

BEWARE THE URGE TO PURCHASE THE INAPPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GOAT HERD!

Not long ago we had the opportunity to purchase both a sweet feed and an all-purpose mineral. Good sale price, a long winter ahead, and hopefully a nice compliment to our hay. Our animals loved the feed and as the new kids began to eat with their mothers their appetites grew. Wow, they looked great! Well, as they grew and winter progressed it appeared that the mothers were milking well and the young ones were off to a flying start. The once little 6 to 8 pounders were now 20 to 27 pounds and eating day and night as well as having free choice hay and heated water. One would not surmise that there was a problem brewing, and perhaps you have never had this problem. At exactly 6 weeks of age, the one male out of the registered triplets was standing alone while the others were out playing as only kids can do. Immediately we treated with Pro-Biotic Paste, gave an injection of anti-biotic and Banamine. We could not help but notice how this kid continuously stretched its hind legs out backward and often arched its back like perhaps a good morning stretch for a healthy animal. But, this was too often to be normal, especially when none of the others displayed this trait. Waiting for our remedies to take affect, the second day we proceeded with the Pro-Biotic but also went to the computer to search out these strange behaviors. (Listlessness, back arching/stretching and not urinating or eating and drinking like normal): We also had moved our little guy into the house so we could watch him more carefully to determine if he was urinating and to see if things were moving through him. We administered a child's fleet enema and it did result in a small specimen. About this same time we felt a call/visit to the Vet was in order. Upon inspection, the urethra was totally closed and only with an operation could it be repaired; NO GUARANTEES. No guarantees and the cost became considerations and led us to the determination we never thought would be an issue. Ultimately, we euthanized this kid. Discussions with experienced members of our Association and internet knowledge passed along by other caring producers across the Country led us to the realization that we had been introduced to 'Urinary Calculi'. All the symptoms fit and now the question was "Why"? There were several reasons which we feel led to the problem. 1. Being that it was winter, animals drink less water in cold weather thus making for more concentrated urine. 2. The sweet feed purchased did not contain Ammonium Chloride as an ingredient which is believed to be essential to preventing a build up of mineral deposits in the bladder and urethra. Note: male goats are more likely to have this problem than females under the same conditions, because they have a lot more tubing to run the urine thru than the females, thus more chances to deposit this crystalline material. 3. The all-purpose mineral being fed did not contain any Ammonium Chloride (AC) and thus the mother goats were not passing any of the AC along to the kids. 4. A high amount of concentrates were being fed to the kids in their creep area which did not contain the AC.

Where did we go from here or/ (the solution): We began a treatment of AC which we found on the internet used successfully by other producers and pro-rated the dosage for the weight of our male kids. Because of the bad taste (try some) of the AC we mixed it with the 'magic' formula of one part veg. oil, one part Molasses and two parts corn syrup to make it palatable; (this also found on the internet). They take it very well by mouth via a large tipped syringe. We have taken all the low price/inappropriately labeled (*not specific for goats*) concentrate away from the kids and are feeding only free choice

mixed hay, water at all times as usual and minerals having AC on the tag (especially for goats) They also have free choice white block salt. We have begun to feed kids and milking mothers a 12% concentrate (with AC) labeled for Goats. We feed concentrates once only in the morning; (thus, they are up and active and drinking). We even tested our well water for mineral content and found it to be a ph of 7 which is good. As you know there are so many variables to be aware of in feeding and care. As was passed on to us, "don't purchase products supposedly ok for multiple species and always check those labels for the proper balance of Calcium to Phosphorus" and inclusion of all the right stuff!!! In spite of this isolated issue, this has been a good year thus far and we hope this experience may be of value to other producers. I know WE have learned a valuable lesson.

John and Debbie Rowley are fairly new to the goat industry and learning new facts about goats every day. They currently have 33 goats, (*8 of which are kids born this past Jan.*) and 15 due to kid in June/July. John and Debbie own and operate Rock Creek Goat and Hay Farm, in Petersburg. (*20 minutes northwest of Springfield.*) March 2010