

**HEALTHY FARMS LARGE
ANIMAL VETERINARY SERVICES**

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General Guidelines for Dairy Goat Operations

Note that larger and commercial dairy farms may need more intensive management!!!

General Milking Doe Protocol:

BEFORE BREEDING

- Give a dose of BoSe (1 mL/40 lbs) if animals are not on a selenium supplement. Even if they are, consider testing to be sure that your animals are not selenium deficient.
- If you are using copper boluses (Copasure) now is a good time to add this as well. 2.5 gram bolus per 150 lb doe is a good place to start if your copper status has been shown low in the past. If your animals eat minerals well and your minerals are in the 1000-1250 PPM copper range you may be fine.

4 WEEKS PRIOR TO DUE DATE (GESTATION LENGTH 140-150 DAYS):

- Vaccinate with CD/T vaccine.
- Test feces at this point also. Doe's will start to shed many eggs just before birth, but this is a nice time to get a sample and have an idea if you have a problem because ivermectin treatment is reasonable now through about 1 week before freshening. Ivermectin will give you a milk withdraw of 2-4 weeks depending on dose. Consult your veterinarian if you are unsure about the withdrawal period of oral ivermectin in goats.

1 WEEK BEFORE DUE DATE:

- Deworm with ivermectin if indicated. The milk withdraw for oral ivermectin at the common dose (twice the label dose) is a minimum of 14 days, and I prefer to recommend 21 days.
- Clip udders

AT KIDDING:

- Make sure to offer water with electrolytes after kidding. Adding calcium to electrolytes can help does also.
- Have oxytocin on hand. Make sure that your does pass the placenta, are eating/drinking well and acting bright. Giving oxytocin IM may be recommended by your vet if your doe has not passed her placenta within an hour of kidding. Call with questions/concerns.
- **WATCH KIDS FOR NURSING:** kids have an absolute requirement for colostrum. They should be up and nursing colostrums within an hour of kidding. Get down on your hands and knees to look at the kids suckling and make sure that they latch on and actually drink. You can also palpate the belly after nursing to feel for a full stomach. Your vet can show you how.
- Give Bo-Se 1 cc/40 lbs to kids and does at this time also.
- Keep water buckets high enough that kids cannot fall into them.

AFTER KIDDING:

- Check udders frequently to make sure that does do not have mastitis, trauma, or udder edema (chunky milk, hard udders, blood in milk, etc) and to make sure that kids are draining udders.
- Mothers and kids should be eating/nursing with alacrity within a few hours of kidding.

GENERAL GUIDELINES:

- Practice good parasite control with manure removal and fecal testing. Plan for parasite control with your veterinarian and use dewormers carefully and at specific times to avoid pasture contamination (at least once in the winter after the freeze and then every 30 days in the spring for 2-3 treatments).
- Remember to supplement with Selenium using BoSe every 4-6 months or a daily oral supplement. Check

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selenium levels in all cases.

- Provide a trace mineral block or loose goat minerals. Make sure that your minerals have enough copper for goats. “Sheep and goat minerals” often have no added copper, which leaves both sheep and goats, but especially goats, open to copper deficiency. Choose a mineral meant for goats specifically.
- Talk to your veterinarian about copper supplementation (copper boluses). Call your vet if you notice pale haircoats or spots on the haircoats.
- Vaccinate with CD/T annually and before kidding.
- Vaccinate with rabies vaccine annually.
- Remember that goats need to eat 1-2% of their body weight in dry matter (dry hay and, for milking animals, dry grains) with a total protein content of 10-12%, with higher protein levels for milking animals (aim for 15% protein). Milking animals can eat as much as 3% of BW per day, and should be offered as much high quality hay as they wish to eat.

General Goat Kid Protocol:

AT BIRTH:

- 1 mL BoSe IM
- Betadine dip for umbilicus
- Monitor that kids are nursing well and acting bright and alert. They should pass soft feces within several hours of birth.
- **BEGIN YOUR MONTHS-LONG MONITORING FOR DIARRHEA.** Kids frequently get diarrhea, but they act totally normal, eat/nurse with alacrity, and have plenty of energy. Anytime that you see diarrhea that accompanies any decrease in a bright attitude or any decrease in appetite, call your vet immediately. Kids have almost no reserve and can decompensate and die quickly with diarrhea! Also call your vet if diarrhea persists beyond 2 days, even if the kids are acting fine.

AT ONE WEEK OF AGE:

- Disbud if you plan on disbudding your goats.
- Begin offering hay and grain. They will probably reject most non-milk feeds for another week or two.
- Band your buckling if you plan to do it yourself. Understand that by castrating early, you are setting male goats up for urinary stones. The best plan for male goats is to wait as long as possible before castrating so that the urethra has time to grow under the influence of testosterone, which will make it wider and less prone to urinary stone impaction.

AT ONE MONTH OF AGE

- Vaccinate with CD/T vaccine.
- Likely deworm. At least test feces for parasites.
- Consider another BoSe shot if deficient- if you have given the mothers BoSe and the kids BoSe at birth, you should be fine.
- **TEST FECES.** Most parasites will not shed eggs in the feces before this time. Testing feces for parasite eggs is particularly important at this time because it is crucial to understand if your kids need to be treated for coccidia parasites. If you know that you have a coccidia problem, you can just start a coccidiostat at this time.

AT 8 WEEKS OF AGE:

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- Second CD/T vaccine.
- If you have heavy worm burdens, deworm again.

AT 6 MONTHS OF AGE AND THEN ANNUALLY:

- Rabies and CD/T vaccines.
- Check feet and trim if necessary (every 6 months at least).
- Remember to plan for parasite control. Test your animals feces and deworm selectively using a plan designed for your farm by your vet.
- Your vet can surgically castrate at this time or as early as 2-4 months if indicated.

GENERAL GUIDELINES AND REMINDERS:

- Watch for diarrhea always. Call your veterinarian immediately if a kid is depressed, not suckling, or has diarrhea.
- Consider using a coccidiostat if you have had problems with coccidia. Usually this should be started about 14 days of age.
- Test your kid's feces for parasites early and frequently! Alternately, you can use FAMANCHA but know that FAMANCHA is looking only for blood loss from haemonchus.
- Plan for deworming smartly by talking to your veterinarian.
- You will probably want to deworm all kids around 45 days of age with fenbendazole.
- If bucket or bottle feeding, you need to be meticulously clean! Really!
- Remember that whole goats milk directly from the source (remember that CAE is transmitted this way!!!) or pasteurized is the best feed for young goats.
- Young goat kids need 15% of body weight in milk per day over several feedings. As they start to eat solid feeds, their requirement for milk will decrease.