

Birthing Cria

Labour (Parturition)

Stage 1

- Full term female “wandering”, restless, getting up & lying down (legs out to the side), frequent visits to poo pile, vocalising.
- Internally, the cervix is relaxing, and contractions of the uterus are beginning
- Lasts: from 2-6 hours. Longer in maiden females.

Stage 2

- The foetus moves into the birth canal
- The female begins “active” labour, straining and pushing to expel the cria: this may occur lying down, standing up, over poo piles.
- Female will have increased discomfort, get up and down, lie on her side or roll.
- Some females will look at their side and show signs of colic.
- Fluid expulsion is sometimes seen before the cria presents
- Cria presents nose first, either within the “sack” (a fluid-filled membrane) or just a nose if the sack has already broken
- The legs may appear now or after the head is through the vulva.
- The unassisted female should deliver in 8-25 minutes.

Alternative presentations of cria:

- Cria may present backwards (hind feet first), with a leg or both legs back, with the head back and legs forward, or any number of other positions.
- If the cria is not presented normally, labour will not progress. An experienced breeder can usually assess the position and orientation of a cria by inserting a clean, lubricated hand into the vulva to feel for the cria.
- A retained leg can easily be straightened. A head back can be more difficult.
- Gentle, downward pressure with gentle pulling can assist a normally presented delivery for an exhausted female.
- Don't ever force anything when it comes to birthing.
- Small hands are advantageous!

If you are not sure, call a vet to assist as soon as possible.

Other causes of an extended Stage 2 include

- Failure of cervix to dilate adequately
- Torsion (twisted) uterus
- Small pelvis or tightness of vaginal tissues (especially maidens)
- Cria too big for female's size

Most cria can be delivered vaginally but if one of the above problems is present, occasionally a caesarean section is required.

Stage 3

- Expulsion of placenta. Should take place within 2 hours of birth. Female contracts further and placenta should come out in one piece.
- If not out by 6 hours the female may need treatment to remove.