

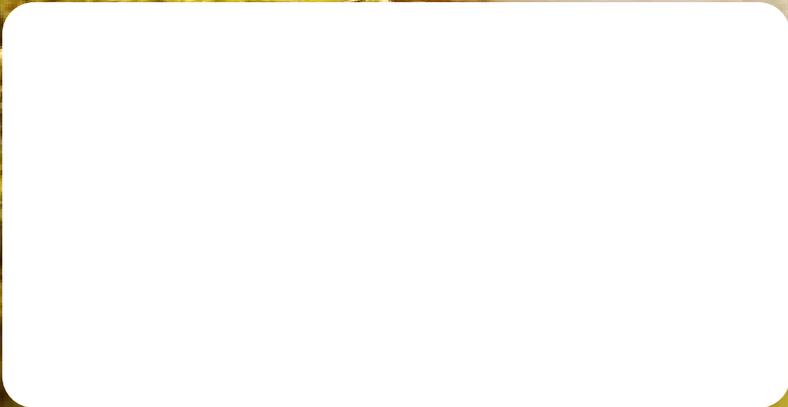
SINCE



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**SMALL RUMINANT EDITOR**  
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1929



SINCE

# CAUSES OF BLOAT IN GOATS

## WHAT IS BLOAT IN GOATS?

Bloat is the symptom that occurs when a ruminant animal cannot burp.

The rumen produces a lot of gas from the fermentation of food, and goats (as well as all other ruminants) normally get rid of this gas by belching. If something blocks the escape of gas from the rumen, the rumen will begin to expand. You will notice a large bulge on the animal's left side, as if it had swallowed a soccer ball.

## WHAT CAUSES BLOAT IN GOATS?

There are two major causes of goat bloat.

### 1. Obstruction in the goat's esophagus

One is an obstruction of the esophagus; the goat may have swallowed something large, and it is stuck. In this case, you may be able to feel the obstruction in the throat. If you cannot gently work it down the esophagus, get a veterinarian's help. You never want to be rough with an obstruction, since you don't know if it has sharp edges. Under no circumstances should you ever try to push the obstruction down the throat using any kind of instrument. If the obstruction does not feel soft and pliable, do not put any kind of pressure on it, or you may cause serious damage.

### 2. Consumption of inappropriate food or diet change

The second major reason for goat bloat is that either the goat has gotten into a source of soluble carbohydrates such as grain, or someone tried to change its diet too quickly. With a quick diet change, rumen microbes cannot deal with that amount of unfamiliar feed. Common sources of soluble carbohydrates are grain, the first fresh clover in the spring, and many weeds and forbs that produce high starch levels in the fall in response to cold nights.

The result of eating too much of these feeds is a shift in the pH of the rumen, resulting in death of the normal microbes, leaving "bad" microbes to increase in number and work on the feed to produce foam. The foam fills up the rumen and blocks the entrance to the esophagus, preventing the escape of gas. (This response is often the result of a mild grain overload or a meal of the first fresh clover of the season, as opposed to a severe overload that could quickly kill the goat.)

## WHAT TO DO ABOUT GOAT BLOAT

The best course of action is to call your veterinarian. Common traditional treatments include mineral oil to try to settle the foam, but your veterinarian will have much more effective surfactants that will decrease the foam and allow your goat to belch away the problem. Serious cases may require stronger intervention from your veterinarian. The best prevention is to keep the goat separated from food it is not supposed to have, and to make any dietary changes very gradually.

*Purina Animal Nutrition*



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A mild laxative for the lubrication of the intestinal tract. For use in horses, cattle, sheep, swine and dogs.

Refer to the product label for complete instructions.



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# BODY CONDITION SCORING BASICS FOR GOATS

Knowing the amount of condition or fat cover for goats is a good practice to implement in any nutrition program. Condition is commonly measured using a body condition score (BCS). Body condition adjusts throughout the year for various reasons, including the animal's age, breeding cycle and weather impacts. Nutrition decisions impact which direction the body condition score of your herd goes.

It's important to body condition score goats because it's a direct indication of their overall health and reproduction. Scoring body condition during key times like breeding helps evaluate nutritional needs of your herd and gives you a guideline of where things stand.

Follow these steps to monitor and maintain body condition in your goats:

## HOW DOES SCORING WORK?

Goat body condition score is monitored on a 5-point scale that increases or decreases by half-point increments.

The ideal score falls between a range of 2.5 to 4, depending on life stage and energy demand. During breeding season, we like to see does around 2.5 to 3 BCS. Bucks can have a little higher condition, up to a 4 BCS because they will lose more condition.

Goats are considered too thin or under-conditioned when they are at or below 1.5 BCS. Common problems in under-conditioned does include missing heat cycles which leads to lower conception. Similarly, bucks in lower body condition tend to wear down during a breeding season. Thin animals are also more susceptible to disease because they aren't receiving adequate nutrition for immune system support.

Goats become too fat or over-conditioned when they reach 4.5 BCS or higher. Over-conditioned does can have reduced fertility, causing delayed kidding and reduced production for their offspring. When bucks are too fat, it may reduce libido, so they won't follow or stay with females for breeding.

If you can keep goats around 2.5 to 3 BCS, reproductive outcomes improve. Timely breed back and twinning will also increase, resulting in a higher percentage kid crop.

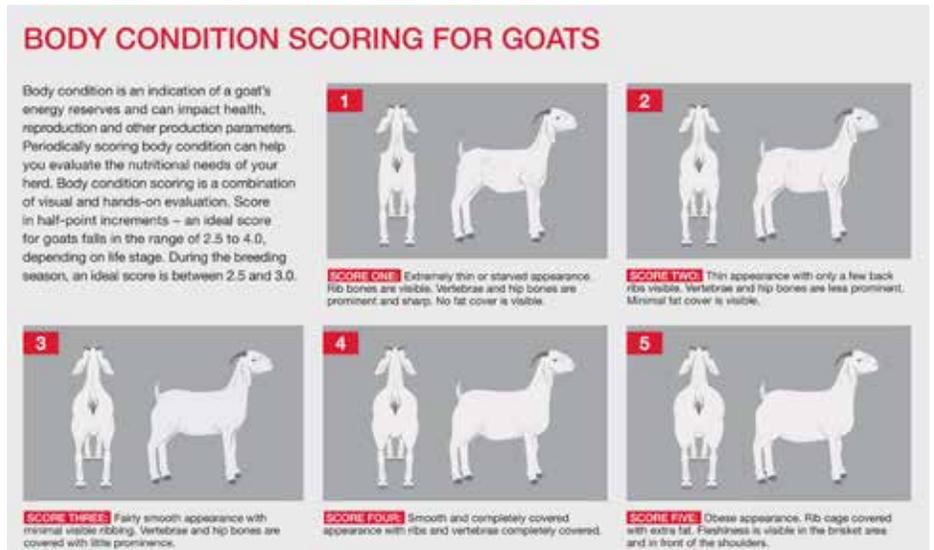
## WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

Body condition appears in a few visible places on the body. Fat cover typically deposits on the top-line of goats, running alongside the vertebrae. For goats, fat will show up around the hipbones, similar to what you might see in cattle. When goats are especially obese, fat collects in the brisket running below the neck.

These areas are extremely prominent if goats are too thin, or they'll stand out when they have too much fat. When visually appraising, a 2.5 BCS will have a smooth appearance over the ribs. The vertebrae and hip bones will be covered but still visible.

There is also a hands-on approach you can take when assessing goat body condition score. When goats are thin, you'll feel bones easier, like the vertebrae and ribs. On the flip side, if you aren't able to feel some bones, the animals might have too much condition.

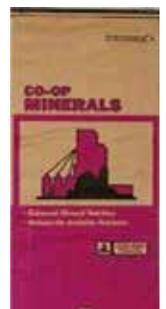
You don't want their top-line to 'cut your hand' (be bony). Coming right off of the back of their shoulder, you want the top-line to be smooth, but still be able to feel it and not be obese.



## Augusta Co-op Solution

### Co-Op, Sheep & Goat Mineral w/ Zinpro, 50 lbs.

For ewes and does in all stages of gestation, breeding and lactation. Contains Zinpro as a source of organic zinc which is more bioavailable to help improve reproductive performance, hoof health, and production. Contains 9-10.8% calcium and 4.5% phosphorus plus 1.55% zinc. Refer to the product label for complete instructions and nutrient analysis.



SKU - 683

continued on page 3

## KEEP THEM IN CONDITION

Pasture is sometimes thought to be an adequate source of nutrition for goats. However, forage quality and reproductive timing may require additional supplementation to meet or exceed nutritional needs and keep goats in proper condition.

Don't ignore nutrition, particularly in the lead up to breeding when green pastures might seem sufficient. Adding a supplemental fat tub, increases energy for does that have just weaned their kids, a time when females need to gain condition to be flushed for breeding.

If goats are under-conditioned, a pelleted ration, can supply more targeted supplemental nutrients, so you know they are getting energy each day.

When dealing with over-conditioned animals, you can pull back on the nutrition program slightly by feeding higher fiber rations.

In all situations, goats should get mineral to make up for any nutritional gaps. Use mineral containing the proper proportion of nutrients like calcium and copper to optimize performance. Then the supplemental rations can balance for protein and fat.

Keeping an eye on goat body condition score throughout the year and making nutritional adjustments goes a long way towards optimizing herd performance.

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## SHEEP NUTRITION CRITICAL FOR YEAR-ROUND PERFORMANCE

EACH STAGE OF A SHEEP'S PRODUCTION CYCLE CALLS FOR SPECIFIC SHEEP NUTRITION REQUIREMENTS TO HELP THEM PERFORM AT THEIR BEST AND MEET THEIR GENETIC POTENTIAL. SHEEP NUTRITION REQUIREMENTS INCLUDE SIX NUTRIENTS (WATER, PROTEIN, FAT, CARBOHYDRATES, MINERALS AND VITAMINS) AND ENERGY (RECEIVED FROM THE PROTEIN, FAT, AND CARBOHYDRATES CONSUMED).

Follow these tips for providing the right sheep nutrition for year-round flock success:

Rams that are too thin or fat will not perform as expected. While pasture or hay is the best feed for rams in the off season, larger-framed rams or those that need to gain weight will need to receive supplemental feed. Critical to the ram's fertility and breeding success is a proper mineral and vitamin supplement that provides the key nutrients: zinc, selenium and vitamin E.

## EWE NUTRITION AT EVERY STAGE

Ewe nutrition needs vary more throughout the year than rams due to the changes in their reproductive status. There are five main reproductive stages that determine ewe nutritional requirements, including maintenance, breeding, early gestation, late gestation and lactation.

## FEEDING EWES DURING MAINTENANCE

The lowest ewe nutrition and energy requirement is during maintenance. For a typical sheep flock this occurs after lambs are weaned from the ewe and before the ewe is rebred. In an accelerated lamb program, the ewe may never be in maintenance, or in an early weaning program, maintenance may last 20 weeks. Although ewes in maintenance are only maintaining themselves, it does not mean nutrition is not important. Usually, the ewe in maintenance can meet her energy and protein requirements with pasture or hay alone. Depending on quality of the forage and the soils on which it was grown, both vitamins and minerals would need to be supplemented through a sheep mineral and vitamin mix offered free-choice.

## SHEEP BREEDING SEASON

Two to four weeks prior to the sheep breeding season and two to four weeks into the breeding season, ewe nutrition and energy intake can be increased to help optimize ovulation rate and the opportunity for multiple births. This period is called flushing. Flushing can be accomplished by placing ewes on high quality pasture or adding energy in the form of a grain mix or sheep feed pellets.

## EARLY GESTATION EWE NUTRITION

Following the sheep breeding season, bred ewes can be placed on a sheep nutrition program to maintain their weight. Although ewes are bred, the fetuses are only growing a small amount during the first and second trimester. Ewes can be fed on pasture or if in confinement, a good quality grass hay. In both situations, ewes should be fed a sheep mineral and vitamin mix to complement the nutrient content of the forages fed.

## LATE GESTATION EWE NUTRITION

As ewes enter late gestation, the greatest growth of the fetuses occurs and ewe nutritional requirements and energy needs increases. During this period, a 220 lb. (100 kg) ewe, pregnant with a single lamb, will have a 50 percent and 71 percent increase in energy and protein requirements, respectively, compared to maintenance requirements. Ewes with twins or triplets will have energy and protein requirements 25 percent to 41 percent greater than ewes carrying a single lamb. The size of the ewe and number of lambs will determine how much supplemental energy and nutrients is required along with good quality hay to meet ewe nutritional requirements.



## FEEDING EWES POST LAMBING

After the ewe lambs, lactation is the period of the reproductive cycle with the greatest ewe nutritional requirements. During early lactation, the first eight weeks after lambing, the ewe produces the most milk. For a 220 lb. ewe nursing a single lamb, the energy and protein requirement will increase another 35 percent and 90 percent, respectively, compared to ewe nutritional requirements during late gestation. The ewe with twin and triplets will have greater energy and nutrient requirements than the ewe nursing a single lamb. In most cases, supplemental feed will be needed along with a high-quality forage to meet the elevated ewe nutrient demand.

When lambs are one week old, it is a good time to start offering a creep feed so lambs learn to eat dry food and to provide extra energy and nutrients. At first, lambs will only nibble the creep feed, but as they get older they will eat more and more. Ensure the creep feed is in an area that prevents the ewes from access and keep the feed fresh and always available. Providing a creep feed helps the lambs adapt to eating only dry food upon weaning.

## ewe nutrition includes water

One sheep nutrition need that is often overlooked is water. Water is a critical nutrient to assist with nutrient transport, heat dissipation and milk production. Allow the sheep flock free access to clean fresh water always. As with water, it is always good to provide a sheep mineral and vitamin mix to supplement and balance the forages in the diet being fed.

## BEST FEED FOR RAMS

Breeding rams may only have one job, one or two times a year to do, but what happens the rest of the year is important to their success. During a 45-day sheep breeding season, rams can lose up to 12 percent of their body weight. Rams will need to be fed a diet to regain body condition lost during the breeding season and to achieve a body condition score of 3.5 to 4, out of 5, before the next sheep breeding season. Yearling rams are still growing, so they too may need extra feed.

By providing appropriate feed to meet sheep nutrition requirements in every stage of life and production will provide sustained nutrition to allow the animals to reach their genetic potential.

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## 3 TIPS TO BOOST SHEEP PARASITE CONTROL

There's no question internal and external parasites bug your flock. Pun intended.

An effective parasite control program can go a long way to rid your flock of the discomfort and wasted energy caused by these pests. When sheep don't have to worry about annoying flies and worms, energy can be diverted to more important areas, such as reproductive efficiency, weight gain and health.

When pest pressure increases, the stakes get higher.

Use these three recommendations to knock out parasites, boost animal productivity and benefit flock profitability:

### 1. GIVE FLIES THE BUZZ-OFF

No matter where you're located, house flies and stable flies are a biting threat to your flock. Flies usually attack ears, noses, bellies, legs and open wounds or sores, and are known to carry and spread diseases.

These pests are of greatest concern from around March through October in southern states. Fly season in northern states depends on how soon temperatures warm in the spring and when killing frosts occur in the fall.

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Fortunately, new control options, like Purina® Sheep Mineral with ClariFly® insect growth regulator provide an excellent way to help keep flies from nipping away profits. The product is designed for continuous free-choice feeding to sheep through the fly season to help prevent the emergence of house flies and stable flies from manure of treated sheep.

This mineral supplement with an insect growth regulator is a feed-through product and can be top-dressed with your flock's daily ration. As it passes through the animal's system, it's incorporated into feces and stays in the manure pack. The active ingredient prevents fly larvae from eggs laid in manure from maturing. Purina® Sheep Mineral with ClariFly® breaks the life cycle, making it a great way to control flies.

The life cycle of flies is roughly 21 days. Be sure to add Purina® Sheep Mineral with ClariFly® to rations about a month before fly season begins to maximize protection.

## 2. BANISH BARBER POLE WORMS

Although sheep are subject to many types of parasites, *Haemonchus contortus*, or barber pole worm, is considered the most significant nematode parasite.

This bloodsucking pest leaves animals weak, and even incapacitated – reducing weight gain, stressing general health and lowering reproductive performance.

Adult female worms produce eggs that are passed in manure. Larvae hatch and go through several stages of development before they can infect the next host. During the warm months of the year, enormous numbers of larvae can build up in your pasture.

Consider these management actions to reduce barber pole worm challenges:

- Rotate pastures. The longer native pastures can be rested, the better.
- Rotate dewormer products annually and follow label directions to minimize resistance issues.
- Work with your veterinarian to use fecal egg counts to determine treatment effectiveness.

Also, use the FAMACHA system which compares a color chart to the inner lower-eye membrane of each sheep to evaluate pathogen presence and target treatments. For example, a white color indicates anemia from a high parasite load.

Work with your veterinarian to determine a comprehensive treatment plan to maximize worm control effectiveness.

## 3. USE NUTRITION TO BOOST SHEEP RESILIENCE

Animals on a high nutritional plane are equipped to address the adverse effects of parasites.

Adequate dietary protein and minerals, such as that provided by Purina® Sheep Mineral with ClariFly®, as well as energy and other nutrients, are important when dealing with the effects of parasites. Nutrition gives animals the energy needed to address any disease challenges and support overall health.

Monitoring flock body condition score can help determine if parasite loads are a problem. If you know animals are receiving proper nutrition, but you notice body condition declines, or ewes and lambs aren't as thrifty as they should be, consider parasites as a culprit and take corrective action.

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