

1998



## AMERICAN BOER GOAT ASSOCIATION

### Standards for the Improved Boer Goat as recognized by the American Boer Goat Association

#### OVERVIEW:

In describing those traits that constitute "standards" for the Improved Boer Goat, we are leaning heavily on the standards which have evolved during the development of this breed over the past 70 years in South Africa. The standards that they have developed have the explicit objectives of improving the breed for economic production. The South African Boer Goat is 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 from size
2. High carcass yield grades
3. Uniform visual appearance

Visual uniformity exists not only in the color patterns that the animal 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 was developed by natural selection practices of the 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 South African Boer Goat Breeders Association was formed. One of the first undertakings was to establish breed standards that have been introduced and assisted in improving the Breed.

Information available from the South African Boer Goat Association indicated 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 a variety of color patterns, including brindle, gray, dark brown and white. Occasionally animals have brown heads and necks.
2. LONG HAIR BOER - heavy coat, matures later and said to have coarse meat. Long hair reduces value of skins, making this type undesirable.
3. THE POLLED BOER GOAT - is naturally hornless, with conformation that is usually less than desirable.
4. THE INDIGENOUS BOER GOAT - which 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 - This type has been the primary line which breeders have been 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 pedigrees 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 US. These standards describe what an Improved Boer Goat should be, citing the most desirable traits as making 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 who possessed 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 who 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

##### 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 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 musculing. 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 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:** Cull characteristic or defects which decreases the value of the goat for breeding purposes and will ultimately affect an animal's eligibility for Ennobled status.

#### I. CONFORMATION

##### A. 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. Two tooth (1-1.5 years of age) can have no over or under-bite; the jaws must be perfectly opposed. Four tooth and older (the second pair of permanent incisors erupt at 1.5 to 2 years of age) animals can have 1/4 inch overbite. All permanent front teeth (goats have four pairs of front teeth in their lower jaw, with the fourth pair erupting at about 4 years of age) must be in the anatomically correct positions. The forehead must be prominent, and form an even curve, linking the nose and horns. Horns should be strong, of moderate length, positioned well apart, and have a gradual backward curve before turning outward symmetrically. Horns should be as solid as possible and dark in color. Ears should be broad, smooth, of medium length and hang downwards. Short ears are unacceptable. Disbudded or dehorned animals should have that noted on their registration papers and should not be discriminated against in the show ring.

**FAULTS:** Concave forehead, straight horns, jaws protruding or too short, jaw too pointed, overshot or undershot jaws, blue eyes.

##### B. NECK AND FOREQUARTERS