

# Pregnancy Toxemia In Goats



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Farmers consistently look for ways to be more efficient with time, money and resources. Hidden profit thieves in dairy operations can have a tremendous impact on a farmer's bottom line. One hidden profit thief in dairy goat

operations is pregnancy toxemia. This metabolic disorder is present in approximately 13% of does and has a herd prevalence of over 87%.<sup>1</sup>

## What Is Pregnancy Toxemia?

Pregnancy toxemia is also known by the name pregnancy ketosis or twin lamb disease. It is a metabolic disorder that occurs in does during the last stage of pregnancy. When does have a negative energy level, blood sugar values decrease and ketones increase due to an increased nutritional demand from fetus growth and development. This occurs mainly because the fetus requires 30 to 40 grams of glucose per day to meet their development requirements.<sup>2</sup> If a doe does not have the proper nutrition to provide the fetus with its needs, the doe's body will resort to breaking down body fat, which causes a condition in the doe known as fatty liver. Does in their second or greater lactation and those carrying multiple fetuses, are more susceptible to pregnancy toxemia.<sup>2</sup>

## Clinical Signs Of Pregnancy Toxemia

Pregnancy toxemia occurs one to three weeks prior to kidding. Does exhibiting signs of toxemia can have a depressed appetite, circle, star gaze, have poor coordination and may grind their teeth. A smell of acetone may be on their breath due to the production of ketones from breaking down their body fat. If not treated accordingly, this can lead to the death of the doe and fetuses.

## Diagnosing Pregnancy Toxemia

The best way to determine pregnancy toxemia in your herd is to take a blood test. To test the blood,

you can use a blood glucose monitor with a BHBA (beta-hydroxybutyrate) blood strip. Does with a reading of 0.8 mmol/L or higher can be classified as being positive for pregnancy toxemia and should be treated accordingly.<sup>2</sup>

## Prevention And Treatment Of Pregnancy Toxemia

Proper nutrition is the absolute key to preventing pregnancy toxemia. Working with a Crystal Creek® nutritionist to properly balance the diet will help ensure does receive adequate nutrition. Performing a body score evaluation of each doe on a regular basis will help identify potential issues before they become problematic. Overly fat or thin does are at a higher likelihood of developing pregnancy toxemia. Minimizing triplet pregnancies can reduce nutrient demands on the doe and fetuses, thereby reducing the potential for ketosis.

Using Crystal Creek® products such as Cow Quench™ or Fresh-N-Drink™ once a doe is identified with pregnancy toxemia, can be beneficial. Cow Quench™ is an oral drench that would be given daily for three days. This product contains glycerin which has been proven to help provide energy. Fresh-N-Drink™ is a powder that is mixed with water and given as a drench. Fresh-N-Drink™ is given one time per day for one to three days. The ingredients in this solution provide energy and calcium needed by the doe.

Don't let your profitability be affected by this metabolic issue. Our staff is here to help answer your questions on pregnancy toxemia and help your does transition into lactation successfully.

<sup>1</sup> ABAH Bioflux, 2015, Volume 7, Issue 1. "Prevalence and Risk Factors for Pregnancy Toxemia in Goats" Retrieved from: <http://www.abah.bioflux.com.ro>

<sup>2</sup> Menzies, DVM Paula I., "Pregnancy Toxemia in Ewes and Does" Merck Veterinary Manual Retrieved from: <https://www.merckvetmanual.com/metabolic-disorders/hepatic-lipidosis/pregnancy-toxemia-in-ewes-and-does>