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For more information, contact Adaven Rohling

Diversified Agriculture and Natural Resource Agent, Wildcat Extension District

adaven@ksu.edu, (620) 331-2690

## **Preparing for Kidding Season**

Kidding season is right around the corner, or for some breeders it may have already begun. If kidding has not already started for you, now is a good time to go through your supplies to make sure you have everything needed for kidding season. A few of the basic supplies that should be kept on hand include clean towels, bulb syringe, OB sleeves and/or exam gloves, OB lube, iodine, colostrum, bottles and nipples for bottle feeding, esophageal feeding tube, 60cc syringe, heat lamps, thermometer, scale, and record sheets or book.

When assisting a doe during kidding, it is handy to have towels nearby for cleaning off the kid's face to make sure their nose and mouth are clear and able to breathe, and to dry kids off if needed. Another handy tool to have is a bulb syringe. These work great for clearing the kid's airways of any birthing fluid they may have inhaled. While we hope that we will not have to pull any kids, it is important to have exam gloves, OB sleeves and lubricant on hand in case you do need to pull a kid.

One of the most important supplies to have on hand is seven percent iodine. It is important to dip the umbilical cord of the kid in iodine right after birth to prevent infection and reduce the chance of naval ill. Naval ill is caused by bacteria entering the kid's body through the umbilical cord and causing infection. Dental floss is a helpful item to have available and can be used to tie off an umbilical cord if necessary. Use scissors to cut off any excess umbilical cord after it has been tied off.

Frozen colostrum or colostrum replacer is especially important to have. Colostrum is the first milk a doe produces. It is nutrient rich and most importantly contains maternal antibodies (immunoglobulins). When born, kids do not have any antibodies to protect them from disease, however the antibodies kids absorb from colostrum help develop their immune system and protect against disease. If kids do not get colostrum their chance of survival is very low. It is especially important to make sure kids receive colostrum right after they are born, the antibodies found in colostrum are large proteins and when born the kid's small intestines have openings to absorb these proteins. However, kids can only absorb these antibodies within the first 24-36 hours after they are born and absorb them best within the first few hours after birth.

After 24 hours the kid's ability to absorb the antibodies in colostrum is very minimal. This is why colostrum is one of the most important supplies to have. If using colostrum replacer, make sure to follow the mixing and storing instructions on the package. It is important to remember that colostrum should not be warmed up in the microwave, because the high temperature will kill the antibodies in it. Bottles and nipples should be kept on hand for any kids that need to be bottle fed as well as an esophageal feeding tube and 60cc syringe for kids that are too weak to nurse and need to be tube fed. However, tube feeding kids that have a subnormal body temperature (a goat's normal body temperature is 101-103°F) is not recommended. If you put your finger inside the kid's mouth and it feels cold the kid must be warmed up before it is fed. A thermometer should be kept on hand at all times to check the temperature of any goat that shows signs of sickness and can be used to monitor the temperature of kids while you are warming them up. Items such as heating pads, heat lamps, and kid coats are also good to have on hand to help keep kids warm on extremely cold days or to use on kids that need to be warmed up.

Another important supply to have on hand that may not be considered a "supply" is a record sheet or book and scale to weigh kids. Since kidding is a very busy time, it can be easy to overlook record keeping. Keeping simple records of birth weights, number of kids born to each doe, and if the doe needed to be assisted during kidding can be helpful when making management decisions later in the year. Ear tags or another form of identification may also be useful to identify kids and help with record keeping. Of course, there are many other supplies that can be added to this list, such as medications, that are already kept on hand in case they are needed throughout the year. In addition to supplies, having the phone number of a vet and/or a more experienced goat breeder written down or saved in your phone is always good to have in case you have questions or need help pulling a kid.

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