetoz.

## Mouldy hay

Hay that has been baled when too wet can develop mould. This mould can then produce fungal toxins, called mycotoxins and these can be:

- Tetragenic (cause deformities in a developing foetus)
- Carcinogenic (cause cancer)
- Mutagenic (cause permanent changes in an animal's genes)

Water damaged lucerne hay has been known to cause liver damage in cattle and water damaged white sweet clover (also called Bokhara clover) hay can cause bleeding as it contains an anti-coagulant called coumarin.

However high aflatoxin levels can cause both acute & chronic disease in a range of body systems and hence wide range of clinical signs. Once signs appear, there is no specific treatment or antidote.

These fungal toxins can be excreted in goats milk. Your customers would not like to know that the milk you supply has known carcinogens in it. Aflatoxins will appear in the milk in only 3 hours after the goat eats the contaminated feed.