

Kidding Season by Kathy Daves

Kidding season is upon us, so let's get ready. Most does will deliver their kids without help, but you will always have one that will need assistance from time to time. Does carry their kids for about 150 days. Please...and let me say PLEASE AGAIN, make sure you keep records of when your does were bred and the date they kid out. It is very important to keep good records. The records that you keep on your does will let you know when the kids are due, knowing is a lot better than guessing.

Does: Your does should be in good physical health before breeding. They should not be over weight-that can cause problems to arise. They should be full bodied, muscles filled out, with a strong top line, the teats should be well formed, two teats per side with one orifice per teat. Before breeding your does check the teats for hard lumps, make sure that the does have not had mastitis in the past. Mastitis can prevent your does from being able to nurse their kids.

Stage I: This is the first stage of labor, you will notice that the pin bone, which is the pelvis, will enlarge and look swollen. The vulva will look swollen and appear to be bright pink in color. At this stage the pelvis is starting to relax and contraction of the uterus and dilation of the cervix will take place enlarging the birth canal. It is common that this stage will take a complete day, so if you notice your doe starting Stage I of labor, it may take awhile. The water bag may appear at the end of this stage from the vagina.

Stage II: Get ready, start, go, now fun starts, the does is actually in full labor at this point. You will notice her straining, pushing and pawing the ground more instinctually. You should see her abdominal muscle pushing or straining getting the kid into place within the birth canal. The bag should at this point begin to be more visible. This stage of labor should not last more than one hour, if you notice she is pushing and no results are following, you may need to examine the doe. If you are not comfortable at this point call the veterinarian for assistance, you can never be too safe with your animals. Okay, we are going back to the point of seeing the front feet and the head resting on the two front feet within the back. As your doe pushes the kid will slowly began to emerge from the vagina. Most does will bow as they push. Once the kid hits the ground the bag should break, the fluid will pour out and the doe should lick the kid. If the bag does not break or the doe does not began to break the bag away from the baby face, please jump in and get it off the baby and start cleaning the mouth and nose so that the baby can breath. The mother at this point will start calling the baby and licking it. Let nature take it course, do not interfere too much. It is important for the baby and the mother to bond. At this point you will want to make sure that kid is in a warm dry area, if your dam is not birthing in a barn. For the kid to start nursing their body temperature has to be at least 100 degrees, it is very important to make sure the baby is dry and warm to get off to a good start. A cold wet baby will not thrive. The first 24 hours of nursing is very important to your new baby. Colostrum is the first milk a dam makes after delivery. It is very thick and yellow, not like normal milk, Colostrum is the transfer of the mother's immunity to the kid, so you really want to make sure for the first 24 hours your little one nurses as much as possible. This is making the difference between a strong kid and a weak one. After the baby starts to nurse you will want to weigh the baby and dip the navel in 7% Iodine. At this point I give a shot of Goat Serum 5 cc Sub-Q and three hours later give another shot of 5cc Sub-Q. You can purchase this from Hoegger Supplies or Furney Register @ register goat supplies.com.

Stage III: This is what we call the clean up stage, and this stage sometimes takes as long as two weeks before your does will clean out fully. After birth within a few hours you will see what is called the after birth or the placenta. If within 24 hours your does has not expelled this you will need to take more measurement to get her to pass it. You may need to call a veterinary for assistance. If you have on hand Oxytocin, this will cause the doe to go back into labor and expel the after birth. You will want to give the doe 2cc IM. If you can not give an IM which is in the muscle, then under the skin will do, it just takes longer for the medication to start working. You will have to obtain this medication from your veterinarian, you can not purchase it any other way. After the after birth has been delivered you may notice some discharge from the doe for about a week. This normal, as long as it does not have a foul odor or pus. If you notice this then start with a Penicillin or tetracycline right away. This can be given by injections Sub-Q. Read the label and give accordingly to weight. There is a lot more we can or could cover, but this will get the first time farms started into there kidding season.

Good luck...

BY Kathy Daves, DVMT

ABGA Judge