

Protein Tubs and Goats

Using a good source of protein is a must with goats especially during the winter months when there is no fresh green browse. Most producers do not test their hay for nutritional analysis, especially when their hay may come from several sources. By adding a good protein source via tubs, blocks or liquid source we, as producers provide the necessary means to help the goat break down and better (or more efficiently) utilize these poorer sources of energy in our hay.

Here are Bending Tree Ranch in Arkansas we utilize “cooked” protein tubs in our operation. We prefer the “cooked” tubs as they are a much harder (ie; licking a hard candy sucker) tub which keeps the goats from biting or scooping out large mouthfuls at a time. Blocks do not work well here due to higher humidity and rainfall averages of 44-54 inches a year. The blocks will crumble and fall apart when moisture gets to them. Soft protein tubs are eaten as though candy to the goats and are not economical for us to use. We have also found that these softer tubs will mold and/or sour when rained on. The goats will not have anything to do with them once they start souring. The cooked tubs have not been a problem for us with mold issues or souring. The “cooked” tubs may fill up with rainwater but the goats love the “tea” it makes and drink it right up.

We also use the “cooked” tubs when forage is poor during drought times (like this summer) as well as when we have lactating does. In using tubs in during the summer months it is important to regularly check the tubs for stuck kids. There is nothing more inviting to a kid than to jump into or onto these sticky surfaces to play. I was reminded of the importance of checking inside the tubs this summer when my dairy doe would not come in to be milked. I thought she was just busy licking the tubs which she had had access to for the previous 20 hours. I was so annoyed at having to go get her to bring her into her stall. What she was trying to do was lick the contents off of her baby. The baby had literally melted into the tub. We were running temperatures of 105 F with a heat index over 110 F and the tubs were in the full sun and softening. The poor quality of the photos is due to using my cell phone camera as I was afraid to waste any time running to the house to get my camera. It took 2 of us to work the kid out of the tub. We then ran the kid over to a faucet hooked to a well which gives much colder water, placed her into an empty tub and started hosing her down. We were able to cool her off as well as bath her at the same time. Had we not gone to get her dam the baby would have died from heat stroke. We tubed the kid with electrolytes and began treatment for goat polio with Thiamine and penicillin. It took about 3 days for her to snap back.



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