

Preparing for Kidding

By
Linda DeHart

I don't know about you, but the last month brought warm, dry weather to my farm. Of course that was followed by rain, record setting frigid temperatures, snow and now torrential rains with mud and, well, I think you know what I am talking about. I hope that you all are surviving the joy of living in the Pacific Northwest!

One of the items that are on the entire goat growers mind is the economy and being able to sell our goats at a decent price. OMGP has sponsored a pen sale in Central Oregon for the past few years. Two of the ongoing suggestions for future pen sales were to change the location and change the time of year in which it was to be held. Area 4 – Mid-Willamette Valley-Coast Meat Goats, has made the decision to hold a wether and breeding stock sale in Cottage Grove at the fairgrounds. We felt that this would be a good central location for those that live on the I-5 corridor and would still be accessible to those that live on the other side of the Cascades. Cottage Grove has all of the amenities needed. We are going to host this sale on Saturday March 28, 2009. Since the Buck-A-Rama was such a success at the Prineville sale, we will include this opportunity to show off your bucks either for sale or for breeding opportunity. Having this sale in March will allow members to bring wethers to offer to 4H and FFA buyers. We would like to have an event at the end of the day that would allow the youth buyers to show off their purchases and for leaders to offer to sellers what points the youth used in making their choices. All of the youth that participate will receive a useful gift. This will provide not only an opportunity to sell but also to show off your breeding stock. We are trying to set up a herding dog demonstration. We hope to be able to corral a veterinarian to answer questions and perhaps tackle a hot topic. If you have suggestions, we are open to all that come our way. Please put March 28th on your calendar and plan to bring some goats to share.

I swore that I would avoid kidding during the holidays but here I am again this year hanging around waiting for the inevitable. I had a pretty awful time last year with way too high kid mortality rate. So far I haven't had any miscarriages. I have been feeding well and also have been fastidious about making sure that I have minerals around with selenium specific for goats. I have been using the Beaver State meat goat blocks as we have minimal wastage and the goats love them. I have my bonding pens clean and ready for occupancy. I have even purchased colostrums and vitamin pastes. Now I just have to wait for Nature to take it's course. Are you ready? Don't forget to have plenty of clean buckets, towels, disinfectant for the umbilical cord, gloves if you use them, lubricant for that time when you have to assist a birth, straw or little structures for your kids to tuck into to stay warm. We only had one bummer last year. She made it through on nursing 3 times per day with us holding the doe that strongly disliked this poor little doeling. She was runty and I didn't give her a fat chance in hell of surviving much less being worth keeping as a breeder. Low and behold she is growing well and has good confirmation and a great personality to boot. You just never know. Even though you can't save them all, some survive and are the better for it. The best thing is to be prepared with the basics. If you are new at this kidding process, please contact another OMGP member that is experienced and willing to be on call for questions and support. I never mind hearing from someone. If I can't answer questions then I make sure that the questioner has someone else to call that can.

Good luck with your kidding season. May your kids all be beauties!

Linda DeHart