

## Vitamin and Mineral Supplements

by Kay Orlando, DVM

[Webmaster's note: As stated in this article, it is **VERY IMPORTANT** to check with your local veterinarian about the vitamin and mineral contents of the feed in **YOUR** regional area and what supplements, if any, you may need for your goats.]

Supplementation can be a very confusing issue for many breeders. It becomes more perplexing when other breeders say they have great success with certain products. Pressure to produce well-developed kids for the show ring lures breeders to seek supplements that will make their goats develop faster and better. Herd management differences, natural forage availability and specific geographic deficiencies and excesses make it impossible to make any blanket statements regarding the “right” supplement for Pygmy goats.

Pygmy goats on a good level of nutrition (good quality grass/alfalfa mix hay and a small amount of molasses-free grain) need only trace mineral salt, plus any specific nutrients that are missing in the particular geographic area. For instance, my area is deficient in selenium. The only addition to my goats’ diet is free-choice trace mineral salt and a selenium supplement.

Many supplements designed for cattle or horses may actually be detrimental to goats. Goats (especially kids) have a much lower tolerance for copper in the diet than either horses or cattle. Copper is commonly added to cattle and horse supplements in excess of what goats need, and this can lead to copper toxicity.

Fat soluble vitamins A, D and E are stored in the body when the requirements are exceeded. When they are fed in excess for a period of time, animals will show signs of toxicity. If you feed a supplement, make sure [to . . .] read the label for the correct amount that should be fed. Many times a little is good, but more can be toxic.

All breeders want to make sure that their kids remain healthy and reach their eventual potential. Supplements are usually unnecessary. Kids that nurse for at least 10 to 12 weeks, are kept parasite free and maintained on a good diet will not need additional calories (fat) or vitamins to remain healthy and develop properly. Pushing kids with over-supplementation may lead to undesired effects when they get older.

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Excerpts from:

Kinne, Maxine, ed. [Pygmy Goats: Best of Memo 3 \(1988-1996\)](#)

National Pygmy Goat Association: pp 13

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