

# PROMOTE, PRESERVE & PROSPER

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE MYOTONIC GOAT REGISTRY



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## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Anna Garrett here, I am the owner of Solis Occasus Villa. I have been raising Myotonic Goats since 2008 and currently maintain a herd of approximately fifty to sixty head, not including kidding season. Solis Occasus Villa is well known for color variety and specializing in Moon Spots. I find it fascinating and exciting to be able to include these attributes into my breeding program, but I ultimately place character of the breed and conformation as my top priorities. In my opinion there is no other goat breed, never has been, and never will be.

Having always felt a strong desire to help preserve the breed and to see it prosper, I was honored to be appointed to the Board of Advisors for the MGR in 2020. As a result, I get to witness firsthand the growth of the breed and not just the impact that my little herd alone has on it. I also love mentoring new breeders and in helping them to secure a great start in their ventures with breeding Myotonics.

I thoroughly enjoy volunteering my time to support the MGR and this wonderful breed of goat. Many of you may know me from the online fundraising, advertising and the MGR Gift Shop. I have now added editor to my list. It is my sincere hope, that although the newsletter is taking on a different look since it was last seen two years ago, that you all will get some enjoyment out of it. I urge you to reach out to me with article ideas and things you would like to see published. I am always looking for great articles if you have a desire to author something to share.

Here is to yet another adventure with the MGR!

Anna Garrett, editor ❤️🐐🐐🐐

## OUR NEW LOOK

Change can be a great thing! The MGR has transformed so much in the last few months. The new and highly improved website is proving to be an invaluable tool for members, breeders and office staff. A huge thank to longtime breeder, Sharon Reeves, for all of her hard work in making this happen. Now, let's enjoy the new look of the newsletter and all it has to offer. Promote, Preserve & Prosper defines the goal of the MGR. Happy reading!

# SUCCESSFUL KIDDING STARTS WITH PLANNING

**BY SHARON REEVES**

(DECEMBER 2024)

Myotonic goats are well known for being excellent mothers. To ensure a successful kidding, it's important to prepare your doe before the kids arrive. By doing so, you can help ensure that the kids are born healthy and strong, while also promoting a long and productive life for your doe.

Myotonic does should be bred according to their size rather than their age. While some may be large enough to safely breed at 16 months old, others may need several more months of growing to reach the appropriate size. Breeding a doe too early, or breeding a smaller sized doe to a buck that produces large sized kids, can lead to potential kidding complications.

It's also important to monitor your goat's body condition. Does should not be too fat or too thin during breeding or kidding time. Goats that are too thin may only produce a single kid, while does that are overly fat could develop pregnancy toxemia.

## Gestation

A gestation of 145 to 155 days is the norm. Maintaining good record keeping of dates the buck was in with your does is essential to know when to expect kids.

## Kidding Season

Myotonic goats can have a breeding season that isn't strictly seasonal, but typically they will go in heat between July and February. It's crucial to plan the timing of when you want kids born, as kids born in the winter or early spring tend to grow faster and healthier due to grazing on high-quality feed or cool-season forages. In contrast, kids born in the late spring or early summer, when forages are maturing and intestinal parasites are more prevalent, may not thrive as well.

## Prior to Birth

Many goats prefer to isolate themselves from the herd when they're about to kid, so it's a good idea to move pregnant does closer to the house or barn in advance. If possible, move any first-time moms to smaller pens or closer to the barn about a week before her due date. While Myotonic goats are generally great mothers, it's important to remember that sometimes it takes a little time for the mothering instinct to kick in. The last thing you want is to be searching the farthest corner of the property for a newborn kid.

## Normal birth

It's important to familiarize yourself with the normal goat kidding process. Watch videos of goat births online and read as much as you can so you're well-prepared. One of the most common mistakes I see is producers trying to assist their doe too early. Kidding is not a fast process, and there's very little you can do to speed it up without causing more stress for the doe. Be patient and give her time. Go make yourself a cup of coffee if needed.

There are three stages to the kidding process.

**Stage 1:** This initial stage can last anywhere from 1 to 8 hours, but it may be longer in first-time moms. During this stage you may notice:

- Restlessness or uneasiness
- Kicking or nosing at their abdomen
- Pawing at the ground
- Frequent lying down and getting up again
- Multiple attempts to urinate
- Some vaginal discharge

Stage 1 ends when the kid starts to enter the birth canal.

**Stage 2:** This second stage of the birthing process may last 30 minutes to 2 hours. Once the water sac (bubble) appears, the fetus's legs should appear next and will be followed by delivery of the kid. Where multiple births are anticipated, this process will repeat itself about every 15-30 minutes for each kid delivered. The delivery of the last kid is the end of Stage 2.

**Stage 3:** The last stage of kidding is the delivery of the placenta, (or afterbirth). This typically occurs 1-3 hours after the last kid is born. It's normal for the doe to eat the placenta, as it is rich in oxytocin. This hormone helps stimulate lactation and also aids in uterine contractions, allowing the uterus to return to its original size more quickly.

### When to Help

If no progress has been made after 30 minutes of active pushing, use a gloved hand with some lubricant to check the position of the kid.

**If you feel only one front leg and the head:** you can usually follow the shoulder down and use a finger to “hook” underneath the other front leg to pull that leg forward.

**If you feel only front legs and no head:** (you will know they are front legs because of the knee placement) sometimes the head is folded back on top of the kid's back, however in rare cases the kid's head may be off to the side tucked under it's elbow. Use your hand on the chest of the kid to locate the neck and follow where the head is. Once you determine how the kid is lying, you may need to push the kid in further, to get enough space to gently but firmly pull the kid's head around so that it's laying on top of the front legs. Once in this position the kid should deliver normally.

**If you feel only the tail:** a kid cannot be born in this position. You will need to rotate the kid around so that its front feet and head are positioned for delivery.

There are great diagrams and step-by-step instructions for the different abnormal presentations available online.

**\*\*\*Wearing gloves will help protect your doe from infections, but also helps protect YOU from zoonotic infections, as there are several humans can get from goats.**

### Bonding

After each kid is born, allow the mother to lick and clean the kid, as this is a vital part of the bonding process. You should only intervene if the kid's mouth and nose are still covered by the amniotic sac or if the kid is struggling to breathe. In such cases, you can use a piece of hay to gently tickle the newborn's nostrils, encouraging it to sneeze and clear any remaining mucus from its nose.

When multiple kids are born in quick succession, it's common for the new mom to be focused on one kid and overlook cleaning another. In this case, you can use a paper towel to gently wipe the newborn's nose and then place the kid closer to the mother so she can finish cleaning it. The more the doe cleans the kid, the stronger the maternal bond is likely to be.

The few times I've had moms refuse to accept their kids were when our overly eager livestock guardian dog helped clean one up. The kid ended up smelling like the dog, so the doe wouldn't accept it. Another time, a still-pregnant doe stole a kid, cleaned it up, and tried to nudge it to nurse.

In the first case, applying vanilla extract to the mother's nose and both of her kids helped resolve the issue within a few hours. In the second case, I was able to have another doe who had already kidded accept the stolen kid, as the biological mother never would.

Having an expectant doe kid in close quarters with other goats can lead to situations like these. Planning your kidding pens and being prepared for bad weather in advance can help prevent many of these issues.

## Nursing

Closely monitor the first few hours after birth to ensure the kids are nursing properly. Look for signs that the newborns are urinating and passing stool. Simply standing and nosing at their mom's udder doesn't guarantee that they are getting colostrum. It's important to manually express a small amount of colostrum from each teat to check. Newborn kids need to consume 10% of their body weight in colostrum within the first 24 hours, and continue to receive it for the first few days for best results.

If possible, collect some colostrum from a healthy adult doe within the first 24 hours after kidding. This colostrum can be frozen and stored for later use when needed.

## Birth Defects

Checking newborns for birth defects is super important. While birth defects aren't common, it's still something to be aware of. Check the kid's mouth looking for any abnormalities such as a cleft palate which can make it difficult for the kid to nurse. Some birth defects, for instance a goat born without an anus, or an anus that isn't connected to the colon can be surgically corrected as long as it's discovered in time.

It's never recommended to use goats with known birth defects as breeding stock, however they can still be used for meat or pets as long as the birth defect doesn't cause the animal undue suffering.

## Keeping Newborns Warm

As a general rule, newborns who are healthy and fed require no additional heat measures other than a place to get out of the wind and elements. If temps are below freezing, then frostbite on tender ears is a concern. Be sure to dry newborn ears completely and get the kids to an enclosure free from drafts. If you find a newborn kid whose internal temperature is below 100° and it has no suck reflex, you may warm the kid by placing it in a plastic bag with its head out and placing the bagged kid into warm, not hot, water. The plastic bag keeps the kid dry, but still allows heat to transfer from the water to the kid. It's important to raise the newborn's temperature slowly. Once the kid's internal temp is at 100° hopefully it will begin to suck and you can get a little colostrum into it before placing it back with mom.

## Heat Lamp Alternatives

I highly advise against any type of heat lamps, as they are notorious for starting barn fires. Animals, regardless of species, will find a way to chew the cord and pull or knock the lamp down onto the bedding below. Instead, consider using a warming box and place a non-electric heating pad or microwavable warmer in the bottom. The microwavable pads offer up to 12 hours of warmth with no electricity and no danger of fire. Just be sure the kids have freedom of movement to get away from the heat if they get overly warm.

In summary, the goal is to set your doe up for success before the kids arrive. This way the kids will be born hearty and strong, and your doe will have a long productive life.

#### References:

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#### Images:





# PASSED MEMBERS

BY TARA LAWRENCE

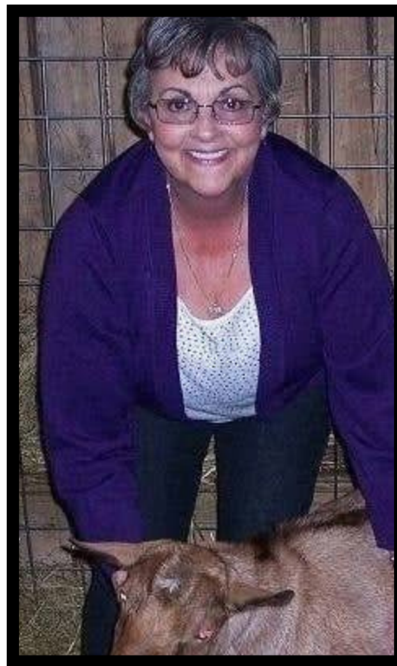
We would like to acknowledge breeders who have passed since our last newsletter.

Zona Johnson (10-15-23), Carletta Robinette (12-7-23) & Nancy Geeslin (11-21-2024) have passed away.

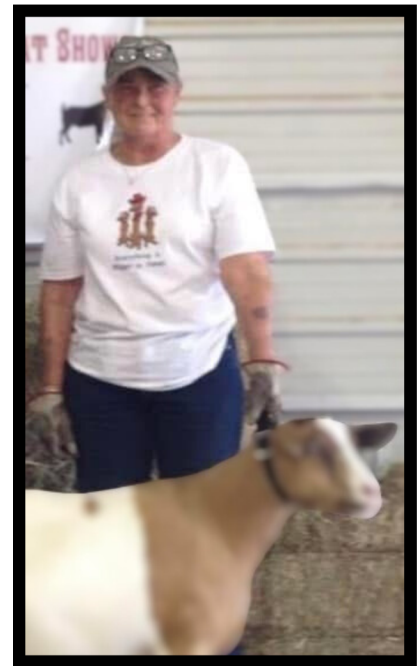
These ladies helped stabilize Myotonic numbers during a time when the breed was disappearing. Many breeders have been touched by these ladies without even knowing it. Their influence can be found in pedigrees under Darktree Farm (Zona Johnson), Rose Lane Farm (Carletta Robinette) & Wolf River Ranch (Nancy Geeslin). We will forever be grateful for the love & passion they had for the Myotonic breed.



**ZONA  
JOHNSON**



**CARLETTA  
ROBINETTE**



**NANCY  
GEESLIN**

# ADS...



[HTTPS://FACEBOOK.COM/MRGIFTSHOP](https://facebook.com/mrgiftshop)



ANNA GARRETT  
 7273 CHRISTANNA HWY  
 GASBURG, VA 23857  
 (252) 908-4380  
 f solisoccasusvilla    ✉ solisoccasusvilla209@gmail.com

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**MYOTONIC GOAT REGISTRY****P.O. BOX 141****ADGER, AL 35006****PHONE: 205-425-5954****E-MAIL: MYOTONICGOATREGISTRY@YAHOO.COM****WEBSITE: WWW.MYOTONICGOATREGISTRY.NET**

The Myotonic Goat Registry was formed in 2005 as a sole ownership registry by Gene McNutt with input from an initial Board of Advisors made up of Dr. Phil Sponenberg and Barbara Roberts. The current Board of Advisors includes Dr. Phil Sponenberg, Cindy Bene, Eve Williams and Anna Garrett. The owner and Board of Advisors will make decisions concerning the registry and its procedures. This method of governance is meant to provide Myotonic Goat breeders with a registry that will not have frequent changes, and will have the longevity and consistency needed to successfully promote the Myotonic Goat breed, while at the same time make it responsive to the needs and wishes of the breeders. In 2009, Gene retired and the registry was sold to Tara Lawrence. As the Myotonic Goat Registry grows, additional Board of Advisor members may be added in order to more broadly represent the breeders. The owner, along with the Board of Advisors, will be responsible for providing for its own replacements and/or expansions.

The Myotonic Goat Registry takes into consideration all breeders, from pet owners to commercial meat growers. Regardless of which aspect of this breed appeals to you, the Myotonic Goat Registry is the place for all breeders to register their Myotonic Goats.

The Registry will help breeders promote their goats through sales, shows, and advertising, and will educate the public about the Myotonic Goat and its usefulness in a variety of settings.