

Feeder Kid Management Buying Low and Selling High!

Terry K. Hutchens, Extension Associate
Specialist
University of Kentucky
(G10207)

More producers are generating extra income through slaughter kid programs. Many producers purchasing goats by the head, feed them for 60 to 90 days and sell by the pound. Suffice it to say, it would be an ideal world if all these kids were purchased off farms, but in the real world you will find the type of goat that can, “make money” is often what you find at a stockyard. These goats are lightweight, weighing 30 to 35 lbs; thin; just weaned; incredibly stressed; and are subject to any number of disease problems.

1. Once goats are received at the farm, keep them isolated from the resident herd. It is always best not to commingle the animals at any time during the feeding period.
2. Provide goats with fresh water and free access to high-quality hay. Let them cool out for 24 hours.
3. On day two, treat all goats with a coccidia control compound for the next five days using products such as Corid (Amprolium) or Albon (Sulfadimethoxine).
4. On day two, move the animals through the chute as quietly as possible. Vaccinate each animal with Tetanus toxoid and Clostridium perfringens C&D.
5. Goats may come onto the farm carrying external as well as internal parasites. Treat each animal for lice, as in a pour-on treat and deworm each goat with an effect deworming product (See page 4 and 5).
6. It is a good idea to take temperatures. Any goat with a temperature 103° F should be treated with a long-lasting antibiotic. In addition to elevated temperature, note nasal discharge and cloudy eyes. These are indicators of stress-related bacterial infections, such as Pasteurella, that is likely to progress into pneumonia. Goats with elevated temperatures and signs of disease should be penned together, and eliminate nose-to-nose contact between sick and health animals.
7. Research has shown that as the diseases progresses in stressed animals, the bacterial becomes virulent and can then infect health animals.
8. By the second day all goats should go on feed, allowing 12 inches of bunk space per head and allow 25 square feet per head lofting space 5 ft. x 5 ft). These areas and good barn ventilation are essential to good respiratory health.

There are many possible feeding programs out there. However, we have seen that high-fiber rations are ideal for goats in feeding programs. First, at least

½ of the daily intake should be hay. If the cost of hay is prohibitive, substitute soybean hulls for at least one half of the hay needs. The concentrate portion of the diet should be at least 15 to 16 % protein and a TDN of 70%. The total diet (hay + concentrate) should have an approximat protein level of 12-14%, TDN 55%, ADF of 35 and NDF of 55. This is a high fiber feed, yet the fiber is quite digestible. In addition to the feeding program, a good mineral product should be fed as a free-choice or as a supplement to the concentrate portion.

Concentrates should be hand fed either once or twice daily. Hand-feeding is preferred over self-feeding. Hog feeders work well for hogs, but not for goats!

Hand feeding has shown to yield 4.5 lbs of feed to 1 lb of gain, compared to 6-8 lbs of feed to 1 lb of gain. For additional information on goat feed programs, please contact

Terry Hutchens, University of Kentucky, Animal and Food Sciences Department,
thutchen@uky.edu, 859-257-2465