

# Setting up yearly preventive health plan for sheep, goats, camelids

Blake Miller, DVM  
Northwest Mobile Vet, Portland, OR 97206

## Abstract

The objective of this presentation is to provide useful and applicable information about preventative medicine that can be imparted in an oral or written form to clients that own small ruminants or camelids. Owners often have serious issues requiring immediate attention that could have been avoided if proper husbandry and maintenance was provided prior to the incident, further reinforcing the idea that preventative medicine is the best medicine.

**Key words:** sheep, goats, camelids, llama, alpaca

## Examinations

Veterinary exams should be performed every 6 months.

## Diet

Please offer orchard hay in the amount recommended by your veterinarian.

## Alfalfa

If you have male goats, alfalfa should be discontinued as it can lead to urinary calculi which can be a serious complication. Alfalfa should only be offered to female goats that are growing, pregnant, or nursing. Please discuss questions with us in regards to the amount that should be fed during these times.

## Grain

If you have male goats, grain should be discontinued as it can lead to urinary calculi which can be a serious complication. Grain should only be offered to female goats that are growing, pregnant or nursing. Please discuss questions with us in regard to the amount that should be fed during these times.

## Minerals

Purchase a goat-specific mineral and have it available for all animals to consume at will. NOTE: If sheep are commingled with goats, a sheep-specific mineral should be provided to all animals as the higher copper levels in goat mineral can be toxic to sheep. If goats are being fed a sheep mineral because these animals are commingled, goats can be supplemented with a 2g copper bolus every 6-12 months as needed to meet their copper requirements.

## Water

Clean, debris-free water should be provided at all times in multiple locations to encourage water consumption.

## Baking soda

Purchase baking soda and have available in a container for animals to consume at will.

## Iodized salt

Purchase iodized salt and have in container for all animals to consume at will.

## Housing

Feeders/mineral buckets/water buckets

Have all these containers at neck level to prevent spread of parasites through fecal contamination. Clean water buckets with dilute bleach solution once a month.

## Shavings/bedding

To reduce chances of fecal contamination, clean barn out and re-bed weekly.

## Guard animals

Even with proper fencing, predators can sometimes attack your herd. Livestock guardian dogs, miniature and regular donkeys, and llamas work well as guard animals and integrate well into the herd.

## Medical management

Delicing

UltraBoss® (dosage of 3 mL/100 pounds of body weight on base of neck) should be applied to the nape of the neck topically (similarly to giving flea medication to dogs) with a dosing syringe once every month to prevent lice infestation. Please begin September 1 and continue through April 1. Lice is a disease of the winter!

## Fecals

Fecal samples should be performed every 3-6 months on 10% of the herd, or immediately if an animal is sick, has diarrhea or is losing weight.

## Vaccinations

CDT should be administered at 6 weeks, 10 weeks and 14 weeks, then boosted every 6-12 months thereafter. Pregnant animals should receive an additional CDT vaccine 30 days before kidding.

## Hoof trims

Your goats should have their hooves trimmed every 3-6 months.

## Biosecurity screens

A one-time blood test is recommended for all goats or sheep on site, or if any new goats or sheep are being introduced. This tests for 4 common (CAE, CL, OPP, Johne's) lifelong, contagious diseases that goats and sheep may be infected with. This should

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be performed after 6 months of age, and typically only requires 1 test for their whole life. This is a common test that people will ask for when adopting new goats or sheep.

## Disbudding

Goat kids should be disbudded when the buds are about the size of chocolate chips (not Hershey kisses!). This is usually around 5-10 days of age.

## Newborn vitamins

All goat kids should receive Vitamin A/D, Bo-Se and tetanus antitoxin.

## Species differences

- Llamas and alpacas should always have loose mineral available.
- Llamas, alpacas, and sheep do not need disbuds.
- Llamas and alpacas do not need biosecurity screens.
- Hoof trims on small ruminants and camelids are different.
- Minerals for sheep are different than minerals for goats which are different for camelids.

