

Profitability Is Nothing To “Kid” About



By Julie Wadzinski, B.S.

Maximizing profitability is an important goal in any business. When it comes to a goat farm (meat or dairy) there are three major factors that impact profitability: feed costs, percent kid crop, and market prices. Although

producers have very little control over market price fluctuations, they can manage feed costs and the herd’s fertility to maximize profit potential.

Reducing Feed Costs With Strategic Deworming

The largest operational expense in any goat operation is feed cost. Improving feed efficiency is one of the best ways to manage this expense. Feed efficiency can be improved through controlling internal parasites and by implementing a highly bioavailable mineral program.

Deworming is often an overlooked component of profitability in goat operations. Because of the grazing and browsing nature of goats, their prehensile lips allow them to eat closer to the ground; exposing them to greater numbers of parasite larvae. Of the internal parasites, the one that is most economically devastating, especially in the Midwest, is *Haemonchus contortus*, also known as the Barber Pole worm. *Haemonchus* is problematic for several reasons. The first is that few dewormers have significant efficacy against *Haemonchus*. It is also problematic because of its blood-sucking nature which can rapidly degrade animal health. Research has revealed that in the average herd, 20% of the animals will carry 70-80% of the parasite burden. An animal heavily burdened with *Haemonchus* can lose 10% of its blood volume to these parasites in a single day; causing the animal to become anemic.¹

A producer can reduce the expense of routine deworming while at the same time minimize the opportunity of parasitic resistance by learning how to use and implement the FAMACHA® test. The FAMACHA® test uses a color chart that evaluates the color of the goat’s inner eye lid to help monitor for anemia caused by the Barber Pole Worm. This allows producers to single out the animals most heavily burdened with *Haemonchus*. By



identifying and deworming the 20% of the flock with the majority of the parasite burden, producers can slow the development of resistance, while also reducing the expense of deworming.

It is important to provide the animals that are identified as being anemic with strategic nutritional support. At Crystal Creek®, we define strategic nutrition as: concentrated nutrition delivered for a short time period. Crystal Creek® has developed a highly concentrated nutritional support specifically designed for small ruminants challenged by heavy parasite loads, called Prevail™. Convenient to administer, in a capsule form, Prevail™ can also be mixed into the feed or top dressed. For larger herds, where individual administration is not ideal, Pivot-FL™ can be mixed into the feed for 2 days to achieve a similar effect.

Besides negatively impacting animal health, internal parasites also reduce feed efficiency by causing damage to intestinal lining. With a decrease in functional intestinal surface it becomes even more important to feed the highly bioavailable nutrients found in Crystal Creek® 2:1 Goat Mineral. By raising the bioavailability of trace minerals, feed efficiency can be maintained even though the functioning intestinal surface area may be decreased. Adequate trace mineral levels are critical to creating and maintaining a highly functional immune system and are vital in the recovery from parasitism. In some cases, a quality mineral is not enough to get an animal over the effects of a heavy parasite load. Having other nutrients such as protein, fiber, and carbohydrates in the context of a balanced diet are essential to provide these challenged animals with the long term nutrition they need to recover from the effects of parasitism.

Improving Fertility with Advanced Nutrition

There are many circumstances besides bouts of parasites where basal, long term nutrition such as a balanced ration, and strategic nutrition can be paired together to aid stressed animals.

Strategic nutritional tools, coupled with a strong basal nutrition program are a beneficial combination in supporting optimal reproduction. Whether the operation is seasonal, or on an accelerated breeding program to kid year round, breeding is often a stressful time. Crystal Pellets™ is a highly effective strategic nutritional supplement that contains ingredients that can block the negative effects of cortisol (a stress related hormone) on the animal. Excessive cortisol levels in the body have been shown to compromise reproduction by delaying estrus, decreasing embryo quality, and reducing fertility in both bucks and does.

Crystal Pellets™ combined with Crystal Creek® Mineral has been shown to significantly improve embryo quality in super-ovulation programs in both dairy and beef cattle. Embryo quality in goats is crucial for achieving a high percent kid crop. The strategic nutrition combination of Crystal Pellets™ and Crystal Creek's® highly bioavailable minerals are beneficial in both accelerated breeding programs and seasonal breeding programs, where high conception rates and vigorous kids are crucial to your bottom line.

Crystal Pellet's™ ability to support the immune system and digestive function is also applicable to recently fresh does as it ensures a smoother transition into lactation. The easier the transition, the better the production level regardless if you are measuring production by pounds of milk or weaning weight.

If your goat farm has a meat or dairy emphasis, Crystal Creek® has both the expertise and products needed to help you create a more efficient feed program that will help lower input costs. Call and talk to one of Crystal Creek's® knowledgeable staff or visit our website, www.crystalcreeknatural.com, today!

Hepworth et. Al, "Managing Internal Parasitism in Sheep and Goats." Web. 04 April 2014
< <https://www.extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/AS/As-573-w.pdf>>

Mendell, Mac. "Economics of Goat Raising." Web. 04 April 2014
< <http://www.ansc.purdue.edu/goat/factsheet/economics.htm>>

Scarfe, David A. *United Caprine News*, February 1993, Volume No. 10.

Crystal Creek® Welcomes Lorrie Meister



Crystal Creek® is proud to welcome Lorrie Meister as a Livestock Specialist to our team of professionals. Lorrie graduated from Madison Area Technical College with an Associate's Degree in Veterinary Technology. She has worked as a Certified Veterinary Technician in large and mixed animal practice for the last 15 years and has a strong agriculture and animal science background. She was born and raised on a dairy farm in northwestern Wisconsin and was active in 4-H, FFA and various other animal associations growing up. Lorrie's professional areas of interest include Preventative Care, Dairy Reproduction, Calf Raising, Diagnostic Trouble Shooting, and Customer Service.

Lorrie pursued a career in veterinary medicine because of a prominent desire to help animals and the people connected to them. She enjoys helping producers solve problems in an efficient manner, focusing on implementing measures that ensure optimal animal welfare with producer profitability in mind. Lorrie has a history of work experience that ranges from assisting in treatments of animals on farm (bolusing, drenching, surgical assistance), to doing in-house laboratory testing (milk culturing, ELISA testing, and blood analysis) and has always been a strong promoter of sustainable agriculture.

In her spare time Lorrie enjoys kayaking, camping, reading and horseback riding. She is excited to be a part of the Crystal Creek® team and is looking forward to working with clients and customers to help them with their livestock and operational needs.