

## Pregnancy Toxemia in the Doe

With kidding season in full swing we thought this would be a great issue to address.

The basic cause for Pregnancy Toxemia (PT) or Ketosis is an inability by the pregnant doe to keep up with the demand for energy. Factors such as growth of the doe herself, having to support triplet fetuses and cold weather, place the doe at a higher risk of developing this disease. The fastest growth of the kids occurs during the last few months of pregnancy so we typically see signs in the last 2-4 weeks of gestation. In some cases the caloric or energy demand gets so high that the doe cannot keep up. The body starts using stored energy such as fats from the liver, overwhelming these systems.

The best way to avoid this problem is to identify which does are at risk and keeping them from becoming thin or obese during the first 2 trimesters and then feeding them additional high quality feed during the last trimester. There is a blood test (plasma beta-hydroxy-butyrate levels) that can identify does that are developing the disease during the last trimester. Clinical signs include thin body condition, weakness, anorexia, depression and neurologic signs toward the end. Once clinical signs are noted aggressive treatment is necessary to save the animal and revolves around giving her the needed energy and supportive veterinary care or in some cases performing an emergency labor induction or cesarean section to save the doe. Therefore knowing who is at risk and feeding them right is worth it.

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