



**Mid Valley**  
Large Animal Service

# CARE OF KIDS & BOTTLE BABIES

Nell Moore, DVM

## Vaccination

All kids should receive a CD&T (*Clostridium C & D*, Tetanus) vaccine at 3 weeks of age, then again at 6-8 weeks of age. This vaccine is available at most feed stores or from your veterinarian. The dose is 2cc, and should be given under the skin behind the shoulder. Mark your calendar, as this vaccine is given annually.

If castrating before the booster CD&T, giving a dose of tetanus antitoxin (250IU under the skin) is also recommended.

## Selenium

Selenium is an important mineral for immune and reproductive function. The Central Valley is selenium deficient, meaning that most animals are low in this mineral without supplementation. All kids should receive 0.5cc of Bo-Se under the skin within the first few days of life. Mark this one on your calendar, too, as Bo-Se should be given annually at a dose of 2.5cc per 100 pounds in adult animals.



## Bottle Feeding

Multiples are normal, but when a doe cannot support all kids, bottle feeding becomes necessary. The kid's first meal should be colostrum, at 10-15% of body weight within the first 24 hours, given in meals of 4-6 ounces every 6 hours. For example, if the kid weighs 10 pounds at birth, it should receive 16-24 ounces of colostrum within the first 24 hours of life (remember that there are 16 ounces in a pound). If the doe does not produce enough colostrum for all kids, sheep colostrum replacer powder is available at most feed stores and should be mixed according to label instructions. Colostrum has antibodies and nutrients that milk does not have, and is absolutely essential for development of the kid's immune system and **MUST** be fed within the first 24 hours of life.

Use store bought goat's milk or whole cow's milk in a bottle with a goat nipple (sold at most feed stores). Milk should be warmed before feeding. Kids should be consuming approximately 10% of their body weight as they grow.



## Castration & Dehorning

To prevent urinary blockage in the future, castration should occur as close to 3 months old as possible to allow the urethra to grow as wide as possible under the influence of testosterone. If you choose to band at home, do so before his testicles are too big for the bander (approximately 2 months old). Make sure you pull both testicles through the band, release the band, and count again to make sure you have them both. Leaving a testicle behind will result in buck behavior and the possibility that he can still breed does. If you decide to have your veterinarian surgically castrate under sedation, he can wait until 3 months of age. In either case, use of NSAIDs like meloxicam to help manage pain and inflammation is recommended.

If you decide to dehorn, it should be performed between 2 and 3 weeks of age. This may be performed at home or under sedation by your veterinarian. In either case, using a local block with lidocaine and post-dehorning pain management like meloxicam is recommended.

The first few days may start at 2-3 ounces every 3-4 hours, but transition to 4-6 ounces at 6 hour intervals within the first week of life. For the next 2-3 weeks, continue to feed every 6 hours (four times daily). Up to week 4, slowly increase milk feeding to 8 ounces every 6 hours. From weeks 4-8, feed 8-10 ounces every 8 hours (three times daily). From weeks 8-10, feed 8-12 ounces twice daily. For weeks 10-12, weaning is on the horizon, so feed 4-8 ounces twice daily supplemented with grain OR feed one full meal once daily, replacing the second meal entirely with grain. Weaning means the kid no longer receives milk and instead eats only solid feeds.

Keep in mind that these are guidelines and may be tailored to your needs. Weaning can occur as early as 8 weeks or as late as 16 weeks. The key to successful and safe bottle feeding is consistency in meal times, slow increases over time in amount fed, and proper milk handling.

## Water, Grain, & Hay

Water should be available on the first day of life and at all times. Water should be clean and fresh and changed on a regular basis.

Grain can be made available on the first day of life, and kids often start picking at grain by the end of the first week. Start with just a handful in a shallow dish, and increase according to consumption and label directions. In order to prevent urinary calculi in the future, wether and buck kids should be fed a complete pelleted feed containing ammonium chloride and a calcium to phosphorous ratio (Ca:P) of 2 to 1 (for example, if calcium is 1%, phosphorus should be 0.5%). Some brands to consider are Purina and Dumor, but if you have any questions, ask the vendor if that pellet is safe for wethers. Doe kids may be fed any complete pelleted feed.

Hay can be made available after the kid is eating grain, usually around 2 to 3 weeks of age. Small amounts of high quality grass hay (or the lawn) are acceptable, but do not feed alfalfa hay due to high calcium content that could encourage urinary stone formation.

