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## Scientific Management of Newborn Goat Kids

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Scientific management of newborn goat kids is essential for reducing mortality, improving growth performance, and enhancing the profitability of goat farming. Effective management begins during pregnancy and continues through kidding, feeding, housing, and health care. Selection of healthy breeding stock, balanced nutrition, mineral supplementation, and appropriate vaccination of pregnant does contribute to the birth of healthy kids. Immediately after birth, clearing the nostrils, drying the kid, disinfecting the umbilical cord, and ensuring timely colostrum intake are critical for survival and passive immunity. Subsequent management includes adequate milk feeding, gradual introduction of creep feed, balanced grower and finisher rations, clean drinking water, and hygienic housing. Regular monitoring of body weight, parasite control, disease prevention, and maintenance of health records further improve productivity. Adoption of these scientific practices can reduce kid mortality, promote healthy growth, improve resource utilization, and increase the economic returns of small and marginal farmers engaged in goat production.

**Keywords:** Newborn goat kids, Colostrum feeding, Kid mortality, Nutritional management, Health management.

### Introduction

Goat farming is an important source of livelihood for poor rural households, landless labourers, and small and marginal farmers. Goats provide food security in the form of meat and milk. According to the Basic Animal Husbandry Statistics 2025, goat meat contributed approximately 13.63% of total meat production, following chicken meat (51.54%) and carabeef (17.49%). Most rural goat farmers still follow traditional management practices. Adoption of scientific goat farming methods can considerably improve productivity and profitability. Proper management of newborn kids is essential for reducing mortality, improving growth, and increasing farm income. Reduced growth rates and increased mortality in goat kids are often associated with inadequate management. Therefore, scientific kid management should begin during pregnancy and continue through birth, feeding, housing, and health care until the kids reach adulthood.

### Management Before Birth (Prenatal Management)

Preparation for the birth of kids is essential. The following points should be considered:

- Selection of breeding goats: Select healthy does capable of producing healthy kids. Breeding stock should be selected carefully.
- Feeding management: Pay special attention to the feeding of goats. Before pregnancy, provide a balanced diet containing mineral mixture, adequate protein, and green fodder.
- Deworming: Deworming should be carried out before pregnancy, according to veterinary advice.
- Vaccination: Vaccinate goats against important diseases, such as enterotoxaemia, PPR, and other locally prevalent diseases, according to the recommended schedule. This helps maintain the health and disease resistance of the animals.

- Selection of breeding bucks: Does should be bred with healthy bucks of suitable breeding quality.

### Management During Pregnancy

Proper care of pregnant goats is essential. The following practices should be followed:

- During the last three months of pregnancy, provide an additional 50–100 g of concentrate per doe per day, depending on body condition and nutritional requirements.
- Ensure the availability of green fodder. Supplement the ration with approximately 10–15 g of mineral mixture where appropriate.
- During the last month of pregnancy, keep pregnant goats separate from other goats in a kidding pen to prevent injuries and allow individual feeding.
- During the final week of pregnancy, ensure access to green fodder and monitor the goats regularly for signs of approaching kidding.

### Management Immediately After Birth

- Assistance during kidding: Assist the doe when necessary to ensure that the kids are born safely.
- Cleaning the nose: Immediately after birth, clean the kid's nostrils with a clean cloth to ensure unobstructed breathing.
- Umbilical cord care: Tie the umbilical cord at two points and cut between them using a clean, sterile instrument. Disinfect the cut end with an appropriate antiseptic to prevent infection.
- Removal of placenta: Ensure that the placenta is passed normally. Seek veterinary assistance if it is retained.
- Prevent chilling: Dry the newborn kid thoroughly and protect it from cold, rain, and draughts.
- First feeding: Ensure that the kid receives colostrum as soon as possible after birth.
- Placenta and feeding: The doe should be allowed to lick the kid and establish maternal bonding. Do not allow the doe to consume excessive amounts of the placenta.
- Water and initial feed: Offer clean water and suitable feed to the doe after kidding. Green fodder and other feeds can be provided according to her nutritional requirements.

### Colostrum feeding

- Feed the kid its mother's first milk, or colostrum, within the first 15 minutes after birth whenever possible.
- Colostrum contains calcium, vitamins, and antibodies that provide passive immunity and protect kids against diseases.
- Colostrum also helps remove meconium, the first faeces, and reduces the risk of constipation.
- Feed kids four to five times daily during the first week to ensure adequate milk intake.
- After the first week, establish a regular milk-feeding schedule, generally three times daily, and gradually introduce starter feed, also known as creep feed.

### Feeding Management of Goat Kids

Feed accounts for approximately 70–80% of the total cost of goat production. Nutritional requirements vary according to age, body weight, growth rate, and physiological condition. Kid feeding can be divided into three stages:

#### A. Creep ration

The creep ration is offered to young kids to encourage early solid-feed intake and promote rumen development.

| Feed ingredient | Inclusion (%) |
|-----------------|---------------|
| Maize           | 32.0          |
| Groundnut cake  | 35.0          |
| Wheat bran      | 20.0          |

| Feed ingredient | Inclusion (%) |
|-----------------|---------------|
| Mineral mixture | 2.5           |
| Salt            | 0.5           |
| Fish meal       | 10.0          |
| Total           | 100.0         |

- Mix all ingredients thoroughly.
- Purchase good-quality feed ingredients and ensure that they are free from mould, fungal contamination, and pesticide residues.
- Introduce creep feed gradually from around one week of age.
- Offer approximately 15–60 g per kid per day, depending on age and body weight, increasing the quantity gradually.
- Provide clean drinking water and adequate green fodder or other suitable forage.

### B. Grower ration

This ration is intended for kids up to approximately six months of age.

| Feed ingredient                   | Inclusion (%) |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| Gram chuni (gram husk/by-product) | 15.0          |
| Maize                             | 37.0          |
| Groundnut cake                    | 25.0          |
| Wheat bran                        | 20.0          |
| Mineral mixture                   | 2.5           |
| Salt                              | 0.5           |
| Total                             | 100.0         |

- Mix all ingredients thoroughly and store the feed in a dry, clean place.
- Provide approximately 60–150 g of concentrate per kid per day, according to age, body weight, and nutritional requirements.
- Allow access to grazing for approximately 6–8 hours daily, where appropriate.
- Ensure continuous access to clean water and suitable forage.

### C. Finisher ration

The finisher ration is used for kids approximately seven to ten months old to promote growth and prepare them for marketing.

| Feed ingredient | Inclusion (%) |
|-----------------|---------------|
| Wheat/maize     | 22.0          |
| Groundnut cake  | 15.0          |
| Wheat bran      | 30.0          |
| Pulse chuni     | 15.0          |
| Mustard cake    | 15.0          |
| Mineral mixture | 2.0           |
| Salt            | 1.0           |
| Total           | 100.0         |

- Provide approximately 150–200 g of concentrate per kid per day, depending on body weight and nutritional requirements.
- Provide additional grazing or suitable forage for approximately 6–8 hours daily.
- Adjust the ration according to growth, health, and production objectives.

## Housing Management

Proper housing protects goat kids from adverse weather, disease, and injuries.

- Ensure adequate sunlight, ventilation, and sufficient floor space in the goat shed.
- Provide protection from cold winds during winter and from rain during the monsoon.
- Keep the shed clean, dry, and hygienic.

- Spread dry grass, straw, or suitable bedding on the floor to prevent direct contact with damp soil. Replace it regularly.
- Change the upper layer of floor bedding and remove accumulated manure regularly; the textbook recommends replacing approximately 6 inches of soil before and after the rainy season.
- Provide separate housing for young kids and pregnant goats.
- Allow approximately 0.4 m<sup>2</sup> of covered floor area per kid, adjusting the space to animal size and housing conditions.
- After weaning, keep kids with the doe for approximately one week if required for adjustment and management.

## Health Management

Effective health management reduces kid mortality and improves growth.

- Deworming: The textbook recommends deworming at 15 days of age and subsequently at three-month intervals. In practice, follow veterinary advice based on local parasite prevalence, faecal examination, and the approved drug and age recommendations.
- Seasonal parasite control: Consider parasite control before and after the rainy season, according to veterinary recommendations.
- Vaccination: Vaccinate against important diseases such as PPR, enterotoxaemia, and other locally prevalent diseases according to the veterinary vaccination schedule. The textbook mentions vaccination at approximately three months of age.
- Veterinary supervision: Vaccination and treatment should be carried out under veterinary guidance.
- Isolation: Separate sick animals from healthy animals and arrange prompt treatment.
- External parasites: Treat ticks, lice, and other external parasites with suitable veterinary-approved products.
- Faecal examination: Conduct regular faecal examinations to monitor gastrointestinal parasites and guide treatment.

## General Management Practices

The following measures are important for maintaining healthy and productive goat kids:

- Clean the newborn kid's body and nostrils immediately after birth.
- Clean the navel and apply an appropriate antiseptic.
- Identify each kid through ear tagging or another suitable identification method to maintain accurate breeding and performance records.
- Provide clean drinking water two to three times daily, or continuous access where possible.
- Ensure that kids receive adequate milk from their mothers.
- Where a doe has insufficient milk, provide suitable supplementary feeding or foster the kid under appropriate management.
- Trim overgrown hooves when necessary.
- Weigh kids periodically to monitor their growth rate and identify poor performers early.
- Maintain records of birth weight, birth type, dam identity, vaccination, deworming, and mortality.

## Conclusion

Scientific management of newborn goat kids begins before birth and continues through pregnancy, kidding, colostrum feeding, nutrition, housing, and health care. Adequate colostrum intake, balanced feeding, hygienic housing, appropriate vaccination, and parasite control are particularly important for reducing mortality and improving growth. Adoption of these practices can improve kid survival, productivity, and profitability in goat farming, thereby contributing to the livelihood of small and marginal farmers.

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