

Herd Management – Breeding Goats

[Ozark Jewels Dairy Goats](#)

Breeding for Health and Productivity

A little on how I manage the goat herd.

Basic management

Bucks:

Bucks get an alfalfa pellets ration and free-choice grass/clover hay, year-round. They also have a 1/2 acre to browse on. Starting when they go into rut in the fall, they also get a ration of feed. They stay on the feed ration (with alfalfa pellets and hay) until they are out of rut and back in condition. Then it's back to alfalfa pellets and free-choice hay. Clean water available at all times. Minerals are supplied free-choice. I feed Right Now Onyx cattle mineral with kelp added.

Does:

The does are out to browse whenever the weather permits. The Ozarks has wonderful goat country with all the brush and grass their little hearts desire. In bad weather and during the winter, the does have free-choice grass/clover hay available. If heavy-bred or milking, they get a heavy ration of alfalfa hay or alfalfa pellets every day to support their calcium needs. Fresh water available at all times. Mineral is kept out free-choice. I feed Right Now Onyx cattle mineral with kelp added. Milking does or does feeding kids, get a ration of whole oats and black oil sunflower seeds (3 parts oats, 1 part sunflower seeds) twice a day. I like knowing exactly what my goats are eating, so I feed nothing but whole grains.

Kids:

Doelings and quality bucklings are pulled at birth and fed on colostrum from repeatedly CAE-negative does. Then after their colostrum feedings, they are put on whole raw cows milk from our family milk Jerseys. They are kept on clean ground away from the adults. I lambar the kids rather than bottle. As soon as they have had their colostrum bottles and are up on their feet well, I start them feeding from the lambar. They get all the milk they want, three times a day. They are disbudded before 1-2 weeks of age. At two weeks they are started on daily coccidiosis prevention in their milk. The kids get alfalfa pellets, hay/browse, and my feed mixture of whole oats and black oil sunflower seeds. After two months of age, they get all the milk they want from the lambar twice a day. I don't wean them until they are 6-7 months old. They are bred by size. I breed my kids their first fall, at about 85-90 lbs. They do not go in with the adults until they kid out at about 12-14 months of age. Excess bucklings are raised by their dams, wethers, disbudded, and either sold as butcher kids when ready, or butchered for our freezer.

Vaccinations, worming and copper boluses:

Starting out as kids,

Bo-Se and CDT at two months.

CDT and Valbazen at three months.

CDT, Valbazen, and Bo-Se at four months.

Before breeding (7-9 months), they get CDT, Cydectin, Bo-Se, a copper bolus and a hoof trimming.

3-4 weeks before kidding, they get CDT and Bo-Se. The day they kid out, they get Cydectin and a copper bolus, and a hoof trimming.

From then on, they are on the adult system, which is simply Cydectin, Bo-Se, CDT, a copper bolus and a hoof trimming before breeding (Cydectin is only given before breeding if indicated by Famacha).

Bo-Se and CDT 3-4 weeks before kidding.

Then Cydectin, a copper bolus and a hoof trimming the day they kid.

So basically they get Cydectin, CDT, copper bolus and Bo-se twice every year as adults.

I have to say here that utilizing Bo-Se and copper bolusing in a timely manner in my herd has made a world of difference in their health. Proper levels of selenium and copper are so important to the health and production of all animals. Most areas of the US are lacking in these essential minerals and even a good free-choice loose mineral is often not enough.