



BURNT FORK VETERINARY CLINIC

From our large animal vet, Dr. Magdi Niedermeyer, here are some tips and tricks to prepare for spring and new life on the farm.

Consider establishing veterinary care prior to your calving/kidding/lambing season, to discuss preparations, plan for an emergency, and to have useful prescription drugs on hand.

We're also available 24/7 to help in an emergency situation! Contact Burnt Fork Vet at 406-777-3844 ext 3 to schedule an appointment for your horses/cattle/goats/sheep/pigs/llamas and alpacas.

Birth Supplies

It can be nice (for you and the dam) to have a small pen for does/ewes/cows to give birth (can be placed there about a week before kidding), with several features:

- Wire walls can allow moms to feel they are still “part of the herd”
- Clean to avoid picking up infection during birth when dam and newborn are more susceptible
- Well-bedded with shavings/straw
- Warm for newborns
- Potential safe area for newborns, possibly with a safe heat lamp depending on season

Birth Kit:

In case you need to do a vaginal exam, you will need:

- warm, very clean water
- Clean bucket
- Very gentle soap (like Ivory) or, I like Betadine Scrub
- Gentle OB Lube
- Gloves

For birth and after:

- Towels for the newborns

- To dip navel - Chlorhexidine solution or 7% Iodine (make sure it's really iodine)
 - o This small step can really make a difference and help prevent infection
- Banamine or Meloxicam (NSAIDs) on hand for pain/fever/inflammation

MOST KIDDINGS/LAMBINGS (95%) and Calvings (~70-80%) ARE UNEVENTFUL AND REQUIRE NO HUMAN HELP.

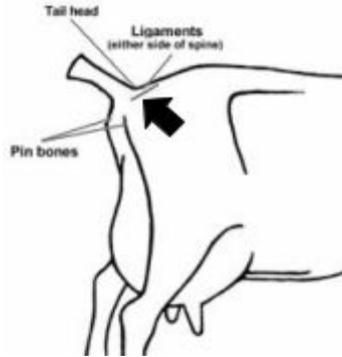
Normal Birth Position: Front feet and head come out of birth canal together:



<http://www.sheep101.info/201/Images/?C=S;O=A>

Signs that labor is about to begin:

- There may be a thick clear to white mucus plug released up to 1-2 weeks prior to birth
- Dam will show signs of having an udder (especially new moms)
- Ligaments (arrow) start to “loosen” and often mean dam is within 12 hours of birth, though they can sometimes loosen earlier



Normal Stages of Labor

- 1) STAGE 1: Uterine contractions begin, cervix begins to dilate, dam may be restless, up and down. Usually lasts no longer than 12 hours.
- 2) STAGE 2: Starts with “water breaking,” when the fetal membranes rupture and there is typically a gush of fetal fluids. Abdominal contractions begin, the dam is in active labor. Kids/Lambs/Calves should be born within 2 hours of water breaking with generally less than 1 hour between each kid.
If you see no progress after 30 minutes of active pushing, strongly consider calling us for assistance.
- 3) Expulsion of the placenta (afterbirth). Occurs within 12 hours of last birth.

Possible complications:

- **Breech presentation** - The fetus enters the birth canal feet or tail first:



<http://www.sheep101.info/201/Imagess/?C=S;O=A>

Common in small ruminants and can continue normally, less common in cattle and more likely to require assistance. If there does not seem to be normal timely progression, this can be a dystocia (see below).

- **Dystocia (any difficulty in delivery)** - Many possible causes: baby in the wrong position, dead baby, inability of the cervix to dilate. If any of the stages of birth do not appear to be progressing normally (e.g. active pushing for >30 minutes, no progress, or >45-60min since water broke), **Consult a Veterinarian**, as your sheep/goat/cow may be experiencing a dystocia and need medical or surgical assistance.

At Burnt Fork Vet Clinic, a large animal veterinarian is available for routine, as well as 24/7 emergency care at 407-777-3844 ext. 3.