



9 steps to getting the best from your bucks
this breeding season

The stress on a buck during breeding season can lead to health issues and the reduction of reproductive performance.

The key to your buck's successful breeding season is good health management, starting with a pre-season breeding readiness assess-

ment to identify and respond to any issues early enough that he'll be ready for his job during breeding season. Then, to ensure he remains in top condition, performing ongoing monitoring and maintenance throughout the breeding season.

Here are some activities and

assessments you may want to perform to ensure your buck begins the breeding season in top form and remains healthy and in good reproductive condition during this taxing time of the year. All of the processes below are easily tracked in EasyKeeper's health event and automated reminder system.

01

Assess general soundness

Ensure the buck is generally sound, disease-free and defect-free. Lack of soundness in the feet and legs, diseases such as pneumonia and pink eye, and defects such as poor or missing teeth and impaired vision, can prevent a buck from accessing adequate food and successfully mounting does, especially when there's competition from rival bucks.

Use EasyKeeper's Animal Notebook to record any findings related to structural soundness and the Medication feature to track the administration of medications and create reminders for follow-up activities.

02

Test for internal parasites

A parasite load can significantly affect a buck's health, causing issues including weight loss, low libido, weakness, anemia – all of which may affect his ability to do his job during the breeding season.

Use EasyKeeper's Parasite Control feature to track administration of anti-parasitics and create re-administration reminders.

03

Bring vaccinations up-to-date

Vaccines boost the buck's ability to fight off disease. Given the additional stressors a buck encounters during the breeding season, make sure he's up-to-date on his vaccines to help prevent an illness that could take him out of the game.

Use EasyKeeper's Vaccination feature to track administration of vaccinations and create follow-up reminders.

04

Trim hair to prevent urine scald

During breeding season the hair on a buck's front legs can be damp for days on end, causing blisters that are a breeding ground for infection. Help prevent urine scald by trimming your buck's front legs or regularly washing them during the breeding season.

Use EasyKeeper's Health Maintenance feature to track leg trimming and washing and create follow-up maintenance reminders.

05

Check for external parasites

For the most part, external parasites such as lice are a nuisance. However, it is important to keep them under control during the breeding season when bucks are already not eating well because this added stress can cause additional weight loss as the animal spends more time and energy combating them than feeding. Additionally, injuries can occur when irritation and scratching result in open wounds that become infected with fly larvae.

Use EasyKeeper's Parasite Control feature to track applications of anti-parasitics and create re-application reminders.

06

Trim hooves and check for foot health

Foot rot, weak pasterns, and overgrown hooves can affect a buck's ability to get to the feeder as well as mount the doe. Trim your buck's hooves, ensuring his weight is evenly distributed and he is able to stand level. While you are there, look for small rocks, thorns, or other debris that might be lodged between his toes and may cause bruising, lameness and injuries that can become infected; check for hoof rot and treat as necessary.

Use EasyKeeper's Health Maintenance feature to record hoof trimmings and create follow-up activity reminders.

07

Evaluate body condition

A buck that is overfed and is too fat may have little interest in breeding activities, while a buck that is thin may not have sufficient stamina to breed all the does he is expected to cover, be more susceptible to disease and have poor semen quality. As his increased activity and decreased feed intake during the breeding season means he'll likely lose weight as the season progresses, weighing your buck and performing body condition scoring prior to the start of, and during, breeding season and adjusting his nutritional intake according will help to ensure he stays in optimal condition.

Use EasyKeeper's Body Condition Score and Weight features to record weights and body condition scores and create follow-up management reminders.

08

Inspect reproductive systems

Inspect your buck's reproductive system to identify potential issues that will affect his ability to breed or settle the does he is expected to cover. Observe and palpate the entire reproductive tract for signs of disease or injury; verify the testicles are of similar size, as pronounced differences in size may indicate fertility problems. Measure his scrotal circumference to determine if he has adequately-sized testicles, as that has been correlated to semen production.

Use EasyKeeper's Health Test feature to record reproductive tract inspection findings and create follow-up inspection reminders.

09

Verify semen quality

As the quality of a buck's semen directly affects his ability to do his job in successfully settling does, once he's been found fit for breeding it is important to determine if the semen he produces is of adequate quality. A microscopic semen test will determine if the sperm cell count, size, shape, and motility are adequate. Additionally, the test can identify if the sample contains any foreign debris such as blood, pus, or urine as any of these could be a sign of problems that could affect breeding.

Use EasyKeeper's Health Test feature to record semen test findings and create reminders for follow-up tests.