

BOER GOAT BREED STANDARDS

as developed and adopted by the
AMERICAN BOER GOAT ASSOCIATION

HISTORY AND OVERVIEW

In describing those traits which constitute "standards" for the Improved Boer Goat, the ABGA is leaning heavily on the standards which have evolved during the development of this breed over the past 70 years in South Africa. The standards which they have developed have the explicit objectives of improving the breed for economic production. The South African Boer Goat is a recognized breed in its country of origin, and many experts throughout the world consider this to be the premier goat meat producing breed. Three selection criteria have contributed to this recognition:

1. Large frame size
2. High carcass yield grades
3. Uniform visual appearance

Visual uniformity exists not only in the color patterns which the animals carry, but also in the uniform stature and yield grades. The lack of one or more of these traits in other breeds that have been used for meat production has held back the development of the meat goat industry in the US and abroad.

The South African Boer Goat developed by natural selection practices of breeders in Africa under the often stressful conditions of the African environment. These breeders demanded that only the best, commercially viable animals be recognized as superior. On July 4, 1959, the Boer Goat Breeders' Association of South Africa was formed. One of the first undertakings was to establish breed standards. These standards have changed little over the years, and the changes which have been introduced have assisted in improving the breed.

Information available from the Boer Goat Breeder's Association of South Africa indicates that five types of Boer goats are recognized in South Africa.

These include:

1. The ORDINARY BOER GOAT which is an animal with good meat conformation, having short hair and patterns, including brindle, gray, dark brown and white. occasionally animals have brown heads and necks.
2. The LONG HAIR BOER GOAT which has a heavy coat, matures later and is said to have coarse meat. Long hair reduces value of skins, and makes this type undesirable.
3. The POLLED BOER GOAT is naturally hornless, with conformation which is usually less than desirable.
4. The INDIGENOUS BOER GOAT has long legs, a variable and poor conformation, and a

variety of color patterns. This line has not been highly selected or managed.

5. The IMPROVED BOER GOAT has been the primary line which breeders have selected for. The specific desired traits which have been stressed, and form the basis of the breed standards include: good conformation, rapid growth rates, high fertility and fecundity, color and type uniformity, and hardiness and adaptability to varied environmental conditions.

The Improved Boer Goat is the only line or type which the South African Boer Goat Association will register as a breeding quality animal.

The South African Boer Goat Association does not maintain or use pedigree to register goats. Trained inspectors assess animals by viewing them personally, crediting all characteristics to the whole.

The ABGA provides the following standards as a guide to owners and breeders of Improved Boer Goats in the U.S. These standards describe what an Improved Boer Goat should be, citing the most desirable traits as make up the ideal individual. When evaluating an animal's value and desirability, the best balance of all the standards should be sought after. In summary, the animal that possesses the greatest conformity to the breed standards, when viewed as a complete package, is the best representative of the Boer breed as it was developed to be.

The ABGA registry has been developed to document and maintain bloodlines through pedigree only. Owners and/or breeders should use the standards to evaluate animals when establishing desirability and value. Only animals that meet or exceed these standards will be eligible to advance to performance evaluations and ultimately attain recognition in the Ennobled Book certified by the ABGA beginning September 1, 1994. (criteria for performance evaluation is being developed)

IMPROVED BOER GOAT STANDARDS FOR AMERICAN GOATS

Overall Quality, Size, Appearance and Type

The overall objective is for a goat to have suitable size with maximum meat yields, good structural conformation which meets environmental and production requirements, high adaptability to environmental conditions and high fertility.

Ideally, this is an animal with short glossy hair with fine luster. The major portion of the body should be white with dark coloration around the head and pigmented skin in hairless areas around the head and under the tail to reduce sunburn, cancers, and skin diseases. A loose, supple skin helps the animal adapt to wide climatic conditions, and possibly provides resistance to external parasites.

In general appearance, a Boer goat has a dark head and horns which curve backwards. Animals should be strong, vigorous, and symmetrical, with well balanced muscling. Bucks should be masculine and well proportioned, but not overly developed in the head, neck and forequarter

making it out of proportion with the rest of the body. Does should be feminine, yet strong, and have a slightly more angular chest than bucks. They should be able to breed easily and have the conformation and constitution to easily raise fast growing kids.

Overall, the ideal is a rapidly growing, well proportioned goat of suitable size with the ability to maximally produce prime cuts of meat to meet consumer demands. A desirable relationship between the length of leg and depth of body should be achieved at all ages, with kids and young goats being slightly longer in the leg.

FAULTS are cull characteristics or defects which decreases the value of the goat for breeding purposes, and will ultimately effect an animal's eligibility for ennobled status.

1. CONFORMATION

Any extreme occurrence of an undesirable trait is a disqualification.

HEAD

A prominent, strong head with brown eyes and a gentle appearance. Nose with a gentle curve, wide nostrils, and well formed mouth with well-opposed jaws. The jaws must have no over or under bite from birth to 24 months of age. After 24 months no more than a $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch under bite is allowed. Correct fit is preferred. Teeth should erupt in the proper sequential positions. The forehead should be prominent and form an even curve linking the nose and horns. Horns should be dark, round, strong, of moderate length, positioned well apart and have a gradual backward curve before turning outward symmetrically. Ears should be smooth of medium length and hang downward.

Faults: Concave forehead, straight horns, jaw too pointed, overshot or undershot jaws

Disqualifications: Blue eyes, ears folded lengthwise, short ears, parrot mouth or more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch under bite.

NECK AND FOREQUARTERS

Neck of moderate length and in proportion with body length. Forequarters full, well-fleshed, and limbs well jointed and smoothly blended. The chest should be broad. Shoulders should be fleshy, well proportioned with the rest of the body and smoothly blended and fitted into the withers. Withers should be broad and well rounded and not sharp. Legs should be strong, well placed and in proportion with the depth of the body. Pastern joints should be strong and hooves well-formed and as dark as possible.

Faults: Neck too short or too thin: shoulders too loose, and any structural foreleg, and muscle, bone, joint, or hoof deformities or abnormalities to include but not limited to knock knees, bandy legs, hooves pointing outward or inward, splay toes, buck knees, hollow legs, straight or weak pasterns.

BODY

Body should be boldly three-dimensional: long, deep and wide. Ribs should be well

sprung. Loin should be well muscled, wide and long. The top line should be reasonably straight and strong and the shoulder well rounded with an abundance of muscle from shoulder through hip.

Faults: Concave or swayback; chest too narrow or shallow or flat; shoulders weakly attached; inadequate muscle through the back and loin, pinched heart girth.

HINDQUARTERS

Rump should be broad and long with a gentle slope. Britch and thighs well muscled and rounded. Base of the tail must be centered and straight. The remainder of the tail can curve upward or to one side. Legs should be strong and the leg should have a straight axis from the hip (pin bones) through the hock, fetlock, and pastern. Hoofs should be well-formed and as dark as possible.

Faults: Weak pasterns, straight pasterns, rump too steep, sickle-hocked, cow-hocked, post legs.

Disqualifications: Wry tail

2. SKIN AND COVERING

Any extreme occurrence of an undesirable trait is a disqualification. Skin loose and supple. Eyelids and other hairless areas must be pigmented. Hairless areas under the tail should be at least 75% pigmented: 100% is preferred. Short glossy hair is desirable. A limited amount of winter down or under-coat will be accepted during winter, especially in colder environments.

Faults: Hair too long or too coarse.

Disqualifications: Not enough skin pigmentation.

3. REPRODUCTIVE ORGANS

Any extreme occurrence of an undesirable trait is a disqualification.

DOES

Does should have well formed udders with good attachment with the number of functional teats not to exceed two per side. A split teat with two distinctly separated teats and openings with at least 50% of the body of teat separated is permissible but teats without a split are preferred. It is most important that the udder is constructed so that the offspring are able to nurse unassisted.

A. Kidding or Pregnancy

Does must have kidded or exhibited pregnancy by 24 months of age.

Faults : Udder and teat abnormalities or defects to include but not limited to oversized or bulbous teats, pendulous udder.

Disqualifications: Cluster teats, fishtail teats or a doe that has not kidded or exhibited

signs of pregnancy by 24 months of age.

BUCKS

Bucks must have two large well-formed, functional, equal sized testes in a single scrotum with no more than a 2" split in the apex of the scrotum.

Disqualifications: Single Testicle. Testicles too small. Abnormal or diseased testes; excessive split in scrotum.

4. COLORATION

The preferred Boer goat is an animal with red hair on the head and ears and white on the remainder of the body but other coloration's are acceptable