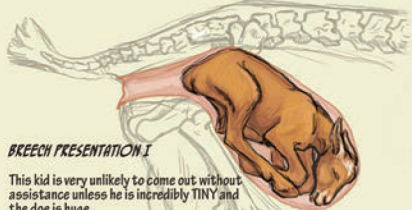


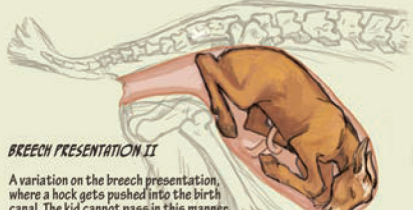
DIFFICULT BIRTH PRESENTATIONS

GOAT
NOTES



BREECH PRESENTATION I

This kid is very unlikely to come out without assistance unless he is incredibly TINY and the doe is huge.
When feeling around manually, that pointy rump really does feel like a nose (the tail is usually tucked under, making it even worse). Feel farther up and you'll feel the relatively flat rump and hips instead of a dome head shape. Feel down and you should encounter the recognizable leg structure.



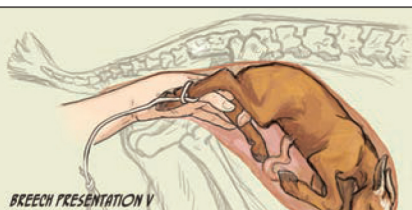
BREECH PRESENTATION II

A variation on the breech presentation, where a hock gets pushed into the birth canal. The kid cannot pass in this manner. Intervention will be required in both cases. If your doe is in labor and pushing hard, but you cannot see any feet in the canal, this is the most common issue. If your hands are small enough, scrub up and get to work. If not, it's time to call your vet!



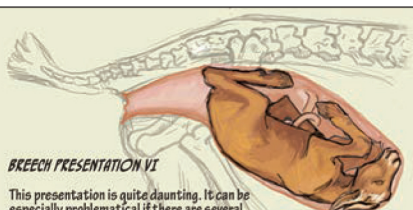
BREECH PRESENTATION III

The first step is to push the kid gently back into the womb as you slide your hand down to a hock. Hook your index or middle finger around the hock and slide it down toward the fetlock (next image).
If you can, loop a thin rope noose (or commercial leg snare) over your fingertips, to work around the fetlock. This takes some practice, but the key is to be patient and keep calm as you learn.



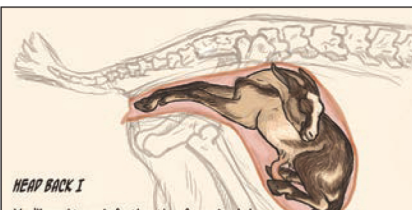
BREECH PRESENTATION V

One leg loop in place (do keep pressure on it with your spare hand, not shown in this image). Fish out the other leg (ideally with another noose, carried in on your fingertips).
Once both feet are in the canal, apply gentle, steady traction. The blood flow of the umbilical cord will be cut off as soon as the kid's torso enters the birth canal - get it out quickly.



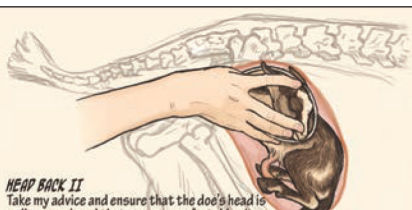
BREECH PRESENTATION VI

This presentation is quite daunting. It can be especially problematic if there are several other kids in the womb, or if it is a large singleton. Some try to turn the kid in the womb. I will normally follow the steps in the previous images, and when I have string around both hind feet, I pull gently in a twisting path to right the kid before the ribcage enters the narrow birth canal. Again, time is an issue because of the bloodflow cutoff of the umbilical cord.



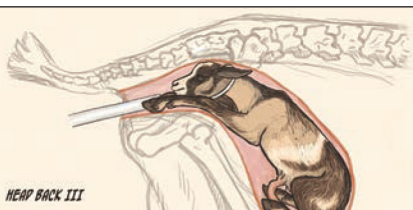
HEAD BACK I

You'll need to go in further than for a simple leg retrieval, and it is going to be quite unpleasant for the doe. If there are additional kids behind this one, things will be very tight indeed.
The head acts as if on a spring-loaded neck, and always wants to return to its original position. This is a case where a lambing snare (or thin rope) is useful, but you may have to guide the muzzle and head back into the birth canal...while pulling.



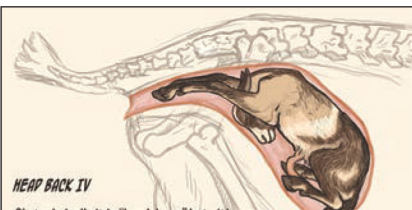
HEAD BACK II

Take my advice and ensure that the doe's head is well secured, and that you are comfortably situated, because both of your hands will be busy.
Because of the tendency for the head to flip back the wrong way, it is a good idea to use a thin rope or snare to loop around the head. After you turn the head, you can keep it pulled around in the right direction with gentle traction on the rope/snare with your external hand while you use your fingertips to guide the muzzle into the birth canal.



HEAD BACK III

Showing the positioning we are looking for in a successful "exit strategy." As with any birth, two forelegs in the canal is ideal, but one foreleg will do at this point.
If you have a leg snare or thin rope around, it can help to add that to the visible leg(s) to help ease the kid out.



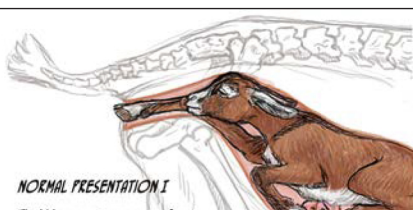
HEAD BACK IV

Ok, technically it is "head down" but either way, this kid really has it in for you. It is going to take a lot of work to raise this kid's chin up. *Patience!*
In most cases, I end up having to gently push the kid well back in, then use a snare or thin rope to help me guide the head and at least one foreleg back into the birth canal. In this case, the snare's handle under the chin helps a lot. You will still wish you had three hands.



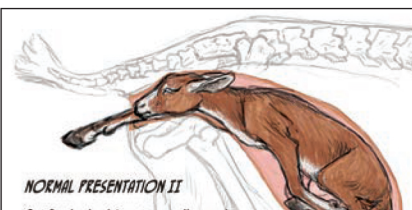
HEAD BACK V

Showing the correct placement of a lambing snare, behind the ears and under the chin. The v-shaped space at the front of the neck and the plastic "stem" of the snare will help hold the kid's head in place, but again, it may be necessary to use your fingertips to "lead" the muzzle into the birth canal.
Ensure that at least one foreleg is in the canal as well, then use gentle, steady traction.



NORMAL PRESENTATION I

The kid presents one or two front feet and the muzzle.
This birth will not normally require intervention, unless the kid is very large.



NORMAL PRESENTATION II

One foreleg back is not normally a problem. As the kid moves into the birth canal, the second foreleg and shoulder blade will rotate and follow naturally.
Gentle traction may be applied on the visible foreleg, pulling slightly downwards in time with contractions.

STOP and call the vet if: the kid is really stuck, if you note bleeding (bright red blood), any prolapsing of the uterus, if a kid has died some days previous and has become necrotic, or any signs that the doe is in extreme distress.

Difficult presentations and suggested solutions from Linda Carlson. Originally published in Dairy Goat Journal March/April 2017



MOTHER EARTH NEWS