



Bottle Jaw

“Severe Intermandibular Edema” by *Kathy Daves*

IF I have received one call, I'd bet I have received twenty calls in the last month on Bottle Jaw in goats. As a producer I have had my own battles with this familiar problem. Let's take a look and see if we can find some answers to these questions.

Your day is going along just fine...you are feeding your animals, you see a particular goat that is somewhat healthy, eating okay with a fairly good appetite, but she seems like she is not putting on weight...her hair may be coarse, eyes may appear dull with little pink, and some swelling starting under the chin—this is what we call Bottle Jaw. If not treated the swelling will continue not only under the chin region, but it will spread into the facial area too. This condition can cause breathing problems for the goat. Bottle Jaw can affect any age or any size goat. If not treated death can occur; and that is precisely why we are going to take a closer look at this problem.

Coccidia:

Coccidiosis is a protozoan parasitic disease that is most common in young kids, but also can be found in older goats. Every animal has some Coccidia eggs, it is when it gets out of control you might see bloody diarrhea in your animals and death will occur if left untreated. Coccidia are easily diagnosed by doing a fecal flotation. Other symptoms of Coccidia are poor growth, coarse hair, loss of appetite, grinding of teeth, weakness, anemia, and sometimes rectal prolapse. Bottle-Jaw is not caused by Coccidia, but

rather a secondary infection caused by the stress and anemia that is caused by the protozoan parasite.

Copper Deficiency:



Copper Deficiency is becoming a concern with producers in the south; we are so deficient in copper in our area, that we are seeing more problems every day. Copper deficiency in your herd may show signs of several problems: swaying, staggering, weakness, loss of pigmentation and discoloration of the hair, anemia, ill thrift, abortion, decreased milk production, diarrhea, muscle wasting, poor growth, and yes, bottle-jaw.

Haemonchus contortus:

Gastrointestinal Parasites, also called worms (slang), seems to lead to the greatest danger in our industry today. *Haemonchus contortus*, referred to as the barber pole worm, is a very complex problem for our goats today and the most destructive internal enemy of the goat. The most common problems are anemia, low pack cell volume better known as (PCV), unthrift appearance, rough coats, depressed, low energy, lethargic, poor growth, bottle jaw (fluid that gathers in the submandibular tissue), low reproduction performance, goats that are often sick, or sudden death.



Liver Fluke:

The Liver Fluke is one of the hardest parasites to identify. Because of that, it makes it very dangerous to the goat herd. Their parasitic systems are so much like Haemonchus Contortus, that it is often overlooked.



The symptoms that go along with Liver Flukes are very coarse hair, very anemic, unsteady gates, swelling under the jaw (bottle jaw), sub normal temp, swallow belly (hay-belly), colic-like signs,



and dry dark feces. It is very hard to find Liver Fluke eggs in a routine fecal flotation, so this writer recommends

having your veterinarian run a complete blood count (CBC) on the affected animals.

Treatment:

We have covered some illness that cause Bottle Jaw...now let's find out how to treat it and prevent it from occurring again. First of all, we will NEVER get rid of parasites, so we must learn how to CONTROL them. "Cleanliness is next to Godliness"! That is a true statement. Clean stalls, pastures, or any place your animals congregate frequently. You have to have control over your farm or your farm will control you. Parasites are not a friend to any of us.

You must learn how to run fecal flotations on our animals. You can purchase a microscope very inexpensively

at a flea market or yard sale – or you

can go the gamut and spend a fortune for a fancy, 'smancy' one. You need to get in to the habit of running fecals and do so every time you see an animal that does not look well. DO NOT REACH FOR A DEWORMER!!! Run a fecal and that will tell you what is really going on with the animals. Ask this question: "How can you deworm for something before knowing what wormer you need to use?" Stop, look at the animal, take their temperature, collect poop. YES, that's right – poop. Run your fecal, see what the problem is and *treat what you see, not what you guessed it was.*

"Cleanliness is next to Godliness"!

Remember Bottle jaw is a symptom of something else going on in the body. One important goal: To not become resistant to dewormers—two ways to accomplish the goal is 1) by using dewormers only when you need them and using the correct dewormer for the parasite you are treating, and 2) cull animals that are consistently wormy.

Kathy Daves is an SGPA member. She specializes in Animal Science and Herd Management and has worked with goats and llamas for twenty years.