

WINTER PREPAREDNESS FOR GOATS

Management of mature goats in colder weather is only slightly different compared to routine management throughout the rest of the year. If planning to have kids during the winter, plan ahead for shelter when kids will be born.



Shelter



Shelter should be off the ground (4-8") because laying directly on the dirt or concrete can release heat from a goat's body in the winter. Three-sided shelters should face south so that sunlight can provide additional heat while deflecting wind. Heat lamps can also be used to provide extra heat. It is important to assess air quality of the shelter daily to reduce the risk of respiratory disease.



Goats grow a cashmere undercoat to keep themselves warm.



Kids are born without a protective layer of cashmere, therefore, if not sheltered properly, can freeze.



Provide best quality forage to lactating goats first then to the breeding herd.

Mineral supplements are especially important during winter when goats do not have access to fresh pasture.



Goats will eat more than normal to maintain their body temperature

Check body condition score monthly, or more often in cold weather. Provide high quality hay or replace some roughage with energy-dense feed (e.g. grain) if goats are losing body condition.



References

- 1) <http://articles.extension.org/pages/70326/care-of-goats-in-severe-winter-weather>
- 2) <http://www.betterhensandgardens.com/goats-much-cold-can-take/>
- 3) <http://hoeggerfarmyard.com/tips-for-keeping-goats-warm-in-the-winter/>
- 4) www.google.ca - images