

Labor and Kidding

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In order to know if a doe's labor is going normal, you need to observe does kidding. The following are general steps that does go through in a normal delivery.

Youtube Video of Doe Kidding <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3W-vVUhMHZk>

Initial Labor (started at 6:30 pm)

We identify the initial labor when the doe starts labor pushes. We document the start time for later evaluation if things are progressing ok. We watch the vulva during the labor pushes to see if it is trying to open up and extend outward. The picture to the right shows the vulva during a push. It is extended and opening up. There may be a dark colored bubble, 3-5 inches in diameter, initially come out and erupt with liquid being released. We have seen many births where no bubble comes out.

Potential Problems

- If the doe continues to have labor pushes for 1-2 hours and the vulva does not show signs of extending and trying to open, we consider there is a problem with the kid being able to come out properly. They may not be positioned properly or the cervix may not have expanded sufficiently to allow the kid to enter the birth canal. It is likely that someone, (vet or you if you know what you are doing) may have to go inside to help. A vet may have to do a C-section to deliver the kids.
- If the streaming mucus is or turns strawberry red color, there may be problems with the kids. We have had several does have this and the results ended up being the kids were already dead.



Water Bubble (did not occur in the same birthing as the other pictures)

One of the first activities of kidding can be a transparent bubble protruding that contains liquids. This does not always occur but is a normal process in the birthing. The doe will go into labor doing pushes and groaning. This transparent bubble will start to appear. She may get up and down during this period. Eventually it will burst and the doe will likely drink some of this liquid. A similar bubble may come out with the kid inside. If this is the bag with the kid inside, you will be able to see inside the bubble and one or more hooves or a nose will be seen.

Potential Problems

- Once this water breaks, you would like to see the doe proceed into heavy labor and showing signs of progressing to the next step within 2 hours. If several hours go by and either heavy pushing or signs of the kid appearing have not occurred, there may be problems. There are two possible problems:
- A dead baby - The doe may have a dead baby that is not pushing to get out and therefore the doe is not pushing.

- One or more babies are not positioned properly for birthing.

In either situation, you may have to go inside the doe to try and help or get your vet involved. This was the situation with the doe in the picture to the right. This first water bubble occurred but no heavy labor occurred for the next 2.5 hours. At that time another water bubble appeared and then the doe went another hour without heavy labor. We contacted our vet and he suggested that there may be a dead kid and we should go inside to check and see if we could remove it. We proceeded to prepare for entry by using surgical gloves, disinfecting the gloves and the does vulva with Betadine and applying OB lube to the hands. Entering her caused her to start pushing and we found a bag with a kid in it. We were able to pull the first kid and it was alive. We checked for others and felt a foot that we gently pulled towards the outside. We could tell it was a rear leg. When we came to resistance, we felt around trying to find the other foot but found a head. We started working with the head and pulled another kid and it was alive. After that we pulled the third kid and it was alive also. We believe the second kid and third kid were blocking each other and until we started moving them around, they could not get positioned properly. We gave the doe a shot to help shed the afterbirth and we gave the doe anti-biotic shots for 4 days because of entering her. Mother and kids are doing fine 4 days after this occurred.



First Sign of Kid (picture at 6:50 pm)

The first real sign we look for is some sign of a kid starting out the vulva. The picture to the right shows a single hoof starting to appear. If you look closely at the hoof, you will be able to tell if the kid will be coming out front first or rear first. If you see the top of the hoof, it is head first. If you see the bottom of the hoof, it is rear first. Both are ok. We want to continue to observe the progress to ensure the kid continues to move outward. Don't try to rush in too soon to help. Sometimes it takes a little time for the progress to occur.

Potential Problems

- No progress. We will step in to help by trying to help by carefully pulling on the leg during labor pushes. If you doe is not tame or gentle, this may be difficult to do. If she continues with no progress, someone (vet or you if knowledgeable) will need to go inside to determine what is blocking the progress. It is likely that the kid is not positioned correctly as shown to the right.



Two legs and a Mouth (picture from different doe added due to loss of original picture)

The picture to the right shows progress is being made and there are now two legs and notice that the tip of the mouth are at the exit. We noticed that both legs are front legs and the head is in position with the front legs to come out properly. As the head or nose starts to protrude, we watch closely to see if the kid has started to breathe on its own. If it has, we want to ensure that the nose area is cleared of anything that may not allow the kid to breathe. Sometimes we have a doe kidding and part of the head will start out and then as the doe moves around the head will go back in. We will watch

closely for continued progress. Many times you will be able to see the kid's leg move around showing it is ok.

Potential Problems

- Once we had two legs come out but one was a front leg and the other was a rear leg. It turned out that it was twins, with one coming head first and the other coming rear first. One leg was from one kid and the rear leg was from the other kid. We had to push the rear leg back in and feel around for the second front foot. We always wear elastic gloves for doing this and have some OB lubrication.
- Two front legs and no head. The head can be turned to the side and unable to come out. You need to try and correct the position of the head.



Nearly Complete (picture at 7:10 pm)

The hardest part seems to be getting the head to come out. After the head is out, the rest of the body should come out quickly. We step in to check the kid has nothing in the mouth area and clear anything away from the head. We will watch for breathing signs and look to ensure the nose area is clear. The kid may still be in the sack and we will step in to get the kid out of the sack and breathing.

Potential Problems

- Head and feet come out but no additional progress. We have had a few kids that got their head and feet out but could not make any additional progress. We had to call a vet to deliver the kid. It turned out that the kid's shoulders were hunched forward and not positioned to go through the cervix area. He had to push the kid partially back in to position the shoulders correctly.



Cleanup (picture at 7:12 pm)

We make sure either the doe starts cleaning up the kid or we will lay the kid in front of the doe to allow her to start cleaning up. The doe will nibble at all of the mucus on the kid normally starting at the head. She needs to be able to clean up her kids in order to identify with the kid. Cleanup may be interrupted by going into labor again with more kids. We watch closely to ensure she does not lay on a kid already born while she tries to deliver other kids.

Potential Problems

- Kid crawls away from mother while she delivers other kids. The kid may get lost for a period and the mother does not get to clean it up. The mother may not believe it is her kid and will reject it.
- Kid gets under mom while she is delivering another kid. This can suffocate the kid.

- New mother may not understand what she is expected to do. You may have to ensure the kid's head is cleaned enough for breathing and if the weather is cold, you may have to towel dry the kid to keep it from getting too cold.



Welcome to the World (picture at 7:40 pm)

If all goes ok, the kid should start moving around trying to stand within an hour or sooner.

Potential Problems

- Kids may not find the teats and start nursing within a few hours. If they can't find the teats and start nursing, we will help them get the teat in their mouth. If they don't start nursing within a few hours with or without help, we will milk some of the mother's colostrum and feed it to the kids either by a syringe or bottle.
- Rubber legs. We have had some kids that could not stand up on their back legs because they were so rubbery. They will normally correct itself within a week. You need to ensure the kid is getting the needed nutrition until they can get around on their own.

Youtube video of kid with weak hind legs



Next Day and Success (picture at 9 am next day).

This was the first time this doe had kidded and she only had one kid.

