

## **Kidding Season Preparation and Kid Care**

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As fall starts, many producers are beginning to get ready for kidding season. This is a very important season for all producers because it is the start of the next generation of breeding animals and the source of income from our animals, as well. However, it is a very stressful time for year of producers and animals alike for the same reason. Some basic care, preparation, and planning can help remove the stress and improve your success rates.

The first thing is to make sure the does are being feed properly for their stage of production. This helps prevent pregnancy toxemia and ensures good-quality colostrum for the new-born kids. This is one of those times that some feed is called for because the doe has a reduced capacity to consume forage, making it difficult for her to consume enough forage to meet her needs. It is very difficult to recommend a standard supplementation because it will depend on the protein and energy levels of your forage and supplement. However, one half to a pound of a 14 to 18% protein supplement will generally meet the animals' needs when good-quality forage is available. Please remember that even with high-quality forages it is a volume issue, not a quality issue, that can cause problems.

The second thing to help prevent problems is to make sure your does are healthy going into kidding. To ensure this, it is a good idea to start working your animals about a month before kidding is expected to begin. At this time you should booster the CDT vaccination on your animals and deworm all that need it. You should also check and trim feet and if you have a history of foot problems you may want to put the animals through a foot bath. You also need to make sure you have a good-quality mineral mix available for your animals at all times. However, it is critical at breeding and kidding to ensure good mineral nutrition. Selenium needs to be in your mineral mix and available to your animal. If you have had problems with weak kids or retained placentas in the past, you may want to give your does a shot of Selenium a month before kidding is to start. This will boost her levels and helps her pass some on to her kids.

Finally, you should review the stages of labor and information on how to assist at birth. Then check your kidding kit to make sure you have all the supplies you will need. This should include tags, record sheet, scale, iodine, feeding tube, nipples, kidding snare, latex gloves, milk or replacer, colostrum, drench product for pregnancy ketosis and weak kids, and selenium shot. You should also make sure you have your kidding area ready, and clean the barn if it is to be used for kidding.

After a doe kids, you need to make sure the doe and kid(s) bond. This is generally accomplished by allowing the doe to clean and dry the kid(s). After this, you need to take a birth weight, tag the kid, and record the birth date, type, and sex, as well as dam and weight of the kid. Dip or spray the navel with iodine, give the kid an injection of selenium to prevent white muscle disease, and, finally, make sure the doe has milk.

The next step is to deworm the doe if you did not do so before kidding. As percussion, deworm again at this time. We know that there is a spike in egg production at kidding so deworming shortly before or at kidding helps reduce the number of eggs on pasture and exposure of the kids early in life. Make sure the kid nurses and is doing well before you turn everyone out on pasture.

Finally, be sure to clean all your equipment and sanitize things as best you can between animals. This will help prevent disease and infection from spreading in your herd. Good luck with kidding, and I hope everyone has a 200% kid crop and all kids live to weaning.