



Hand Feeding of Kids

Any time that kids are being hand fed milk or colostrum, it is wise to heat treat it.

In a meat goat herd, kids will normally be raised by their own mothers. This is the ideal situation as the kids will receive many small feedings each day of fresh, clean milk with little effort on the goatkeeper's part. There are however, some situations which will change this, such as the sudden death of the doe, a Caesarian section where the doe does not accept the kids, a doe with more kids than she can feed (triplets or more) or any situation where the doe may have a disease which could be spread to her kids through the milk. Such diseases are caprine arthritis encephalitis (known as CAE), John's disease, and mycoplasmosis. Any time that kids are being hand fed milk or colostrum, it is wise to heat treat it so that if the doe is later found to be infected, the kids' health will not have been put at risk. After heat treating, extra colostrum may be frozen for future use. It must be thawed and warmed slowly and carefully to prevent it gelling. Never thaw milk or colostrum in the microwave – it will destroy the proteins in the milk.

Kids should receive four to eight ounces of colostrum at least four times in their first day of life, and the first feeding should be within the first hour. After six hours, they will not absorb the antibodies in it. They can be fed colostrum alone for the first three days,

and then switched to pasteurized milk. From three to seven days, feed milk at the rate of eight to ten ounces, four times a day. Also offer calf or kid starter, water and fine hay free choice. The amount of milk fed can be gradually increased after the first week and the number of feedings reduced so that by two months the kids are getting a maximum of 64 ounces a day, spread over two or three feedings.

Heat-Treating Colostrum

Colostrum should be from the first milking of healthy, mature does. Warm it in a double boiler until it is 57 C (135 F) and hold it there for ten minutes. Transfer to a preheated thermos, put the lid on and wrap the thermos in towels. After 60 minutes the colostrum may then be frozen in small amounts (eight ounces is good). Never overheat it or warm in a microwave because it will gel and be useless.

Pasteurizing Milk

A small home pasteurizer capable of treating about eight litres of milk at a time is very convenient, but if one is not available, the milk can be treated in a double boiler. Bring the milk to 62 C, stirring occasionally and hold it there for 30 minutes. The same result will be obtained by heating the milk to 90 C and holding it there for 15 seconds. In either case, set the pan of milk in cold water to chill after it has been heated.



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