

Safeguarding your Goats against Exhibition Maladies

Curt Vlietstra, DVM
Pipestone Veterinary Clinic

Summer is a time for fun. Kids (the human kind) are out of school and enjoying many seasonal activities, families are vacationing, barbeques are blazing, and many of us are preparing for shows, sales, and fairs.

Livestock exhibitions are meant to be enjoyable; seeing old friends and making new friends and the excitement of the competitions are what the shows and sales are meant for. Unfortunately, many of us have had negative experiences associated with these events, especially when animals return to our farms, often carrying who-knows-what with them. By remembering to do a few simple tasks, this should be prevented, allowing you to enjoy the summer.

1. Make sure animals are healthy before the show. You may be required to have a veterinarian inspect your animals and sign a health certificate and even have tests done to show that they are negative for some diseases, but this is only part of the process. The animals should be well-adjusted to their current feed ration. Do not upset their diet before, during or shortly after a show. If the show is not terminal, an injection of a broad-spectrum, long-lasting antibiotic may be used as extra insurance.
2. Have all animals traveling current on vaccinations meant to prevent some of the more common diseases associated with co-mingling, crowded barns, and the stress of travel. Respiratory diseases are some of the most common illnesses brought home. Vaccines made for goats that protect against *Pasteurella* and *Mannheimia* exist, and work quite well. Reports vary on the efficacy of using a half-dose of Nasalgen®, an intranasal vaccine designed for cattle.
3. Pack a kit to take along that has “emergency” items in it. This would include electrolytes that could be added to stock water or drenched if needed, probiotics, and possibly some injectable vitamins, such as fortified B-complex to name a few things.
4. Know your “neighbors” and what, if any, infectious diseases their animals may have that can put your animals at risk. This is particularly important if your herd is naïve to diseases like CAE, foot rot, Johnes, and salmonella, which can be devastating when brought back to a herd that has no circulating immunity against the organisms that cause these diseases.
5. Treat/prevent what you can when animals get home. Trimming and dipping feet can eliminate the foot rot-causing organisms that are bound to be around at a show. Broad-spectrum antibiotics in the feed or water and fly control can help prevent a newly contracted disease from spreading to pen-mates.

A quick note before I wrap up on fly control, since I mentioned it above and I've been getting a lot of questions about it lately. Good fly control consists of treating both the animals and the environment, when possible. A variety of pour-ons, fly baits, and premise sprays exist, and almost all of them work well in certain situations.

It is difficult to treat the environment when the animals are grazing on pasture. Bait stations can be placed around water tanks and feed bunks to minimize the number of flies around these heavy-traffic areas. Recently, a product called Ultra Boss® was approved for use in both meat and dairy goats. This is a concentrated pour-on that lasts significantly longer than many pour-ons that have been available previously. Your local veterinarian or extension agent should be able to provide assistance specific to your operation if you need it.

Have a fun summer, and travel safe.

Curt Vlietstra, DVM
Pipestone Veterinary Clinic

This information provided to you via University of Minnesota Extension.

Copyright 2007 © Regents of the University of Minnesota. All rights reserved.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, this material is available in alternative formats upon request. Please contact the Extension Store at (800) 876-8636. University of Minnesota Extension is an equal opportunity educator and employer.

www.extension.umn.edu/meatgoats