

CLIENT EDUCATION HANDOUT

OPTIONAL
LOGO

Customer Name, Street Address, City, State, Zip code

Phone number, Alt. phone number, Fax number, e-mail address, web site

Precocious Udder

Overview

A precocious udder is a mammary gland that develops more than is expected based on the animal's age or stage of lactation. It occurs sporadically in female goats and occasionally in male goats during the summer months.

Species and Animal Groups Affected

Much more frequent in goats but has been reported in sheep and cattle. Most prevalent in dairy breeds such as Saanen, Alpine, Toggenburg, LaMancha, and Nubian. Although rare, goat kids may also be born with udders containing milk.

Signs

Early development of the mammary gland in the absence of pregnancy or mastitis.

Causes

- False pregnancy causing prolonged progesterone production
- Exposure to high levels of estrogen
- High estrogen feeds (e.g., clover, moldy corn)
- Suckling by herd mates (usually affects a single gland)
- Adrenal or ovarian tumors

Treatment

- No treatment is an accepted option since it may stop spontaneously, depending on the underlying cause.
- *Supportive care*
 - o Separate from young stock that may nurse from affected animal
 - o Milking may be necessary if leaking milk or animal is very uncomfortable. This may increase the risk of mastitis so much be done with care.
 - o Feeding management to dry off the animal (e.g., increase the level of poor-quality hay in the diet and eliminate grain).
- Amputation of the mammary gland is an option in some cases

Management Considerations

- Careful monitoring of any changes in udder size is important. This includes palpating the udder for heat, pain, and firmness as well as checking for expression of fluid from the teat. Some animals will deposit fat in the udder, which is normal, and therefore it is the change that is most important to note.

Expected Course and Prognosis

- The length and response to treatment is dependent upon the underlying cause.
- Many cases become chronic or recurrent

Notes

Enter notes here



Blackwell's Five-Minute Veterinary Consult: Ruminants, Second Edition, Christopher C.L. Chase, Kaitlyn A. Lutz, Erica C. McKenzie and Ahmed Tibary © 2017 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.