



April, 2024

The Goat Note

A good read "wether ewe" have fiber or wool.

Welcome to Our First Goat Note Newsletter!

We are excited to be able to reach our small ruminant and camelid clients with this initial newsletter. For over 16 years, the Elkhorn Veterinary Clinic has published a newsletter for our horse clients. We thought it was about time to offer this (service) to our goat, sheep, alpaca, and llama clients! Our hope is that you will find this newsletter, and future ones, both relevant and informative. Feel free to let us know what you think and offer suggestions for future articles!

Are you interested in saving money while offering your pet the highest quality preventive care?

The Elkhorn Veterinary Clinic is offering a small ruminant/camelid wellness program designed to do just that! **The price for this program is \$220, which represents a 25% discount on routine preventive care.** Enrollees in the program save even more as their pets receive an additional 10% off of other services such as exams, laboratory tests, and imaging (x-rays and ultrasounds).

Services included in the wellness program are:

- Annual CD&T vaccination
- Annual rabies vaccination
- Annual West Nile, EEE & WEE vaccination (camelids only)
- Annual hoof trim (small ruminants only)
- One fecal egg count
- Annual medical exam
- Yearly husbandry consultation (includes body score, nutrition, & housing)

Your investment in the wellness program is safe, too! Clients receive a prorated refund for all unused services. Do you have 3 or more sheep, goats, alpacas, or llamas? If you enroll 3 or more, you will receive a 5% discount off the price of the program.



Scan the QR code to the right and enroll your pet today!



Dr. Walker Hyche speaking to a full house at our first seminar.

"Let's Talk Sheep & Goats," our first small ruminant/camelid seminar was very well attended. Thank you all for coming and for your kind comments and suggestions. We're looking forward to hosting more of these learning experiences for you!.

Spring is the Season for Kidding & Lambing

Know what to expect & be prepared to welcome them!



Preparation for a good kidding or lambing season starts with your selection of high quality and disease-free animals to breed. Knowing your breeding date is essential, as it makes determining kid or lamb viability possible if induction or cesarean is necessary. Average goat gestation is 150 days and average sheep gestation is 147 days.

About six weeks prior to birth, the dam's feeding ration should be slowly increased. The female should be maintained at a healthy weight, not too fat or too thin, to prevent pregnancy toxemia, a disease which presents initially as lethargy, decreased appetite, and pain. If not corrected, the dam and her offspring may not survive. About a month prior to birth, the female should be given a vaccine for tetanus and Clostridium Types C & D. This will allow antibodies to pass into the baby via colostrum and provide early disease protection. It also aids in protecting the female from tetanus infection during the birthing process. Around this time, it is often helpful to deworm your herd. A fecal egg count taken from a manure sample can help you determine the parasite burden in your herd. A well ventilated, clean area should be made in preparation for birth. A sectioned-off area with heat lamps may be necessary to keep kids or lambs warm during the cold months. Be sure to have towels, disposable gloves, lubricant, and umbilical cord dip.

As birthing approaches, the female's udder will fill and her backend will appear 'softened.' She will isolate herself and her contractions will become more forceful. The majority of births go well without any intervention. With first time mothers and small goat breeds, the need for intervention is more common. If the doe or ewe has been straining for more than 30 minutes without progress, it is time to intervene. With gloved and lubricated fingers, enter the vagina and locate the cervix. It should be open, little front hooves should be in the vaginal canal, and a little head should be close behind. If two hind feet are present, the kid or lamb can be pulled with slow, gentle traction out and downward. Use more lube than

you think is necessary and do not use excessive force. If the kid or lamb feels malpositioned and you are unable to correct it, please call the Elkhorn Veterinary Clinic for further instruction. If you are within 30 miles of the clinic, we can come to your location. If you are outside of the 30 mile boundary, you may be asked to bring your animal to the clinic. Please call to coordinate so we can get your animal seen as soon as possible. Ideally, we will manipulate the babies into the correct position for a vaginal delivery. If vaginal delivery fails and viable kids or lambs are possible, a cesarean surgery may be pursued.

After delivery the kids or lambs should be dried off and have their umbilical cords dipped, (we recommend a 2% chlorhexidine dip) then introduced to the female to help with bonding. Please assist the kids or lambs in latching to ensure adequate colostrum intake. Ensure they are adequately warm, as cold babies are prone to frostbite and starvation. The female should be observed for passing placental tissues and lactating comfortably. Mastitis is a common infection of the udder, which requires antibiotics to cure. Veterinary intervention may be required if the placental tissues are retained past 12 hours.



Offspring from vaccinated females get their first CD/T vaccine at about 6 weeks of age, and get 1 booster 4 weeks later. Kids and lambs born to an unvaccinated dam (or a dam with unclear vaccination history) should get their first CD/T vaccine earlier, at one month of age, and need 2 boosters, 4 weeks apart.

You will need to decide if you are going to band your males, leave them intact, or surgically castrate at a later time. We recommend surgically castrating bucks after 3 months to allow the urethra to grow to aid in the prevention of urethral blockage.

Written by Dr. Tess Tucker

New Ultrasound Techniques for Small Ruminants

Continuing education keeps our doctors abreast of new techniques.

Recently, several of the large animal veterinarians were able to attend the Western Veterinary Conference for numerous Continuing Education lectures and labs. One of the most interesting was the small ruminant ultrasound wet lab. In this lab, veterinarians were able to expand their ultrasonographic skills with the use of state-of-the-art technology to identify even the smallest anatomic structures.

The whole body of several Nigerian Dwarfs were imaged, including both abdominal and thoracic cavities. Veterinarians were able to delicately assess the cardiac (heart) and pulmonary (lung) structures, as well as abdominal organs such as the liver, spleen, intestines, rumen, etc. Use of this advanced imaging tool can assist with accurate diagnosis of various disease processes including pneumonia, urolithiasis (blocked goats), congestive heart failure, hepatitis, enteritis, etc. as well as pregnancy diagnosis/staging.

Ultrasonography is great for differentiating between normal and diseased organs. Knowing what healthy organs look like allows veterinarians to better identify abnormal pathology so that more specific laboratory tests can be performed and the animal can be appropriately treated. Here are some interesting images obtained during the conference.



An enlarged gallbladder (small, dark black circle), an uncommon finding.



Partial view of normal bladder (large black structure on the right side of the image) in a doe. Note the small circular structure below left of the bladder: this is one of the collapsed horns of a non-pregnant uterus! These are generally very difficult to find when the doe is not pregnant.



Longitudinal view of the chambers of the heart and their respective valves.

Story and photos by Dr. Kristen Zainer

Did you know? Vaccinating your animals against rabies not only protects them, it also protects *you*. Although rabies is rare, it still remains a deadly disease. Why take the risk? That's why our veterinarians recommend annual rabies vaccinations for all sheep, goats, alpacas and llamas.



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Coccidiosis Prevention and Treatment



Coccidia are parasites that can cause mild disease to severe diarrhea and dehydration in many animals including small ruminants (sheep and goats) and camelids (alpacas and llamas). The parasites are found throughout the environment, but grow especially well and are abundant in warm, moist locations.

Healthy animals are introduced early to coccidia and have developed a good immunity to these parasites and are able to resist disease. However, infection can occur when the animal is too young to have developed immunity, is under stress, lacks proper nutrition, or is housed in unsanitary conditions. Diagnosis can be made through clinical signs coupled with a fecal egg count.

To help your animals resist coccidial disease, offer appropriate nutrition and housing, keep manure picked up, eliminate moist bedding and wet areas, don't feed on the ground, and select feeders that keep the animals from climbing on and ultimately defecating on the feeding surface. Refrain from housing your small ruminants and camelids with ducks and chickens as poultry may harbor coccidia and cause infection in your other pets. There are several treatments available if your animals do develop coccidiosis, including Corid™ and Albon™.