

HYDRATION & NUTRITION BASIC TO TREATING SICK GOATS

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A sick goat cannot get well if it is not also hydrated and fed. This may seem like an obvious statement, but it is amazing how many producers never take food and water into account as they work towards getting a sick goat well again.

Hydration is necessary from the beginning of treatment for any illness or injury. A 100-pound goat needs at least one gallon of water a day to survive. The producer can do everything right treatment-wise for pneumonia, ruminal acidosis, listeriosis, meningeal deer worm, or any other illness or injury, and the goat will still die if it is not kept hydrated. After about three days of not eating, nutrition has to be added to the goat's diet. Protein, energy, minerals, and vitamins must be given in addition to water and electrolytes or the goat will starve to death.

Water, electrolytes, and liquid nutrients must be stomach-tubed into any goat that is off-feed. It is not reasonably possible to syringe enough fluids into an adult goat to maintain adequate hydration and nutrition. A 100-pound goat needs 3840 cc's of fluids a day. That's right. One gallon is 128 ounces; 30 cc's equal one ounce. That means that one gallon is 3840 cc's. Goats

stress easily. Attempting to get even close to that amount of fluids into a goat by mouth via syringe will upset the goat and interfere with its recovery -- not to mention making a nervous wreck of the producer.

In order to provide these essential needs, the producer must have on hand before illness occurs the following items at a minimum: (1) rectal thermometer, (2) weak kid syringe and stomach tube, (3) adult goat stomach tube which the producer will have to make by following the directions in this writer's article on Stomach Tubing, (4) ReSorb or other electrolytes, (5) Entrolyte -- not Entrolyte HE -- oral calf ruminant powder or equivalent product that contains about 13% protein. There are many other items that every producer should have in stock; a list of them can be found in the article entitled "Supplies Every Goat Rancher Needs".

Like humans or other animals, food and water is essential to the goat's survival. Curing the illness while starving the goat to death is not the goal. Medication without hydration and nutrition is useless.

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Thanks,
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