

Is it Bees or Something Else?

Article by Faron Stubbert

In the August issue under the Letter's to the Editor section was a letter about their goats being stung by bees, with a picture of a goat with its lower jaw swollen. Well, I'm not here to discredit the story of their herd being attacked by bees, as it is all possible as I have to seen swarms of bees go thru my property. What I'm here to talk about is, if you have a goat with the lower jaw swollen, it's possible that your goat has Bottle Jaw often caused by Barberpole worms (Haemonchus Contortus) or liver flukes or your goat is Iodine deficient.

Bottle Jaw is characterized by a hardened swelling under the jaw. Typical treatment includes vitamin B12 shots and deworming although you may have to treat the underlining cause such as barber pole worm and liver flukes for which your goat can die from.

Barber Pole Worm – is a very common parasite and one of the most pathogenic nematode of ruminants. The adult worms attach themselves to abomasal mucosa and feed on the blood and eventually cause your goat to be anemia. The females can lay over 5,000 eggs per day which are released thru the animals feces for which helping the spread of the worm to the rest of your herd. (Photo on the right shows what the eggs look like.) There is nothing you can do to get rid of the worms, just good pasture maintenance and keep changing the type of de-wormer you use. Left untreated, your whole herd can be infected with drastic results.



Liver Flukes – If you have slugs and snails you will have liver flukes as snails and slugs are carriers. Since goats browse for food rather than graze like sheep, plus goats don't like to eat real wet grass etc. unless they have no choice, they will not consume enough infected snail and or slugs to cause acute disease. If your goat does become acute, death is more likely the outcome as there are no drugs on the market for goats.

Iodine Deficiency – is another possible reason for a goat, especially Boers, to have the lower jaw. It's a disease of the thyroid gland, which is under the chin behind the larynx front of the neck. When the goat is deficient in iodine, the thyroid gland enlarges to form a goiter. Goiters are not CL or Bottle Jaw. Treatment is to add iodized salt blocks to their menu.

I know this is very brief, but if I went into details, my article could take up many pages. All I wanted to do was point out other possible reasons why your goat has a swollen lower jaw. If you would like to make a comment on this article or any others, feel free to write to me at littlepieceofheaven@g.com