

Pregnancy Toxemia (Ketosis)

Article By: Faron Stubbert

Everyone will experience Pregnancy Toxemia (Ketosis) in their herd at one time or another. The general cause is from the high-energy demand of multiple fetuses in late pregnancy. Usually occurs during the last 1 to 6 weeks of pregnancy when the fetus grows most of their body mass. Does bearing twins will demand 180% higher energy intake than those bearing a singleton. Does bearing triplets will demand 240% more energy intake. When these demands exceeds the supply, the body will use the fat to metabolize into glucose to feed the fetus at the expense of the doe's health, this causes Ketotic conditions.

The risk factors for Pregnancy Toxemia are –

- Multiple fetuses
- Poor quality of ingested feed
- Dietary energy level
- Environment
- Genetic factors
- Obesity
- Lack of good body condition or high parasite load
- Confinement – lack of exercise

Symptoms of Pregnancy Toxemia are –

Early Stages

- Laying down
- Become sluggish
- Loss of appetite
- Swelling of the lower limbs
- Grinding their teeth
- Staggering

Progressed Stages – the neurological systems become comprised due to lack of glucose.

- Blindness
- Stargazing
- Tremors
- Aimless walking
- Ataxia (Uncoordinated Staggering)
- Comatose

When the doe becomes Comatose, the fetuses release toxins that send the doe into endotoxic shock and death. Does that do manage to survive the ordeal needs to be watched for dystocia and lactational ketosis.

At the first sign of the symptoms, you should provide exercise for your doe along with high-energy supplements to provide enough energy intakes for her and her unborn kids. The supplements can come from corn, fresh alfalfa, or soybean. Increasing the protein does not necessarily increase the energy level.

High Energy Supplements –

- Propylene Glycol

- Nuri-drench
- Dextrose
- Environment
- Combine (1 part Molasses, 2 part Kayro, 1 part Corn Oil)
- Glucose IV

Treatment is usually unsuccessful, but If the doe is within 7 days of due date, you can induce labor in order to try to save the doe and her kids. You may even have to do a cesarean section. Consult your Veterinarian for a proper course of action and inform the Vet of the symptoms the doe is having. If you catch your doe in the early stages, chance of survival is good.

To help prevent Pregnancy Toxemia, feed the does 1-2 lbs of grain daily along with good quality hay like Alfalfa during the last 6 weeks of pregnancy. Make sure the does have plenty of room to exercise. Other than that, there is not much you can do to prevent it.

Send comments to the Editor of the Newsletter at littlepieceofheaven@g.com