

MORE DIFFERENCES

BETWEEN SHEEP & GOATS

Sheep and goats are similar in many ways, but they have differences that affect how they are fed and managed.



Goats require and can tolerate more copper in their diets than sheep. Sheep have a hard time disposing of excess copper, so there is a narrow range between what they need and what can potentially be toxic. This is further complicated by antagonists that bind with copper. While copper deficiency may be more common in goats and copper toxicity more common in sheep, both species can experience deficiency or toxicity. When sheep and goats are comingled, feedstuffs without added copper are usually necessary.

Sheep and goats share mostly the same diseases, but there are a few exceptions. They are affected by different lentiviruses: ovine progressive pneumonia (OPP) in sheep vs. caprine arthritic encephalitis (CAE) in goats. Transmission between species is possible, but rare. They are infected with the same worms, but coccidia (protozoan parasite) are host-specific. Lambs don't get floppy "kid" syndrome. Some diseases are more common in goats; some in sheep. Disease symptoms can vary between species.



Other nutritional differences exist. Goats have higher maintenance requirements than sheep. A goat's peak requirement for calcium occurs during lactation, whereas as a sheep needs the most calcium during late gestation.

The same animal health products are used in sheep and goats, but more are labeled for sheep, and they may not work the same in both species. Goats metabolize medicines and vaccines differently than sheep. For this reason, higher doses of anthelmintics (dewormers) are usually required, usually 1.5 to 2 times the sheep dose for goats. Withdrawal periods may be different. Clostridial vaccines may need to be given more frequently to goats. The sheep vaccine for caseous lymphadenitis (CL) should not be used in goats, due to the high frequency of adverse reactions.

