

Bottle Feeding

By Julie Weimer

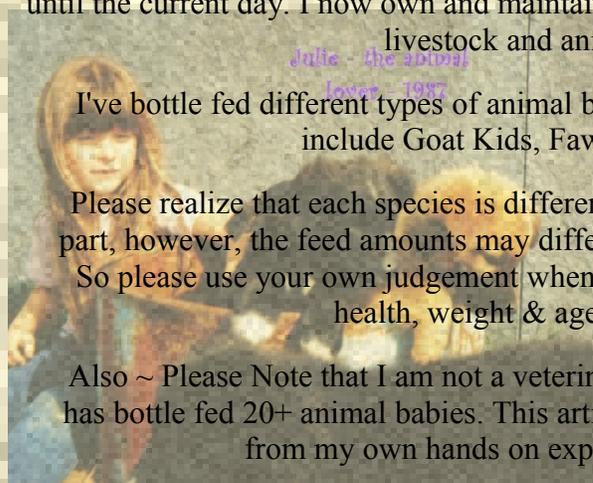
Lil' Goat Farm ~ <http://lilpygmygoats.tripod.com>



Every First Time Bottle Feeder ends up with a ton of questions on their mind about "How To Do It," "How Much, How Often," etc.

I hope to answer those questions for you in this article.

First let me tell you a few things about myself. I'm an animal lover and have cared for many animals throughout my life. I've always had animals from the time I was an infant until the current day. I now own and maintain my own farm consisting of a variety of livestock and animal species.



Julie - the animal lover - 1987



I've bottle fed different types of animal babies. To date (Aug.2008) these animals include Goat Kids, Fawns, Bunnies & a Calf.

Please realize that each species is different, bottle feeding is the same for the most part, however, the feed amounts may differ depending on the baby's weight/species. So please use your own judgement when bottle feeding – based upon the species, health, weight & age of the animal baby.

Also ~ Please Note that I am not a veterinarian. I offer this advice as a person who has bottle fed 20+ animal babies. This article is based upon the knowledge I gained from my own hands on experience with bottle feeding.

GOAT MILK ~ Orphan's Milk

Goat's milk is the best milk. Goat's milk is mother nature's "Orphan Milk" meaning that any animal/human should have the ability to thrive on goat's milk when mother's milk is not available. For Goat Kids - You can also use WHOLE Cow's Milk (the kind you'd buy at your grocery store) if goat's milk is not available. Or of course you can use milk replacer, but personally, I have heard to many bad things and seen bad things happen with kids on milk replacer. Bloat for instance. On the other hand - some people use Milk Replacers and don't have a problem. And I have raised fawns (deer babies) on milk replacer with no problems before. But I personally prefer GOATS MILK. Do not switch milk types when bottle feeding. If you switch, there's a likely hood that it will cause diarrhea/scours. If a switch is necessary – do the switch gradually.

COLOSTRUM ~ A Must Have

Are they getting colostrum ? Sadly, I know from experience (from taking care of someone else's young bottle babies who didn't get an efficient amount of colostrum) that they **NEED** to get that colostrum ! Whether they get it straight from the mother, or if the owner has to milk it out and bottle feed, or if the colostrum is powder form, etc. They should get colostrum for at least their first 3 days of life. If you have a baby that survived & thrived without colostrum ~ consider the baby lucky !

GET COLOSTRUM IN THOSE BABIES ! If colostrum is not available for some reason - You can purchase colostrum from www.jefferslivestock.com or Tractor Supply, etc. Most Farm Supply stores carry colostrum, as well as some Feed Mills.

BOTTLE & NIPPLE ~ What to use



You can use pretty much any nipple that would suit the baby. I personally have always used a regular [baby bottle](#) and nipple. They're cheap, and easy to find. Or you can purchase other types of livestock/animal specific nipples from Tractor Supply or www.jefferslivestock.com or other stores that carry [livestock](#) supplies. For instance, a Lamb nipple is specifically made for lambs, a Pritchard nipple is specifically made for goat kids. Then there's small puppy/kitten bottles and nipples, or an eye dropper for very tiny animals. Some nipples are made to screw onto a pop bottle. Others are made for a specific bottle (such as a puppy/kitten nipple/bottle). Any nipple you use - you usually need to put a hole in the nipple for the milk to flow through. If the milk seems to flow too slowly then you can make the hole larger until the milk is flowing efficiently. Once the animal baby is accustomed to sucking the milk through the bottle/nipple, you may need to cut a small X in the nipple (in replacement of the small hole). Start with a small X and make it larger if and when needed. Basically you want the milk to flow freely without requiring too much work from the baby, yet you don't want the milk to flow SO freely and fast that it's choking the animal baby. Use your own judgement based upon how easy/difficult it is for the animal baby to get the milk out. If it's too hard for the animal, the animal baby could simply give up and decide not to bottle feed.



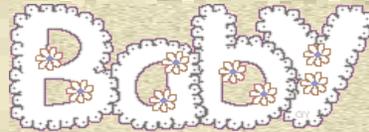
PREPERATION ~ How to prepare the bottle

1. While getting a bottle/nipple ready to use - Boil a pot of water
2. Pour the appropriate amount of fresh milk or milk replacer into the bottle/s
3. Put nipples on the bottle/s
4. Place the bottle/s into the pot of HOT water
5. Every few seconds remove bottle/s, shake, and then test the temp of the milk on your skin. (be careful - obviously it could be very warm or hot)

* NOTE ~ Milk MUST be at least WARM to feed to the baby ... if fed cool milk the baby could get COLIC

If using Powdered Colostrum ~ Follow instructions on the Powdered Colostrum Bottle Label for preparations.

If using Milk Replacer ~ Follow instructions on the Milk Replacer Bottle Label for preparations.



ACCEPTING THE BOTTLE ~ The fun starts !

If you've never bottle fed before, then this is the one part that a lot of first timers get discouraged over. It CAN be difficult getting babies to accept a bottle sometimes. Especially if they've already been on their mamma, and the longer they've been on her - the harder it can be to change them over to a bottle.

TO DO SO - HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO DO :

Once you have your bottle / milk ready, get your animal baby on your lap.

(Get comfortable, cause you're gonna be in this position until the feeding's over)

Use your thumb (or finger, etc. whatever works best for you) to open the baby's [mouth](#) enough to force the bottle into it's mouth.

Close it's mouth over the nipple and keep your hand around it's mouth so it can't spit the nipple out. But don't cover it's nostrils – you want it to breathe !

Try moving your fingers with it's mouth in a sucking motion to help it drink.

You're force feeding it - and will need to do this until the baby willingly takes the bottle.

Have patience, it can take a while sometimes to get an animal baby “willing” to accept the bottle on it's own. Be persistant, gentle, yet forceful enough that it IS eating.

*** TRICKS**

- smear a small amount of sweet black strap molasses on the nipple and let dry then try bottle feeding again (with the dried molasses on nipple).
- Add a small amount of flavored yogurt to the milk (for taste and as a probiotic)
- Wipe/Rub the baby's hind leg as you bottle feed – this stimulates them to eat.

FEEDING SCHEDULE ~ How much, How often

I never got up at night to feed bottle babies *Once they were drinking at least the newborn dosage of milk. However, if it's a baby who's NOT drinking at least the recommended newborn dosage of milk in a feeding, then it is necessary to bottle feed every 2-3 hours *around the clock*. Recommended Newborn Dosage is the Birth amount of milk for each species in each species guide below.

Once they're drinking at least the newborn dosage of milk per feeding - they're fine to go through the night till their morning feeding. For a healthy bottle baby who's drinking at least the newborn dosage per feeding - just give the last bottle right before bed, and then right away in the morning.

Goat Kids, Fawns & Lambs



Bottle/Nipple Options ~ Pritchard, lamb, or regular baby bottle/nipple

Milk Type ~ Goat's Milk, Whole Cow Milk, Milk Replacer

Birth-2 weeks old ~ 3-4oz ~ Every 2-3 Hours

2 weeks old ~ 5-6 oz ~ Every 3-4 Hours

4 weeks old ~ 7-8 oz ~ Every 3-4 Hours

6 weeks old ~ 9-10 oz ~ 4 Times a Day

8 weeks old ~ 11-12 oz ~ 3 Times a Day



You get the idea ~ approx every 2 weeks add an ounce or two. After 8 weeks you can continue bottle feeding if possible, or wean at this time (8 weeks is the EARLIEST that most animals can be weaned – some cannot even be weaned this early (such as a cria) (a cria is a camelid baby – such as a camel, llama, or alpaca baby). So please use your own judgement, based upon the species you're bottle feeding, it's health, etc.

Baby Bunnies

Bottle/Nipple Options ~ Kitten Bottle/Nipple or Eye Dropper

Milk Type ~ Goat's Milk, Kitten Milk Replacer

Baby Bunnies can be very difficult to keep alive when they're orphaned. Especially wild bunnies ! However, it is possible. Using an Eye Dropper ~ feed the baby bunny a few drops of goat milk per feeding. The bunnies will need fed every 4 hrs. Some people say that they should only be fed twice per day, but I have a hard time letting the baby bunnies sit around all day – wondering if they're hungry. But try not to OVER DO it. You don't want the bunny/s to become constipated. So 3 or 4 drops from an eye dropper every few hours. If the bunny is eating really well and seems really hungry ~ you can allow it to eat more than a few drops. But again, don't push to much milk into the little bunny. Also, bunnies are one of the species that DO need to be wiped/petted/rubbed for stimulation. Make SURE the baby bunnies stay nice and warm. They cannot control their temperature when they're really young, so if they get cold they could die. Keep them under a heat lamp if they're in a cool area, but be careful that it doesn't get to hot – that will kill them also. You want “WARM” ... not cold, not hot.

Crias (Camelid Baby – Camel, Llama, Alpaca)

*** Note ~ I do not have bottle feeding experience with Crias. This information is based on information that I received from outside sources.**

Bottle/Nipple Options ~ Pritchard or regular baby bottle/nipple

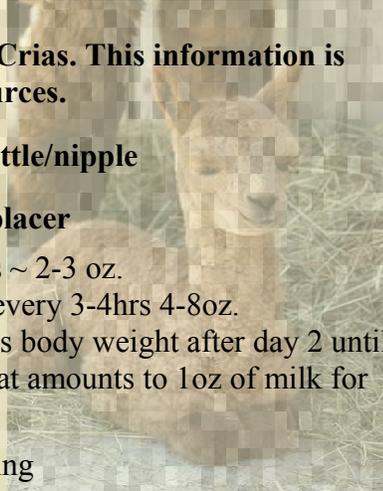
Milk Type ~ Goat's Milk, Whole Cow Milk, Milk Replacer

Day 1-4 ~ Colostrum with ½ tsp glucose ~ every 2-3 hrs ~ 2-3 oz.

Day 5-7 ~ Add 1 Tbs of active yogurt to each feeding ~ every 3-4hrs 4-8oz.

In a healthy, on-time (not premature) cria, feed 12% of its body weight after day 2 until it's time to Wean (5-6 months of age). Every 4 hours. That amounts to 1oz of milk for every .5 lbs of body weight per feeding.

For Example ~ a 30lb cria would need 15oz at each feeding



Calves

Bottle/Nipple Options ~ Calf Bottle/Nipple

Milk Type ~ Whole Cow Milk, Milk Replacer

Newborn-Day 1 ~ 2-3 Quarts of Colostrum ~ every 8 hours

A calf should be fed 12% of it's body weight until weaned. That amounts to 1oz of milk for every .5 lbs of body weight per feeding.

For example ~ a 60lb calf would need 30oz. at each feeding 2-3 times per day.



Foals

*** Note ~ I do not have bottle feeding experience with Foals. This information is based on information that I received from outside sources.**

Bottle/Nipple Options ~ lamb, regular baby bottle/nipple

Milk Type ~ Goat Milk, Milk Replacer

Newborn-Day 1 ~ 1 cup Colostrum every 1 ½ to 2 hours

Day 2-7 ~ 1-1½ pints every 3 hours

Week 2-4 ~ 2 pints every 3-4 hours

Week 5-6 ~ 2-3 pints every 4-6 hours

Weeks 7-Weanling ~ 2-3 pints every 6-8 hours



WEANING ~ What works best for baby

Whenever the time does come to wean the baby from the bottle, you need to gradually wean it. Decrease the amounts/times (such as seen in the schedule above at 6 weeks and 8 weeks – the times per day decrease) that the baby is given a bottle. While you're gradually weaning the baby ~ it is also a good time to introduce the baby to solid foods (atleast a couple weeks before weaning is completed).

WHEN TO WEAN ~ Different Species

This depends on the species.

Goat Kids & Fawns = 8 – 14 weeks of age

Bunnies = 6 – 8 weeks of age

Puppies & Kittens = 8 – 12 weeks of age

Crias = 6 months of age



if you have further information on bottle feeding animal species not listed here, please send your information to ~ lilpygmygoats@aol.com with the subject “Bottle Feeding”

IS THIS ALL THERE IS TO BOTTLE FEEDING ?

No. There's more to it than just how to force feed and how much to feed, etc. So now let's discuss what else you need to do with the bottle baby.

WIPE ~ Just like mamma would

In nature ~ when a baby fawn is born (as well as many other species) the mother licks the baby. She does this for a number of reasons ~ stimulation, to clean the baby, to encourage the baby to urinate/poo, etc. These are all important for the baby's survival and health. So if you have a bottle baby animal ~ in most cases with most species you need to use a wipe (baby wipes work well) or a damp rag and wipe the baby yourself. Keep it's body/coat clean, be SURE to keep it's vulva/penis & anus clean and free of ALL debris (if debris remains on the vulva/penis or anus – the baby animal may become constipated or unable to urinate which could cause fatality).

Pet and touch the baby to stimulate it's entire body. This helps with circulation, bowel movement, urination, any other things. So as you can see, wiping, petting & gentle rubbing are very important ! You need to act like the baby's mamma. And this is what mamma does in nature to care for her baby.

* Keep rags, towels and/or wipes clean by washing or disposing of those which are contaminated. Use clean & fresh rags, towels or wipes each time you wipe the baby.

TLC ~ Tender Loving Care

The only thing left to discuss is TLC. Show the baby lots and lots of Tender Loving Care. Be gentle and patient. Try to be understanding – even when you're covered in milk and fur and didn't even get an ounce of milk in the baby's stomach ! These are animals we're dealing with, they cannot understand our language, or our actions, although they try their best. They need a mother, and that is the job that you took on ~ motherhood. They depend on our care for survival. To a bottle baby – you ARE their mother, you ARE all that they have.

NO LUCK ~ If you can't get the baby to take the bottle

If you absolutely cannot get that orphaned animal baby to take a bottle, you can try putting the warm milk in a bowl for the animal to drink from, if that doesn't work and the animal is absolutely refusing to take the milk - seek a veterinarian and/or someone else that might be able to assist you. A baby animal can be “tube fed” if it is refusing a bottle. This can be done by a vet, or a farmer, or you can learn to do this yourself as well. I cannot give you guidance in this area of discussion, because I (thankfully) have never had to tube feed in my experience. But if it comes to that – please seek someone who can assist you so you do not injure the animal. This is the last resort to feed a baby animal. And tube feeding can be done by anyone who knows what they are doing. I hope that you don't ever have to deal with a situation such as this, but it is possible. But don't give up trying to bottle feed right away – it DOES take time and patience !



Visit my Websites

Julie's Funny Farm : <http://juliesfunnyfarm.tripod.com>

Lil' Goat Farm : <http://lilpygmygoats.tripod.com>

Xander Mt. Mastiffs : <http://xandermtmastiffs.tripod.com>

Visit These Forums

Goat Talk : www.goattalk.freeforums.org

Alpaca Nation : www.alpakanation.com/forum



Julie Weimer

Email : lilpygmygoats@aol.com

Website : <http://juliesfunnyfarm.tripod.com>

Specializing in Pygmy & Nigerian Dwarf Goats,
English Mastiffs, Chickens, and soon ~ Huacaya Alpacas.

COPYRIGHT - Julie Weimer

