

HEALTH BEAT by Dr. Shipley

Spring is upon us finally and we are all looking forward to fawns coming and antlers growing. You will need to get prepared for those fawns and I want to mention a few things to get you started. First, be prepared. The day the first fawns come is not the day you should be worried about getting tags, milk replacer, etc. Get organized and get things ordered and on hand so you can be ready for the blessed (or cursed) event. Make sure your pens are clean and disinfected and ready for those little guys and gals. I prefer small individual pens with a dirt floor with an overlay of crushed limestone and on top of that shavings. But if you are doing something else and it works, don't fix it just cause I said so! The dirt floor allows moisture to escape and the limestone works to keep the pH high so that bacteria and viruses won't grow. Shavings are usually easier to handle than straw and tend to make it easier for the little fawns to get around (at least in the first few days of life).

Have bottles and nipples cleaned and disinfected. I personally prefer the Pritchard nipple. Most fawns take to it better than other nipples and I've tried 'em all. If you haven't used them before, try them. If you don't like 'em, switch back! Other supplies that you need are tags (remember that Illinois now requires a "unique" identification. Talk to your veterinarian about the small alpha numeric tags that the state has. They work very well and if put in properly (not tight to the ear, allowing room for growth) they shouldn't be a problem. I have some people putting them in the upper part of the ear and some in the lower part. It doesn't make any difference that I know of, but the upper is the "proper" place. Have your veterinarian show you if you have questions. You should have all the medicines and vaccines on hand now so that fawn that needs something on a Sunday night will be able to get it. If you routinely give vitamins, probiotics, antiserums or colostrum supplements, get them now! Likewise coccidiostats for the milk should be started in the milk within the first week or so, especially if that has been a problem on your farm. For herd identification tags, you might want to consider using sheep/goat tags that you can get prenumbered or blank. Consider tagging in the middle of the ear in the lower third of the ear so that as the animal grows, the tag is still readable from a distance. I put the year on the tag so I can tell how old they are at a glance (since I can't remember anything anymore) but everyone has a different system. Color for year is common as is ear for sex (right ear female, left ear male or vice versa).

Don't forget about EHD. I have heard predictions for a dry summer (after a wet winter and spring!!) and if that is so, then EHD may be a problem. Vaccinate, vaccinate, vaccinate. It is killed so it can't cause a problem and it needs to be in the deer PRIOR to the EHD season or it won't do any good. For those of you who can't run them through a chute system. Consider darting them. I've got the Illinois vaccine in 1 and 2 ml dose size and hopefully have an unlimited supply. The company that makes the vaccine is "stockpiling" it so that when other states need it, they can get it. That means that I won't have the problems that I've had in the past with stocking it (I hope).

Enjoy watching those antlers grow and have a great spring and summer!!!