

Goatvetoz Winter Newsletter

Goat Veterinary Consultancies - goatvetoz

Winter 2021

Buying a new goat?

The first step happens before you even start looking for a goat to buy. You must look at your Biosecurity plan and decide on the level of risk you are prepared to accept. Then in Australia you must get a Goat Health Declaration first so you can decide if the answers on the statement will meet the risk level you want to take. See <https://www.farmbiosecurity.com.au/toolkit/declarations-and-statements/>. Pay particular attention to the iceberg diseases e.g. CAE and Johne's disease, where there are carrier goats that can introduce these diseases. Johne's disease has no test that can pick up carrier kids or goats in the early incubation stages.

New goats should also be placed in a quarantine area well away from your current goats so they can be closely observed. Check their coat for lice by using a dog flea comb twice during the minimum of 30 days quarantine period. Also trim their feet and look for footrot twice. Vaccinate with Glanvac 3 unless done in the last 2 months.

With **worms**, most goats have some worms but what you don't want to introduce is drench resistant worms. The only way to know if you have

drench resistant worms is to do a DrenchCheck i.e. do worm egg counts before, then 14 days after drenching to ensure the drench killed most of the worms by getting a 95% drop in egg counts. Doing a worm egg count just after drenching proves little as sometimes drenches just make the worms sick so they don't produce eggs but don't kill them. See www.wormboss.com.au and the DrenchCheck and quarantine pages. I also recommend feeding Bioworma for 70-90 days after introducing new goats so any drench resistant worm larvae are killed by the fungi - see www.goatvetoz.com.au/worms

Also ask the owners about liver fluke. Liver fluke eggs are shed only intermittently so you need multiple negative tests to ensure they have none.

Obviously **blood testing** for CAE and Johne's is a good idea but one blood test is not a guarantee as tests take time to turn positive, especially with Johne's disease. If any goat in the group test positive take none of the goats. Ideally you should only buy goats from herds in accreditation schemes or at least a history of annual negative whole herd tests. Read more about these diseases on my website as I have pages on both diseases - www.goatvetoz.com.au. There is a directory for Johne's disease accredited herds but few goat herds are in it (<https://apav.animalhealthaustr>

Arthritis in kids

Kids can get joint infections via their naval cords shortly after birth, although clinical signs may only develop weeks later. This is why it is essential to dip naval cords in 7% tincture of iodine, Betadine or strong antiseptic several times in the first 24 hours. Grass seeds that are sharp enough to penetrate the skin can introduce bacteria that then travel to the joints. Ear tags can also place bacteria under the skin and result in arthritis. Use lots of methylated spirits/rubbing alcohol on the skin, the applicator spike and the tag pins when applying ear tags to kids.

Joint ill is very painful for these kids & unfortunately very difficult to treat. This difficulty is due to the lack of blood supply in joints which means antibiotics can't easily enter to kill the bacteria. Early diagnosis & antibiotic treatment by your vet will give these kids their best chance of recovery.

alia.com.au/index.php?page=searchet) but at least try to find a check tested herd. Herds that export overseas and have a history of negative tests in exported goats are safer than untested herds.

Pregnancy Toxaemia

It is essential that pregnant does are observed closely so that the first signs of pregnancy toxaemia e.g. not eating, are quickly picked up. If in doubt get a urine samples and test with a urine test strip. You can use the human ones that you buy from a chemist/drug store.



To get a urine sample from a sheep you restrict the nostrils. This is less effective in goat so 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 toxaemia. Fatter does are more likely to get pregnancy toxaemia. 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.

Barber's Pole Worms

Haemonchus contortus (barber's pole) worms have caused major problems in this last summer and autumn. Research has shown in Australia that most likely due to climate change, barber's pole worms are no longer going into winter hibernation in the abomasum wall and are staying in the gut and continuing to lay eggs. In cold weather these eggs may not hatch but in sub-tropical areas like SE Queensland, these eggs will still hatch. Barber's pole worms only need a daily maximum of 18C to hatch. Larvae from hatched eggs in autumn will last up to 6 months on winter pastures.

This means that the spring will be a very bad barber's pole season as well, even if the wet weather stops soon. So start planning now. Prepare safe weaning & kidding paddocks, increase worm egg counts and FAMACHA checks

Do you get my Tweets ?

What was your favourite Tweet last season? Mine was - [Australian goat farmers below a line drawn from Margaret River to Canberra your goats may not have enough vitamin D due to wet weather. Look out for milk fever. See all my tweets at \[www.twitter.com/goatvet\]\(http://www.twitter.com/goatvet\)](#)