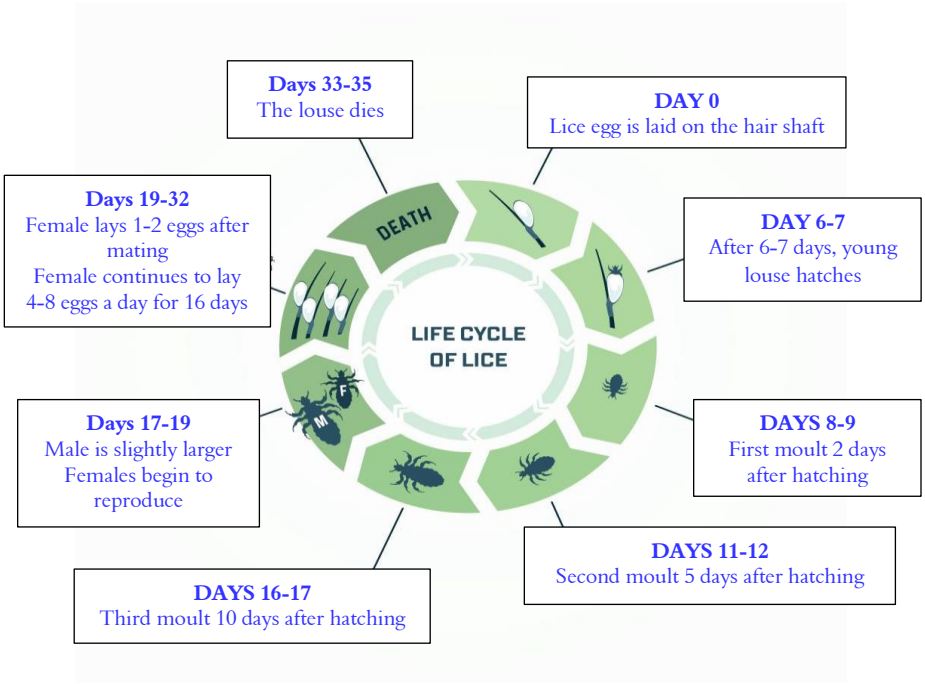
Ectoparasites of Goats

Lice, Mites, Fleas and Ticks

UF IFAS Extension UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

Infestations with one or more ectoparasite poses health and financial risks to goat herds.

Lice



Usually seen in undernourished and unhealthy animals, living in poor and overcrowded conditions. Infestations usually occur during the cooler months (Spring, Fall and Winter), when animals are exposed to cold and wet weather, and usually stressed from kidding and internal parasites buildup.

Lice are usually present in animals with dull coats, matted fur and constant itching and scratching. When you separate the portions of the coat, you see lice crawling among the hair shafts. Sores, wounds, anemia, and death may occur if animals are left untreated. When treating lice, it is important to repeat the treatment within 2 weeks to address any eggs hatched.

Mites

There are many different species of mites that infest goats and cause mange. Infestations are characterized by skin lesions, red and irritated skin, the presence of pustules, dry and flake hair, as well as thick and crusty skin with prominent hair loss. Itching and formation of wounds and irritation are associated with the main symptoms. The proper diagnosis made by a veterinarian is important to determine the adequate treatment.

Fleas and Ticks

Fleas

The cat flea is the most common type of flea that infest goats, causing itching and scratching. You may observe what is call a "sticktight flea" infestation occurs primarily around the face and ears with the presence of crusty clumps of fleas when left untreated.

Ticks

Most ticks that infest goats also infest other livestock and domestic animals. When left untreated, ticks may cause anemia, secondary infections, production losses and even death.

Treatment and Prevention

Both fleas and tick can carry diseases that are transmissible to goats.

To prevent spread of infestations and preserve the health of the animals, immediately isolate the affected animal, and treat it accordingly. It is also important to clean the environment to destroy any parasites living within the bedding area.

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