



## Northwest Cashmere Association

Dear Member,

Here we are in the closing pangs of winter. Here in Wilton, it has been windy and rainy. Mud is commonplace and the sun, when it shines, is very welcoming. If for no other reason it helps to dry out the mud on our miniscule farm. I have heard that in the northwest there has been rain and snow and some of our members may have needed to dig out a bit, others not so much.

Kidding season is here. As of this writing we have had 45 kids born and waiting for the rest which may continue through March. From what I have seen on social media, there are some real future champions being born. Good luck to all who have more kidding to come. I have included a couple of articles about kidding from the Cash Mirror magazine. You may find the information helpful.

The coming year promises to be interesting and active for us cashmere goat owners. There will be fiber shows and festivals, like Black Sheep Gathering, where our products may be sold. There is also the NWCA/CGA Annual Fleece show. This year the NWCA will host the event. There will be Cashmere Goat shows at the Oregon State Fair and Oregon Flock and Fiber Festival, maybe California State Fair. I hope to have more information on those events in a later letter.

At this time, I must ask, have you paid your dues for this year? If not, please do so. As you know, for any organization to accomplish its goats and/or put on any events it must have the funds to do so. Your dues will help us to do so.

As you may be aware, it has been one of my goals to promote cashmere goat by exposing the breed to as many people as possible. I continue to be active in trying

to get fairs and other shows/festivals to include cashmere in their events, whether exhibits or judging competitions for the animal and/or fiber.

If you, the membership, are interested in promoting your farms and educating people about cashmere, cashmere goats and products made from cashmere, by showing your animals, please let me know, yes or no, and please let me know about which way you would want to register your animals.

Also, I would be very interested in what other events you would like to see the Northwest Cashmere Association do. Please respond to this letter by sending your responses to me at [rbfiorica@frontiernet.net](mailto:rbfiorica@frontiernet.net),

To keep within our mission to promote education, I was perusing some past issues of CASHMIRROR, and other publications, here are a few articles about kidding that might interest you. Without meaning to promote the magazine, the Goat Journal has some really good articles on kidding this month. I hope you find the information useful.

Thank you,

*Ron Fiorica*

Ron Fiorica, President  
Northwest Cashmere Association

CASHMIRROR

## **Management at Kidding**

Tips from Australian Goat Notes (1990)

Birth is a normal process that, in the vast majority of goats, do not require human assistance. Before birth, the doe's udder swells with milk. Increasing udder size often happens later in maiden does than in "experienced" does. Inadequate udder development can be a sign of insufficient nutrition.

Prior to birth, from one to three days, ligaments on the back, belly and pelvis of the doe soften and the flanks look sunken. Pelvic bones protrude and the vulva swells. Softening of the tissues allow expulsion of the kid without damage to the mother or the kid.

Most does kid during daylight hours. When fed in the evening and confined in an area with lights left on at night, does may give birth during the night.

Does who kid in paddocks need help less than .2% of the time. Does confined in pens and yards need help kidding up to 5% of the time, perhaps caused by frequent shifting in and out of yards. Once birth commences, the doe has to be left alone. In close confinement, birth is easier to observe and the owners often tend to panic earlier than the does.

Birth happens in three phases:

1. Opening phase-birth canal opens, womb contracts, kid is pushed into cervix. This phase last up to several hours and is driven by hormonal and mechanical actions. During this phase, doe is restless, sometimes bleats and searches for a good spot for birth.
2. Expulsion phase--Doe visibly strains to expel kid. This stage (for first kid) lasts about half an hour. Successive kids follow in rapid succession.
3. Expulsion of fetal membranes-the expulsion of the afterbirths. In goats, usually all kids are born before the afterbirths are expelled. After the last kid is born, it takes between half an hour and up to eight hours for all fetal membranes to be expelled. Most goats eat some of the afterbirth, but not all. It has no nutritional value; maybe they eat is as a matter of hygiene.

During birth, as long as progress is observed, there is no reason to interfere. Help may be needed if head is turned back or other abnormal position are noted.

Both mother and kids are very alert during birth and for a few hours after birth. Most does kid lying down, but some will stand. If a doe kids lying down, she will usually stand right after giving birth and begin to sniff and lick her new kid's head.

**March 2003**

# Saving a Weak Baby Goat

## What to Do for Floppy Kid Syndrome and Beyond

The good news is that if you're well prepared and your doe is in good health, things usually go pretty well, and you might not have to do much more than help dry off the babies and give mom some treats and love. But knowing the problems to look for and what to do if they arise can make the difference between life and death for a new kid in distress. Beyond any major genetic or physical abnormalities, the three main life-threatening issues to be prepared for in a newborn kid include:

1. Kid can't feed itself.
2. Dam can't feed her kids.
3. Kid is hypothermic.

All three of these issues are related to one central and critical fact: newborn kids **MUST** have colostrum within the first hours of life to survive. There are different reasons why a kid may not get this much needed elixir of life, but without it, chances of survival are greatly reduced so your prompt attention and intervention may be needed. Here's a look at some of the causes of these three common problems, along with several possible interventions you can try before calling the vet (or until the vet arrives):

### **PROBLEM:**

#### **Kid is too weak to get up weak sucking response.**

Occasionally a kid just had a rough delivery, has a slight deformity like contracted tendons that keep it from standing right away, or is slightly underdeveloped and lacking a strong sucking response. While this kid may appear “floppy,” it does not have floppy kid syndrome, which doesn't present until three to 10 days after birth and will be discussed later in this article.

### **Possible Interventions**

- You may need to help the kid get to its feet by propping it up and holding it to its mother's teat for the first few sucks.
- You may need to express some of the mother's colostrum into a bottle with a Pritchard nipple and feed a few ounces to the baby.
- You can try dripping or rubbing some colostrum, vitamin solution, corn syrup, or even coffee on its tongue and gums to help give it a little energy boost.
- A weak baby goat may benefit from a thiamine injection.
- If all else fails, you or your veterinarian may need to administer the initial colostrum through a stomach tube.

There are times when a dam delivers her kids before her colostrum has come in, and she doesn't have an initial source of food for her own babies. On occasion, a dam may reject her kid for one reason or another. Or she may have had multiple kids and doesn't have enough colostrum (and eventually milk) to feed them all. Or there may be too much competition among multiples, and the smallest, weakest kid loses out. There are also times when a dam has had such a difficult delivery that she is too sick and weak, or even worse, has died and cannot feed her baby. Whatever the reason, it's going to be up to you to find a source of colostrum quickly for this kid to ensure its survival.

### **Possible Interventions**

- If you have multiple does kidding simultaneously, you may be able to express some colostrum from another dam that has just delivered and feed it to this kid.
- If you had another doe that gave birth earlier in the season or even last season, you could express some of her colostrum and save it to use in a situation like this. You can freeze it in small, 1-4oz. portions and

then, when needed, gently thaw it to just above your own body temperature and feed it to the newborn in a bottle.

- You can mix up some powdered colostrum replacer with warm water and feed it to the newborn. Be sure to use “kid colostrum replacer” (not calf colostrum and not regular milk replacer).

### **PROBLEM:**

#### **Hypothermia**

If a baby is born on a very cold or wet day or night, or if the kid is under-developed and having a hard time regulating its body temperature, hypothermia can set in quickly. An otherwise healthy kid whose body temperature drops too low will be unable to eat or even absorb nutrients until its body temperature is returned to a normal range. Before trying to feed this kid, you will need to warm it up sufficiently.

#### **Possible Solutions**

- The first thing to try is to dry the kid off and hold it close to your body. This will at least minimize heat loss and, for a slightly chilled kid, may raise the body temperature enough to get it to start eating.
- If a weak baby goat is very cold, a quick way to bring up body temperature is by submerging it in a hot water bath. If the kid is still wet, you can plunge it in a bucket of very warm water, holding its head above the water, of course, and then dry it off once warmed. If the baby is already dried off but still very cold, you may want to place the body, up to the neck, in a large plastic bag and then submerge it into the bucket of very warm water, so the baby stays dry. This acts as a hot tub and can restore body temperature quite quickly.
- Another method to bring body temperature up is to place the baby in a box and use a hairdryer to warm the box quickly. A semi-airtight container such as a plastic tub with a hole cut into one side to stick the hairdryer through works well. You don't want the hot air blowing directly on the goat, so make sure the hole is near the top of the tub.

The weak buckling had to be bottle-fed. He responded to a thiamine shot. Heat lamps and heating pads will help warm a baby, but these both take longer to raise body temperature and are more of a help in keeping a baby warm once you've raised a frigid body temperature back up to normal. Of a weak baby goat

- Heat lamps and heating pads will also help warm a baby, but these both take longer to raise body temperature and are more of a help in keeping a baby warm once you've raised a frigid body temperature back up to normal. They are both potentially dangerous fire hazards, and there is a risk of overheating or even burning baby or other goats in the area, so use with extreme caution.
- Once the baby's body temperature returns to normal, you can try feeding through one of the methods suggested above.

#### **REFERENCES**

- [salecreek.vet/floppy-kid-syndrome/](http://salecreek.vet/floppy-kid-syndrome/)
  - *Smith, Cheryl K. Goat Health Care. Karmadillo Press, 2009*
- Goat Journal March/April 2021





### **Floppy Kid Syndrome (FKS)**

While a weak baby goat may seem floppy at birth, a newborn is most likely not suffering from FKS. The main symptom of FKS in an otherwise normal and healthy kid is the sudden onset of extreme weakness and loss of all muscle tone around three to 10 days after it is born. The kid will stop suckling a bottle or nursing well, although it will still be able to swallow.

There will be no other symptoms such as diarrhea, dehydration, or labored breathing, which, if present, could indicate something other than FKS. The causes of FKS are not known, but the effect is that the bloodstream becomes too acidic. While some kids will recover with no treatment at all, early detection and treatment will increase survival chances. The treatment is very simple and inexpensive—baking soda! Mix  $\frac{1}{2}$  to one tsp of baking soda with one cup of water and feed it orally if the baby can still suck. If not, it may need to be administered using a stomach tube. You should see improvement within a couple of hours when caught early and when FKS is the correct diagnosis. In more severe cases, the kid may need intravenous fluids and bicarbonate administration.

While most kids will arrive perfectly healthy and will need little assistance from you, knowing what to watch for and how to intervene quickly may enable you to save a weak baby goat. While these suggestions are a good starting point, they are not substitutions for expert medical advice or intervention, so don't hesitate to call your veterinarian for further consultation and recommendations.