

Goatvetoz Autumn Newsletter

Goat Veterinary Consultancies - goatvetoz

Spring 2022

Floppy Kid Syndrome

We don't really know the cause of floppy kid or drunken lamb syndrome. It affects kids that were born normal but around day 3 to 14, they suddenly become weak, wobble and can't walk straight or use their tongues to suck. They aren't stiff as with tetanus but just "floppy" and unresponsive. The kids are not scouring and not dehydrated as with many other kid conditions. Sometimes multiple kids are affected in the herd.

Their blood is too acid (a pH of 7 or higher) and have high levels of D- lactate in their blood stream.

The first aid treatment is to give half a teaspoon of baking soda (sodium bicarbonate) as a slurry drench. You could also give 30mls of a human antacid such as "Gaviscon" (half for small miniature kids). Repeat treatments may be needed and watch other kids in the group carefully. If the kid doesn't respond, then a vet visit will be needed to give a drip intravenously with added sodium bicarbonate. The amount of fluid and sodium bicarbonate is best determined by doing blood gas analysis. The vet can also give antibiotics as it is thought that an infection

may be the cause. A range of bacteria have been identified as the possible cause.

New Australian CAE Market Assurance Program

Australia has a new national market assurance program for CAE (Caprine Arthritis Encephalitis or Small Ruminant Lentivirus). Before now only New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania had government schemes and South Australia had a dairy goat society scheme.

What is different?

In New South Wales, vets had to undertake an exam to take part in the CAE accreditation scheme. This is not the case with the new national scheme. Now any veterinarian can be involved. All goats over 3 months must be tested. Two negative herd tests over 6-18 months are needed to join.

There is also provision for using 4 bulk milk tests instead of individual goat blood tests. Goat owners must do a basic Biosecurity plan first and then the CAE module. They can also add on the John's disease module. There are more forms in the new scheme -4 compared to 1 but some are very short e.g. the Document Control Register (which lists where you filed

Floors for goat sheds

There are pros and cons for most floor types. Concrete is easy to keep clean but is hard and cold. Dirt is insulating but can't be disinfected. Elevated slatted floors are good for manure removal but can be cold. Urine will need to be absorbed or drained away otherwise ammonia levels will build up and cause lung problems.

But what do goats like best?

Researchers have looked at this question. They found that kids on wood shavings gained more weight than kids fed the same volume of milk if kept on metal mesh floors. In other experiments, straw was not preferred by adult goats. They preferred a mattress designed for dairy cows on either a wood or expanded metal floor. This was the same in temperate and cold weather.

But another experiment found that goats liked straw or rubber floors best. They disliked slatted floors.

everything & current versions). Most of the forms can be done with the help of your vet.

Why take part in this MAP?

Many goat owners test for CAE annually but testing is only a snapshot in time that correlates to the situation approximately 60 days before the blood samples were taken. A doe may come for service and infect a buck just before the samples were taken. Or shortly after the blood samples were taken, a goat breeder could introduce a new goat into the herd that is a carrier and spreading CAE. Testing only allows you to identify carriers earlier than if just looking for clinical signs.

With the MAP, a veterinarian must visit every year and go through the goat herd records and a checklist that covers the agreement both parties have signed when joining the scheme. The goat owner must notify the vet if they are aware of any CAE in a goat of theirs that has left the herd or in a herd they received a goat from or a neighbouring herd. For more information see <https://animalhealthaustralia.com.au/goatmap/>

If your country does not have a Market Assurance

Program for CAE feel free to use this as a template and ask your government's veterinary services for a similar scheme.

Lice

There are 2 types of goat lice in Australian goats:

1 Biting lice or *Bovicola caprae* (was called *Damalina caprae*).

2 Sucking lice or *Linognathus stenopsis*

Approximately 1 in 3 kids that come to me for disbudding have lice and some in massive numbers as shown in this video of lice combed out of a kid's coat <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qMqwRyf89ts>.

These are biting lice as they are brown, not pink and have round heads. They live on the dander in the skin and cause itching and hair loss.

Sucking lice are more dangerous as heavy burdens can cause anaemia as they live by sucking your goats' blood.

Lice can be very difficult to find and it is recommended that you do 20 hair parting all around the goat's body. I prefer to use a dog flea comb if the goat's hair coat is short. Lice can be easily missed so wear glasses if you need them for reading.

Mycoplasmas

Mycoplasmas are a group of bacteria that lack a cell wall and only have a plasma membrane meaning they can be various shapes. As some antibiotics e.g. penicillin, work on cell walls, this is an important difference.

There are over 100 species of mycoplasmas and some are that are just normal body flora but some can cause diseases in people & animals.

Mycoplasma agalactiae causes contagious agalactia i.e. goats with mastitis, eye infections, no milk & pneumonia. This is exotic to Australia & USA, but is around the Mediterranean, in Africa and parts of Asia. Another serious exotic disease is Contagious Caprine Pleuropneumonia (CCPP) which can make 100% of goats ill if introduced & kill many. It is caused by *Mycoplasma capricolum* subspecies *capripneumoniae*

Other mycoplasmas are in Australia & everywhere and can cause outbreaks of pneumonia &/or mastitis in adult goats and/or arthritis in kids. Some are excreted in the milk by carriers so this is another reason never to feed bulk milk to kids.

Mycoplasmas are difficult to grow in a vet lab unless the samples are very fresh.