



Mastitis

Mastitis is inflammation of the mammary gland, usually caused by an infectious process. The most prominent signs are painful, hot, hard and swollen udders, with decreased milk production. Lameness also occurs on the affected side. Nursing kids will appear hungry and weak and will die if the disease is not treated. The doe may be clinically ill with fever, loss of appetite and depression. Causative agents range from gram-positive to gram-negative bacteria, mycoplasmic organisms and viruses.

The more severe forms of this disease include bluebag, hard bag and udder edema. Bluebag refers to gangrene mastitis [*Staph. sp, E coli*]. The bag changes color, going from red to gray to bluish tinged/black. These animals are euthanized and not used for food. Hard Bag refers to condition where the udder becomes hot, inflamed and large milk clots and abscesses may develop. Milk production is reduced and the udder or half of the udder may become dysfunctional.



Treatment: Treatment for bacteria- causing mastitis: Cull all suspected does. If treatment is elected, administer broad spectrum antibiotics and treat five to seven days. Treat using infusion applicators and systemic antibiotics. Gangrene mastitis may be treated successfully in early stages; however, medical intervention by a veterinarian should be sought.

Prevention: Control starts with protecting the herd. Start by maintaining good herd status. Cull infected animals. Introduce an animal from herds that have a good herd history and reputable source. Quarantine new animals for a period of observation. Practice good management and milk affected animals last.

References cited: Mary C. Smith & David M. Sherman: Goat Medicine

<http://www.extension.org/pages/26019/mastitis>

Years ago Ruth, a Nubian, developed mastitis the day she kidded. The vet had me collect a sample, give her 10cc Penicillin (5cc IM & 5cc SQ) X 3 days, apply warm moist compresses, massage with peppermint oil (icy hot if no peppermint oil), milk her and let her drink her own milk even though it appeared beige and clabbered. His explanation was: drinking her own milk introduces the bacteria causing the mastitis back into her system which triggers her own immune system to fight it. She went on to raise those kids and kidded several times without ever having mastitis again. Dawn Steward