

NOW THAT YOU HAVE THAT EXPENSIVE BOER BUCK – WHAT DO YOU DO?

by

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The Boer goat industry in the U.S. is now about 20 years old. Since the first import of fullblood Boer goats into this country in 1993 a lot has happened - some good - some bad. A lot of people have spent a lot of money (and in some cases I mean A LOT of MONEY) on what they hoped would turn out to make them even more money in the Boer goat business. I have seen it written in several places that only about 10% of the people that get into the Boer goat business actually see a positive return on their investment, that is, make money. In reality I do not know of many people that will truthfully tell you that they have a positive cash flow when it comes to their Boer goats. The purpose of this article is to reflect on the Boer goat business today and suggest ways that people might perhaps make more money on their adventure in the Boer goat industry.

In the past 20 or so years I have attended many production sales and auctions where National Show winners and other famous animals were sold for literally tens of thousands of dollars. In most cases once the goat is purchased you never hear much more about the animal. In a few instances you see an animal made famous through an organized program of advertising and promotion. As you probably have noticed over the years not every national champion has gone on to produce prize winning progeny but in some cases a father produces even better sons. In South Africa a buck is not worth its salt if he does not produce better than he is. That is how the breed improves over time.

I am sure you have heard the old saying, "Build a better mouse trap and the world will beat a pathway to your door." When you buy a national champion Boer buck or other outstanding sire at a production sale the world does not beat a path to your door just because you bought him. You have to somehow let the Boer goat industry know that you bought him and that his semen and kids are for sale. If you don't tell everyone about him how will they know. The

answer is to advertise, advertise, advertise or in other words PROMOTION, PROMOTION, PROMOTION!

The next question might be "How do you advertise and promote?" When you go to a show and pass out business cards or put a banner up over your pens you are promoting. When you create a website and tell everyone about your famous buck you are advertising (24 hours a day worldwide). When you buy a quarter page to full page ad or even business card size ad in one of the industry magazines such as Goat Rancher, Meat Goat News, Boer Goat Magazine (ABGA), Canadian Meat Goat Journal, etc. you are advertising and promoting.

I have learned over time that a \$1000 buck has \$100 kids; a \$5000 buck has \$500 kids and a \$10,000 buck has \$1,000 kids or more. The old saying holds true in the Boer goat business, "You have to spend money to make money." (If you don't prime the pump you will never get water from it.)

When I was campaigning my Boer goats in the show ring several years ago I told my fitter that it was important to win grand and reserve grand champions as these winners in the show ring provide the opportunity to take champion pictures to use on back covers of magazines. It doesn't make much difference what show, you just need the champion photo to put in the magazine. When I told my fitter that, their perspective changed when showing my goats. I was not interested in just winning "day money" and making my entry fees back, I was interested in winning grand champion of the show. When my fitter got the mindset of winning grand champion rather than day money the ribbons started coming in and the color pictures on back covers of magazines started to appear.

With many of the magazines you can reach a large portion of the Boer goat owners through a single ad. Why do I mention the back cover of the magazine so much? The back cover is the only location in the magazine besides the front cover that can turn up on a coffee table and advertise your product without having someone turn a page in the magazine. You have a fifty - fifty chance of the magazine landing face down on the coffee table when it is put down.

I have bought many back covers over time and it is gratifying when I go to the sheep and goat auction on Tuesdays in San Angelo, Texas and see a back cover of a magazine with one of my advertisements turned up on a table in the front foyer of the auction barn. It pays to advertise.

You might say, "It costs too much to advertise in magazines." It costs from \$250 to \$1500 for a quarter to full page ad in most trade magazines. If a \$1000 ad results in your being able to sell a couple of \$1000 kids the ad has done its work. In some cases I have had people call me as a result of an ad that I ran over a year in the past. A magazine ad keeps on promoting and promoting as long as copies are spread throughout the country.

So now that you have bought that big Boer buck, what is one of the most important things you can do to be successful? Advertise, Advertise, Advertise.

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