Goat production handbook

Published by:
The Ministry of Agriculture and Goat Breeders Society of Jamaica
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Determine the age of goats by its incisors

The teeth as shown in Figure x can estimate the age of the goat. Beware of purchasing goats with all its permanent teeth and never buy a goat with excessively worn or broken teeth.

3 months:
all temporary pinchers or "milk teeth"

9 to 15 months:
2 permanent teeth.

2 years:
4 permanent teeth.

3 years:
6 permanent teeth.

4 years or older:
8 permanent teeth.

BREEDS AND BREEDING

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The Alpines were first introduced into Jamaica around 1945/46 from England. It is thought that the Alpines brought in from the USA in 1948 could be the French Alpine. It is however evident that both breeds are present in Jamaica.
The French Alpine

The French-Alpine is a breed of goat that originated in the Alps. The goats of Alpine type that were brought to the United States from France where they had been selected for much greater uniformity, size, and production than was true of the goats that were taken from Switzerland to France.

Size and production rather than colour pattern have been stressed in the development of the French-Alpine. No distinct colour has been established, and it may range from pure white through shades of fawn gray, brown, black, red, or various shadings or combinations of these colours. Both sexes are generally shorthaired, but bucks usually have a roach of long hair along the spine. The beard of males is also quite pronounced. The ears in the Alpine should be of medium size, fine textured, and preferably erect.

Mature females should stand not less than 75 centimeter at the withers and should weigh not less than 60 kg. Males should stand from 85 to 100 centimeters at the withers and should weigh not less than 75 kilograms. French-Alpine females are excellent milkers and usually have large, well-shaped udders with well-placed teats of desirable shape.

These are hardy, adaptable animals that thrive in any climate while maintaining good health and excellent production. The face is straight. A Roman nose, Toggenburg colour and markings, or all white is discriminated against.

British Alpine

The British Alpine was developed in Great Britain in the early 1900's. They are tall, rangy and graceful. They are best suited to temperate climates and perform poorly in regions with high humidity. The does are good milk producers, with an average fat yield of four percent. They also exhibit a tendency to perform better in cooler areas. British Alpines are black with white markings. Their coat is generally short, fine and glossy. However bucks often have longer hair.

Saanen

Saanen dairy goat originated in Switzerland, in the Saanen Valley but was introduced in Jamaica from the United States around 1929. Saanen does are heavy milk producers and usually yield 3-4 percent milk fat. It is medium to large in size (weighing approximately 65kg) with rugged bone and plenty of vigour.
The Saanen is white or light cream in colour, with white preferred spots on the skin are not discriminated against. Small spots of colour on the hair are allowable, but not desirable. The hair should be short and fine, although a fringe over the spine and thighs is often present. Ears should be erect and alertly carried, preferably pointing forward. The face should be straight or dished. A tendency toward Roman nose is discriminated against.

**Toggenburg**

The Toggenburg was one of the earlier of the present breeds introduced into Jamaica from England about 1910. This Swiss dairy goat originated from the Toggenburg Valley of Switzerland. They are also credited as being the oldest known dairy goat breed. This breed is medium size, sturdy, vigorous, and alert in appearance. Slightly smaller than the other breeds, the does weight at least 55kg.

The hair is short or medium in length, soft, fine, and lying flat. Its colour is solid varying from light fawn to, dark chocolate with no preference for any shade. Distinct white markings are as follows: white ears with dark spot in middle; two white stripes down the face from above each eye to the muzzle; a white triangle on either side of the tail. Varying degrees of cream markings instead of pure white acceptable, but not desirable. They are noted for their excellent udder development and high milk production. The ears are erect and carried forward. Facial lines may be dished or straight, never Roman.

**Nubian/Anglo-Nubian**

Although there are several instances where Nubians were brought into Jamaica the earliest of the present breeds of goats were Anglo-Nubians brought in as early as 1907. The Anglo-Nubian was developed in England by crossing British goats with bucks of African and Indian origin. This all-purpose goat is useful for meat, milk and skin production. The Anglo-Nubian breeding season is much longer than that of the Swiss breeds so it is possible to produce milk year round.

The Anglo-Nubian is regarded as an "aristocratic" appearing goat and has very long pendulous ears that hang close to the head. They carry a decidedly Roman nose and are always shorthaired. Any solid or parti-coloured Roman nose is permitted in the Anglo-Nubian, but black, red or tan are the most common colours, any of which may be carried on combination with white. A mature doe should stand at least 75 centimeter at the withers and weigh 60 kilograms or over, while the males should stand at least 85 centimeters at the withers and weigh at least 80 kilograms.


**LaMancha**

This is the least popular of the exotic breeds present in Jamaica and is very small in quantity. They were imported from the United States in 1980. The LaMancha goat originated in Oregon USA from short-eared goats of a type, found throughout Spain. It has excellent dairy temperament and is an all-around sturdy animal that can withstand a great deal of hardship and still produce. The LaMancha face is straight with the ears being the distinctive breed characteristic. There are two types of LaMancha ears. In does, one type of ear has no advantage over the other. The "gopher ear" is described as, follows: an approximate maximum length of one inch but preferably non-existent and with very little or no cartilage. The end of the ear must be turned up or down. This is the only type of ear, which will make bucks eligible for registration. The "elf ear" is described as follows, an approximate maximum length of two inches is allowed the end of the ear must be turned up or turned down and cartilage shaping the small ear is allowed.

Any colour or combination of colours is acceptable with no preferences. The hair is short, fine and glossy

**Boer**

This is the latest improved breed of goat imported into Jamaica. A small amount was imported from Canada but the first organized importation was from the United States in 1996. The Boer is an improved indigenous South African breed with some infusion of European, Angora and Indian goat breeding many years ago. The name is derived from the Dutch word “Boer” meaning farm and was probably used to distinguish the native goats from the Angora goats which were imported into South Africa during the 19th century. The present day Boer goat appeared in the early 1900’s when ranchers in the Eastern Cape Province started selecting for a meat type goat. The Boer goat is primarily a meat goat with several adaptations to the region in which it was developed. It is a horned breed, with lop ears and having a red head and neck with white body. There is usually a white blaze in the face. Producing weaning rates in excess of 160% the Boer doe is a low maintenance animal that has sufficient milk to rear a kid that is early maturing.

The mature Boer buck weighs between 110-135 kg and ewes between 90 and 100 kg. Performance records for this breed indicate exceptional individuals are capable of average daily gains over 200 g/day in feedlot. More standard performance would be 150-170 g/day. The ovulation rate for Boer goats ranges from 1 to 4 eggs/doe with an average of 1.7. A
kidding rate of 200% is common for this breed. Puberty is reached early, usually about 6 months for the males and 10-12 months for the females. The Boer goat also has an extended breeding season making possible 3 kidding every 2 years.

**The Native/Creole goat**

The “Native” Jamaican goat has been noted to be a mixture of breeds whose origins according to Oliveira (1988), can be traced back to 16th century introductions by the Spanish (the Criollo, mainly black or brown with white patches) and the Portuguese (the Charnequiero, brown or fawn, with a black strip along the back, white face and belly). This mixture of breeds has produced an eco-type, which has evolved mainly through natural selection and has become highly adapted to the agro-ecological conditions of the country.

A profile of the “Native” goat describes it as a small type, having horns and beard and sometimes wattles, with a variety of coat colors. Mature females average 33.32 kg with heart girth of 72.66 cm, body length from shoulder to hipbone 45.94 cm, and height at withers of 62.45 cm. The does are described as good mothers with a high rate of twinning. The average birth weight of kids is 2.3 kg. Mature bucks weigh 40 kg, with heart girth of 77.9 cm, body length of 51.1 cm, and height at withers of 65.7 cm.

The “Native” is an early maturing type with animals capable of breeding as early as five months. It can be classified as a meat type animal with a long breeding season.