



Small Ruminant Ramblings



Floppy Kid Syndrome (fading kid syndrome)

Goat kids can sometimes exhibit symptoms of a condition known as floppy kid syndrome or fading kid syndrome.

Goat kids with this clinical syndrome were first reported in the spring of 1987, although there were anecdotal reports of herds with this syndrome several years earlier. Kids are normal at birth but develop sudden onset of profound muscular weakness at three to 10 days of age. Affected kids cannot use their tongues to suckle but can swallow. They exhibit a marked metabolic acidosis (low blood pH) but have no other detectable, repeatable serum biochemical abnormalities. Affected kids have no other signs of illness such as diarrhea or respiratory disease. Cases of floppy kid syndrome may be confused with white muscle disease, abomasal bloat, colibacillosis, septicemia or enterotoxemia. Necropsy of dead kids is encouraged to rule out other causes of neonatal death.

Cases tend to occur most commonly late in the kidding season, and herd morbidity (numbers of

animals affected) ranges from 10 percent to 50 percent. Affected kids have been found in dam reared; pasteurized milk, hand-reared; and unpasteurized milk, hand-reared herds. No specific management or goat-related risk factors have been identified. There does not seem to be a breed predilection.

Early recognition of the syndrome, immediate correction of the low blood pH and supportive care are critical. If clinical blood chemistries are available, the degree of acidosis can be calculated and the kid can be given intravenous fluids. Less severely affected kids can be treated orally with sodium bicarbonate (baking soda) at the rate of ½ teaspoon in a small amount of water. In addition, kids may need supportive therapy such as tube feeding. Spontaneous recovery (without treatment) has been reported in a few cases, but case fatality rates have been as high as 30 percent to 50 percent in untreated animals. Because the etiology is not known, no preventative

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May 2010

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