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## **Preparing for Kidding Season**

Kidding season is right around the corner, or for some producers 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 you may need. There are a few basic supplies that should be kept on hand no matter the herd size or the type of goats being raised. These supplies are: towels, bulb syringe, exam gloves, OB lube, iodine, colostrum, bottles and nipples for bottle feeding, esophageal feeding tube and 60cc syringe, heat lamps, scale, and record sheets.

There is always the possibility that a doe will need assistance delivering her kids. It is important to have exam gloves and lubricant on hand in case you need to assist a doe. A kid puller or leg snare can also be helpful when pulling kids. When assisting a doe during kidding it is handy to have towels nearby for cleaning off the kid's face 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. 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 help prevent infection.

Frozen colostrum or colostrum replacer is very important to have in case a doe does not have enough colostrum to feed her kids or there is a weak or orphaned kid that needs to be bottle fed. Colostrum is the first milk does produce; it is nutrient rich and most importantly contains maternal antibodies (immunoglobulins). When born kids do not have any antibodies to protect them from disease, but the antibodies kids absorb from colostrum help develop their immune system and protect them against disease. If kids do not get colostrum their chance of survival is very low. It is very important to make sure kids receive colostrum right after they are born, kids can only absorb the antibodies in colostrum within the first 24-36 hours after they are born and they absorb them best within the first few hours after birth.

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 the colostrum. Bottles and nipples should be kept on hand for 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. Heating pads, heat lamps, and kid coats are also good to have on hand to help keep kids warm during extremely cold days or for kids that need to be warmed up.

Other supplies to have on hand are a record sheet and scale to weigh kids. While kidding is a busy time and it can be easy to overlook record keeping, just 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.

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