

# FOLDED EARS

by Keith Smith

Folded ears come in two types...

**Vertical Fold** (sometimes called "tube ear") - This is a cull defect and mechanical or surgical correction is not recommended.

What is "tube ear"? First, think about what an ear does... It radiates heat and it flaps down to keep casual trash out of the tube that leads into the head of the goat. All well and good for the radiating heat part. It's the covering the opening in the side of the head that can be the problem.

The ear has to do that and, at the same time, let stuff out of the side of the head ... stuff like puss, wax, insects. If it's shaped like a tube instead of like a flap then that junk tends to accumulate inside and fester. More work for the herd keeper. Less health for the goat. And, there's a fair chance that the goat's offspring will have the same problem. And that's why it's a cull factor.

**Horizontal Fold** - The last inch or so of the ear tip is folded back and stuck in that position. Correction is usually easy in the first couple of hours after birth. This is a cosmetic defect that rarely results in problems if not corrected. Within a couple of hours of birth dry the end of the ear, removing all birth fluids. Grasp the middle of the ear very tightly. Grasp the folded tip very tightly. SNAP the fold open. Clean the broken skin and apply a topical antibiotic. Sounds easy. Usually is.

Remember that I wrote, "this is a cosmetic defect"? Well, I had a judge tell me that a goat with a (horizontally) folded ear should never be brought into a ring. He can't place the goat... He'd have to go to the bother of explaining the difference between horizontal and vertical folded ears to the people in the stands and "That's not my job". He lost a lot of respect in my eyes that day.

Fixing a horizontally folded ear tip is easy. Just snap it open.  
Fixing a vertically folded ear is easy. Just eat the goat.