



The Goat Source

Raising Kids Begins With Pregnancy

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Raising Kids Begins With Pregnancy

Raising you kids begins with feeding and managing your does for optimum health. Feed a quality ration balanced correctly. A pregnant doe should be in good flesh but not fat. Fat does will have trouble kidding and could have life threatening complications such as pregnancy toxemia, in late pregnancy. Pregnant does should be dried off 45 – 60 days before their kidding date. Dry treatment should be done when the doe is dried off. They should be vaccinated 30 days before kidding for Enterotoxemia and Tetanus in order to give the colostrum sufficient antibodies for the kids. Your vet can recommend any other vaccinations that may be needed.

Kids should be born in a clean environment. This can be a special kidding pen or in the regular doe pen as long as it is clean (and it should be!) Before kidding, you should decide if you are going to bottle feed the kids or leave them on the dam. Once the decision is made, don't change – it is extremely hard to make a kid switch. I do not recommend dam raising for the reason that the kids are much wilder than bottled kids. Bottle raised kids can have their food regulated more closely and when you have to treat them for coccidia them, it can be done easily.

When the kids are born, clean them off, dry them and dip navels with iodine or betadyne. I use newspapers to do the initial cleaning, discarding them in an empty feed bag. Old towels make short work of getting the kids completely dry. After the kids are dry, I give them their first feeding of heat treated colostrum. Feed no more than 10% of their body weight. I like to take the bottle away as soon as the kid begins playing with the nipple.

My kids spend their first night in a box in the kitchen, especially if it is really cold outside. I have a baby pen in the barn with a heat lamp for when they are walking OK. Don't crowd the kids, as weak kids might get sat on and smothered. Group kids by age and size.

Regular feedings two or three times a day of pasteurized milk are sufficient, depending on the kids' appetite and your schedule. I work my kids up to 16 oz. twice daily. Three times daily may be better for kids from the larger breeds. At one month of age, they are treated for coccidiosis with Albon (as prescribe by my vet) 1 cc per pound of body weight for 5 days, then again at 2 months and 3 months. They are vaccinated for entero/tetanus at one month and again at two months and three months.

Kids are penned separate from adults and they have spools to play on and kid sized feeders. Good quality alfalfa hay is presented to them at about a week of age. They mostly ignore it for awhile and then will gradually start to nibble on it. At about one month, I give them a sprinkle of grain after their bottle. When they start showing more interest in it, I up the amount. Remember the goal is growthy, trim kids. Don't let them get fat. Fat kids don't thrive nearly as well as their lean siblings. Work up to about one cup per feeding. Minerals should be offered to the kids even though they will ignore them for the most part.

Socialize your kids – friendly kids make easy to handle adults. Keep their feet trimmed. Tattoo all kids with your approved letters, and keep careful records. Remember because of the government Scrapie regulations, every kid needs to be identified. Most of all, enjoy your kids!!