



GOAT LABOR SIGNS

Knowing goat labor signs also alerts you to be available in case the doe should need your help. Unfortunately, not all pregnant goats show signs that kidding is imminent.

1. The doe bags up.

A doe may bag up a month or mere days before, or not until after they give birth. In most cases, when the udder looks tight and shiny, and teats point slightly to the sides, kids appear within a day.

2. The pelvic ligaments loosen.

Place your palm above the doe's tail, fingers pointed toward the rear, and press down with your thumb and forefinger while moving your hand toward the base of the tail. You will feel thin, stiff ropey ligaments on each side. When the doe nears kidding time, the ligaments loosen, and the tail looks gimp. When you can't feel the ligaments at all, expect kids within the day.

3. The doe changes shape.

As kids move into position, the doe's belly sags. As the kids drop, the doe's sides hollow and her hip bones stick out. As the area above the back legs sinks, the spine appears more prominent.

4. The doe discharges mucus.

Note that some does will drip cloudy mucus as much as a month prior to kidding. Watch for thick white or yellowish mucus discharge that looks like a long, continuous rope.

5. The doe seeks solitude.

A doe may wander off into a pasture and appear to stare at the ground. Try to coax her into a private area under cover.

6. The doe gets restless.

A doe that's going into labor will pace, turn in circles, paw the ground, stretch, yawn, and sniff at the bedding, and maybe grind her teeth. She may look back behind her and lick or bite at her sides. If you visit, she may lick your face, hands, and arms.

7. The doe won't eat.

She may not eat for the last few hours, even up to a day. On the other hand, some does eat right up until they kid, and even grab a bite in the middle of giving birth to twins.

8. The doe becomes vocal.

Within a day or so of kidding, some does bleat to their unborn kids. She may bawl with each contraction. As contractions get close together, the doe usually grunts as she pushes. You should see the first kid within about 30 minutes.

9. The calendar says so.

Goat gestation is 150 days, although she may kid three days early or five days late. Keep a record of when your does are bred and when they kid.

10. The water bag bursts.

When the doe pushes, a water bag may protrude from the vaginal opening, followed by a second bag filled with dark liquid. These contain amniotic fluid and surround and protect the kid(s) until birth. Next you will likely see tips of a kid's front toes, with a tiny nose resting on top. This is the moment you've been waiting for—the beginning of a normal delivery. *Originally written by Gail Damerow in 2016.*

