

## Detecting Labor

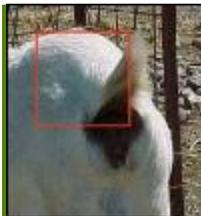
By Jack Mauldin

We try to be with each of our does that are about to kid to lend a hand if there are any problems. We are with our does kidding 85-90% of the time. The only reason we are not with 100% of them is because they kidded during the middle of the night and we did not read the signs of eminent labor. If we see the signs, we will be with them during the middle of the night. Below are some of the types of signs to help you better understand when your doe is about to kid.

**Youtube link** → **Signs of Upcoming Labor**  
**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jwym40hsA8w>**

**Calendar** - We do individual breeding of our does. They are placed with a specific buck when the doe comes into heat. We will leave the doe with the buck for two days and then remove them. We document the date the doe was serviced. From that date, we will start to closely watch the doe around 149 days from the breeding date. (See Gestation Calendar)

**Tail Dropping** - As the doe gets close to kidding time, her body will start to adjust to allow the pelvic bones to spread out. Look at the back bone of the goat as it connects to the tail area. Either side of the tail bone will indent showing the body is getting ready. The picture to the right was taken 8 days before she kidded. This is not the best sign. It is not very specific and sometimes we just don't see the tail dropping.



**Losing Plug** - Our vet calls this "losing their plug". You will see a small amount of creamy jelly leaking from the vulva. The picture to the right was taken at the same time as the picture for the tail dropping, 8 days before she actually kidded. We have seen small drippings like this up to 2 weeks prior to the doe kidding, therefore this is not a very good timing signal unless it changes into "streaming". Streaming will be discussed later.



**Bag Strutting** - This is one of the better signs for estimating eminent labor. The top picture was taken 8 days prior to kidding and the bag looks full but the skin is not a shiny texture like the bottom picture. When the bag is strutted, the skin is as tight as it can get and the skin will be very shiny. The dirt on the bag in the bottom picture is not part of the strutted sign. That is coming from another sign, "streaming", which will be discussed later. The bottom picture was taken 2 hours before she went into labor. The bag changed from looking like the top picture to the bottom picture in about 3 hours. We have had a few does that did not have a strutted bag prior to kidding. The bag filled up after kidding,

but that is not the norm. When we see the bag get strutted like the bottom picture, we expect labor to be very soon and will start to watch for three other signs... streaming, doe going off by herself, and soft talking by the doe.



**Streaming** - This is an extension of the "losing the plug". The difference is in the amount of creamy mucus coming from the doe. This picture was taken at the same time as the "bag strutting" picture which was 2 hours before labor started. You can see the large amount of mucus streaming from the doe is what caused all of the muddy dirt on the bag. One hour earlier, there had been not streaming like this. It had looked similar to the "losing the plug" sign. When we see streaming like this, we expect the doe to start labor within 4-5 hours at least. We have seen does stream like this for several days and not go into labor and we get concerned when this occurs. Especially if the mucus changes to a strawberry color. That is normally a sign that something is wrong with the kids inside.



**I want to be alone** - When we see a doe going off by herself, we get our kidding tools ready. We expect labor within 4-5 hours at least. Especially if we have seen strutting and streaming.

**Soft Talking** - Another sure sign of eminent labor is when the doe starts baaing very soft. This is a different sound than she normally makes and much softer. She will also be looking back at her stomach quite often and can't find a comfortable place to stand or lay. We expect labor within 4-5 hours at least.



**Pawing the ground** - The doe will start pawing the ground like she is trying to clear a place for kidding.

