

Preparing Does for Kidding

By: Jack Mauldin

The focus on management of pregnant does is:

- to ensure the doe stays as healthy as possible throughout the pregnancy and kidding period
- the kids are able to develop properly throughout the pregnancy.

The basic needs can be summarized into exercise, proper nutrition and preventative health management steps.

Exercise

Pregnant does need to continue as much normal activity as possible. They need the strength to carry the extra weight during the last two months and go through the labor successfully. A doe should not come into pregnancy or the first two months too fat. The normal activity of walking around grazing should continue.

Nutrition

Nutrition is very important in the last two months of pregnancy. 70 % of the weight of the kid(s) is developed from around day 100 to the birthing date. Undernourishment during this period will result in the birth of smaller kids, increased mortality and slower growth rates. A doe in late pregnancy has additional requirements from their supply of food, especially for energy foods. Also the uterus and its contents take up a large amount of space in the doe's abdomen so that she cannot eat enough poor-quality foodstuff to provide all of their requirements. The doe's body is designed to ensure that the kids get enough energy food at the expense of her own tissues. Her body will rob her own reserves to provide nutrition to the kids.

A doe's appetite often drops off at this time and the volume of the uterus contents and the internal fat stored will limit the volume of feed she can consumed. Therefore the quality of feed must be increased. A high quality hay should be fed during this period. Goats that eat a lot of hay during pregnancy maintain that ability to ingest increased levels of roughage during lactation.

Concentrate food with higher levels of protein can be fed to the does. You do not want to just feed higher levels of concentrate feed. High volumes of concentrate feed has been associated with slow birthing and poor cervical dilations. We feed our pregnant does a concentrate feed with 16-17% protein level. Ensure the does have access to trace-mineralized salt and clean water.

Preventive Management

- De-worm the does around one month prior to birthing if she is showing any signs of worm problems.
- Vaccination for *Clostridium perfringens* C and D and tetanus toxoid should be given around 3 weeks prior to kidding so the immunities can be passed on to the kids.
- Watch for signs of pregnancy toxemia and treat accordingly.

Jack's treatment recommendation for Pregnancy Toxemia:

Give doe propylene glycol twice a day. We give 60cc drench in am and pm. We also create a mixture of sodium bicarbonate with water and give 30cc drench am and pm. Help get the doe up and moving around during the day and offering food.

Another Solution Give her 3 Tbs Calf Pac mixed with 100cc Revive and 100cc water. Give the doe 200cc of Revive every 2 hours, with Calf Pac in it. Also, once you get the doe awake, always give alfalfa, and corn with the sweet feed. Give her at least 6-8 oz. Magic at night to hold them.

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Without getting into a long explanation, to put it simply, pregnancy toxemia in goats is the result of high carbohydrate (energy) demands of multiple fetuses in late pregnancy. When this demand exceeds the supply, fat is metabolized into glucose. The metabolic needs of the kids are met at the expense of the mother causing the ketotic condition.

Revive recipe for does with pregnancy toxemia

*Give Revive during the day

500ML 50% Dextrose
500ML Amino Acid Solution (50ml if it is the concentrate)
200ML Calcium Gluconate *** (see note below)*
20ML B complex
2 grams Ascorbic acid (Vitamin C) I use the injectable
5ML B12 (3,000mcg/ml)
5ML 500mg/ml Thiamin

Give 200cc 3x per day (oral drench)

Use a large, clean canning jar to make and store this. Store it in a cool, dark place because B vitamins are destroyed by light.

Scald the jar with boiling water after you clean it and turn it upside down on a clean towel. Scald the lid also. When you mix the ingredients, do not contaminate the mouth of the jar or the contents.

Do not add water to the Revive until you are ready to give it.

Mix 50:50 with water.

Add 2-3 scoops Calf Pac with the morning dose of Revive.

Use a pan of hot water to warm it if needed. Do NOT Microwave.

****Calcium Gluconate is not necessary in Revive unless the doe is showing symptoms of calcium deficiency. The most common first symptom is tender feet, like she is walking on eggshells.

Offer sweet feed, a little corn and free choice alfalfa hay to these does.

Revive is also helpful for animals that are stressed at shows or that need supportive care for some reasons other than pregnancy toxemia. For regular use, omit the Amino Acid solution, Calcium Gluconate and Ascorbic acid.

MAGIC RECIPE

1 part corn oil

1 part molasses

2 parts Karo syrup

It is helpful to warm it just a bit.

To treat pregnancy toxemia we use Revive during the day and 8 ounces of Magic for a large doe, (a little less for a small one) in the evening to hold them through the night. We have never had a goat scour on this treatment but if one does start to get loose stools then just back off on the Magic a little bit. The most important thing is to get them up and eating on their own again because a doe with pregnancy toxemia that is sleepy, won't get up and refuses to eat is at risk of dying. This will require aggressive and consistent treatment until they are up, alert and eating again. Does in this condition should be treated every 2 to 3 hours until they are awake and up, then the Revive treatment can be reduced to 3 times per day. This treatment has been used by many goat breeders with success for years. These recipes came originally from Coni Ross, a well- respected and knowledgeable goat breeder.

The key to treating this condition in goats is catching it early, once a goat is down even the best treatment might not be successful.

Keep a close eye on your does the last six weeks of their pregnancy. Does that are carrying triplets or more and does that are fat or under-weight are at the most risk.

Some symptoms of pregnancy toxemia to look for:

1. Swollen feet and lower legs.
2. A stained tail.
3. Loss of appetite.
4. Losing weight over her top.
5. Sleepy, lethargic, stays at the barn while the others go out to pasture to browse.
6. Won't stand.
7. Her breath might have a fruity, sweet odor.

If you suspect a problem you can check your doe's urine with a urine test such as Keto-check, it is generally accurate. The test strips can be bought at the pharmacy department of Wal-Mart.

***I am not a vet and this is just what works for us on our farm. You should consult with your goat knowledgeable veterinarian for help in diagnosing and treating a sick goat.*