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Importance of Health Management in Goat Farming

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The goat is also known as the poor man's cow that has served as a good companion to humans from ancient times. They are the first ruminant to be domesticated by humans and currently almost 300 different breeds of goats inhabiting in the world mostly because of its adaptability in diverse climatic conditions. There are about 1 billion of goats all over the world and in India their population is about 140 million. Goats are playing a very important role in livelihood of poor men's life because they've been domesticated for milk, meat and skin. Though they have good adaptability and are quite resistant to environmental conditions still they suffer from many diseases like PPR, pneumonia, diarrhoea, foot rot, etc. So, it has a unique and challenge in goat farming is health management. Therefore, management of healthy goatary not only ensures the well-being of the animals but also ensure a wealthy and economic viability of the goat farm.

[A] Importance of Health Management

The practice of goat farming is intricate, and health management is not just a practice; it's the cornerstone of productivity and sustainability. Therefore, a regular health check is very important for early detection of any health issues. Let's look into why health management is so pivotal in goat farming:

- **Boosting Productivity:** A healthy goat is a productive goat. By focusing on aspects like general health, parasite control, and vaccine management, we can significantly improve their productivity. Effective environment management and meticulous record-keeping play a key role here.
- **Reducing Mortality Rates:** One of the most heart-wrenching challenges in goat farming is the loss of newborn kids. A robust health management system can dramatically reduce mortality rates by equipping us with the necessary knowledge and skills to control infectious diseases.

- *Cost-Effectiveness:* An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. This age-old adage rings especially true in goat farming. A healthy herd is not only more resilient but also more economical. Treating sick livestock can be expensive, given the cost of medicines and potential loss of productivity.
- *Comprehensive Disease Control:* Health management in goat farming is all-encompassing. It involves caring for pregnant does, newborns, and adult goats, ensuring they're free from internal and external parasites. This holistic approach is crucial for the well-being of the entire herd.
- *Improving Livelihood:* Health management goes beyond physical well-being; it encompasses nutrition, housing, and even socialization. A happy goat is a healthy goat, and this happiness translates into improved livelihoods for farmers.
- *Prevention of Major Diseases:* In dairy goat farming, a strong animal health program is indispensable. Without it, even the best feeding and breeding practices fall short. Preventing major diseases is key to maintaining a productive and profitable herd.



Now, let's check out some best practices and preventive care measures essential for robust goat health.

[B] Disease Prevention and Management

To maintain a healthy farms and good productivity following point need to be considered:

- *Biosecurity Measures:* Implementing biosecurity measures is the first line of defense against diseases. This includes:
 - Controlling access to your farm,
 - Ensuring visitors follow hygiene protocols,
 - Establishing quarantine procedures for new or sick animals.
 - Regular testing of animals for common diseases/ parasite infection.
 - Keep separate system for feeding/ watering to healthy and sick animals.

- Implement control pests management for wild boars, rodents, insects etc.
- *Cleanliness and Disinfection:* Regular cleaning and disinfection of equipment and facilities are crucial. This prevents the spread of infectious diseases and creates a safe, healthy environment for the goats.
- *Vaccination:* Vaccination is one the vital component of health management. Vaccines play a critical role in preventing infectious diseases. Keeping up with regular vaccinations can save goats from common diseases like *Clostridium perfringens type C and D*, *Contagious enthyoma (Orf)*, *FMD*, *PPR*, etc. and reduce the spread of outbreaks. PPR vaccine in goat can be used in 3 months old kid once in 3 years against PPR. FMD vaccine can be use in 4 month old kit once in every six months.
- *Parasitic disease management:* Goats are very much susceptible for both external like lice, tick, mites, fleas, flies and internal parasite like tapeworm, round worm, flukes etc. Therefore, an appropriate deworming schedule should prepared and maintained along with application of medicine for external parasite management. External parasite can be managed by application of 0.2 mg/kg as per kg body weight (B.Wt) subcutaneously or dipping sick goat (protecting nose, eyes and mouth) in the mixture of dipping tank [1000 parts water and 3-5 parts of Malathene or Saythene]. Internal parasite can be managed by application of albendazole: 15 mg/kg B.Wt or Oxytetracycline: 15 mg/kg B.Wt or Levamisole: 8 mg/Kg B.Wt or Ivermectin: 0.2 mg/kg B.Wt or praziquantel: 5 mg/ kg B.Wt or Pyrantel: 10 mg/ kg B.Wt.
- *Environment:* A clean and dry living environment is essential. Wet or dirty conditions can lead to health issues like foot rot or mastitis. It's also crucial to detect and treat sick goats early, including isolating them and adhering to treatment protocols.

[C] Nutrition and Housing

- *Quality Feed and Water:* Access to clean water and nutritious feed is fundamental for goat health and its productivity. A balanced diet boosts their immune system, making them less susceptible to diseases. Overfeed is main cause of obesity as well as healthy issues but underfeeding is responsible for poor growth followed by reduced production.
- *Housing Conditions:* Goats need a clean, spacious, and well-ventilated shelter. Overcrowding can lead to the rapid spread of diseases. Good housing should protect goats from weather extremes and provide a comfortable resting area.

- *Bedding:* Bedding should always be clean and dry. Soiled bedding can harbor pathogens, so regular replacement is necessary.

[D] Other Management Practices

- *Veterinary Care:* Regular check-ups by a veterinarian are essential. This includes routine vaccinations and parasite control measures to prevent common ailments.
- *Kidding and Breeding Management:* Proper management of kidding (birth) and breeding is crucial. It reduces the risk of complications like dystocia (difficult labor) and improves reproductive health.
- *Hoof Care:* Goats' hooves need regular trimming. Neglected hooves can lead to lameness or infections, which are painful and can be costly to treat.
- *Report to Veterinarian:* Report to veterinarian if goats changes in their appetite, behavior, body condition; any type discharge like oral, nasal, ocular, etc; dysentery or diarrhea; any swollen lymphnode or joints etc.

Integrating these health management strategies into your goat farming practice can significantly reduce the likelihood of disease and improve the overall well-being of your herd. Prevention is always better, and more cost-effective, than cure. By prioritizing biosecurity, proper nutrition, adequate housing, and regular veterinary care, you can ensure the health and productivity of your goats.

Goat farming is not just about raising animals; it's about nurturing them in a way that promotes their health and happiness. This commitment to preventive care and best practices in health management is what sets successful goat farms apart.