Housing of the goat

A simple housing built using locally available materials is recommended to save on cost.

Housing for kids varies from place to place. Loose stalls which measure 1.8 m x 1.8 m, and 1.2m high may house up to 10 kids. Bucks may be housed in stalls measuring 2.4 m x 1.8 m.

Health management

Diseases and parasites cause losses in both quality and quantity of meat and milk and contribute to goat mortality. The major diseases of goats are:

- Contagious Ecthyma (ORF)
- Brucellosis—causes abortion
- Streptothricosis
- Foot rot
- Haemonchus contortus
- Coccidiosis
- Contagious caprine pleuropneumonia (CCPP)

Rearing the milk goat

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KARI information brochure series / 68 /2008
Ksh. 20
Introduction

Dairy goat farming is increasingly gaining popularity particularly in the high potential areas where land for dairy cows is diminishing. Like the dairy cow, dairy goats require good management.

Dairy goat breeds

The recommended breeds are:
- Anglo-nubian
- Toggenburg
- Alpines
- Saanen.

Breeding management

Female goats (does) should be mated at about 12 months of age to kid at 18 months of age. Mating is best done 12 hours after heat is first observed.

Goat fertility reaches maximum at 5 to 6 years of age and the same applies to milk production.

Feeding of lactating goat

Quality feeds should be provided to the lactating goat during the first three months of lactation.

The feeds should also be varied to stimulate high intake and high forage intakes in pregnancy result in higher feed intakes in early lactation.

The daily concentrate allowance should be increased during the first 4 to 6 weeks post-kidding but not to exceed 0.5 kg. concentrate.

Problems of reproduction

The goat appears to be more susceptible to abortion than other species of domestic livestock.

Most abortions occur in response to stress around 90 to 110 days of gestation.

Such abortions can be reduced by improved nutrition and management or by selection of an animal which has nutritional requirements more in line with that provided by the environment.

Rearing of goat kids

Feed first milk (colostrums) to goat kids for the first 3 days after birth. This stimulates the alimentary canal, provides vitamin A and contains antibodies which confer immunity against diseases.

After 3 or 4 days, feed 0.7 to 0.9 litres of milk or milk replacer daily either on a bottle or from a pan. Feed this total milk 3 to 5 times a day.

At 3 to 4 weeks of age, provide access to a good starter feed like good quality grass and concentrate. Discontinue milk feeding at 3 to 4 months.

In milk goats it is essential to wean early so that the milk can be available for domestic use. Weaning can be completed at any time after 3 months without using milk substitutes.

Female kids should be given about 1.0 kg of milk daily while male kids should get 1.5 kg daily.

Non breeding male kids should be castrated soon after birth using rubber rings, or burdizzo.