

## TAKING CARE OF YOUR BABIES NOW THAT THEY HAVE ARRIVED!

Now that your babies have arrived (or not), most of your problems have been resolved if your babies are at least two (2) weeks old. Unfortunately, due to the extreme weather conditions that we endure during this time, a lot of the kids will lose some, if not all babies. Important to re-breed this Spring if that occurs.

- \*Make sure nest boxes are kept clean and dry.
- \*Keep a daily count of your babies. Not too many babies on one mamma – no more than 7 if at all possible.
- \*Keep the clamp lights on if they have not got their fur yet. When it gets warmer, you can back the clamp lights off a bit or even turn them off.
- \*About 2 ½ weeks, begin weaning the babies out of the nest box.
- \*Begin coaxing to eat by sprinkling oatmeal in their nest box and on top of the food.
- \*Draw attention to the water fixture. The more they drink, the more they eat. A MUST!
- \*Keep extra food in the pen by placing either an extra bowl in the pen or use the feeder that hangs on the side of the pen. The babies tend to get into the bowl and get it dirty so you may have to be emptying it out and re-filling it.
- \*Introduce the conditioning feed to them after about 10 days (or you can do now) – your preference. Use the calf manna very sparingly as it is a “hot” ration and will also cause your meat pen babies to be flabby if used too much. It can also allow them to scour if you use too much.
- \*Watch for signs of trouble with both the mamma does and the babies. With all the weather changes - (hot/cold), you may see some softer “poop” or even diarrhea. Address these problems immediately before they dehydrate!

Flesh condition is very important in meat pen babies. I am told to develop good flesh condition this is ½ genetics and ½ your feeding and management program. Keep plenty of fresh water and clean food available at all times.

With these hot days that we have, once the fur has come on good, you should circulate a box fan on your meat pen babies to keep them cool. It will do two things – keep them moving around more (eat more) and help to develop their fur.

ADDITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS: Doc’s Rabbit Enhancer, Winner’s Edge, Showbloom

NEXT MONTH (**March**) – Grooming, handling (posing) and selecting your meat pens. 4 important criteria are: 1) common weight; 2) common body type; 3) flesh condition; and 4) condition of fur. Remember with meat pens - UNIFORMITY IS KEY! You want them to look as much alike as possible in all of the four areas mentioned.