



Dairy Goat Breeds and Breeding



Breeds of dairy goats

A variety of dairy goat breeds exist world over. The common dairy goat breeds reared in Kenya, however, include Saanen, Toggenburg and Alpines. These breeds exhibit different characteristics that define their performances. The main breeds raised in Kenya are presented in the table below.

Breed	Description
 <p data-bbox="274 730 367 758">Saanen</p>	<p data-bbox="516 459 972 531">Colour: White to pale cream with pink skin pigmentation</p> <p data-bbox="516 555 972 627">Head: Straight face, upright and alert ears (pricked),</p> <p data-bbox="516 651 829 678">Coat cover: Short fine hair</p> <p data-bbox="516 702 972 774">Average body weight: 75-80 kg for males and 50-65 kg for females</p> <p data-bbox="516 798 972 869">Milk production: An average of 2-5 litres/day</p>
 <p data-bbox="180 1209 460 1236">German/French Alpine</p>	<p data-bbox="516 885 972 997">Colour: Brown and black in colour but considerable variations occur, with a black back line</p> <p data-bbox="516 1021 919 1048">Head: Straight face and erect ears</p> <p data-bbox="516 1072 972 1144">Coat cover: Short to medium in length hair</p> <p data-bbox="516 1168 972 1240">Average body weight: The adult male weighs 65 kg and female 60 kg</p> <p data-bbox="516 1264 972 1318">Milk production: an average of 2-4 litres/day</p>



British Alpine

Colour: Black in color with white or cream markings on various parts of the body, e.g., the legs and face

Head: Ears are erect and point slightly forward

Coat cover: Short, fine and glossy hair.

Average body weight: The adult male weighs 65 kg, female 60 kg.

Milk production: An average milk yield of 2 4.5 litres/day



Toggenburg

Colour: Solid light fawn to dark chocolate with white ears, legs, underbelly and two white stripes down the face

Head: Ears that are erect and point slightly forward. The muzzle is broad

Coat cover: The hair is short or medium in length, soft, fine and lays flat. Some have long hair

Average body weight: 55-80 kg for males and 50-65 kg for females

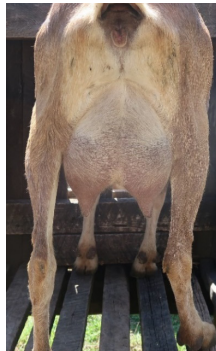
Milk production: An average of 2-4 litres/day

Selection of breeding does and bucks

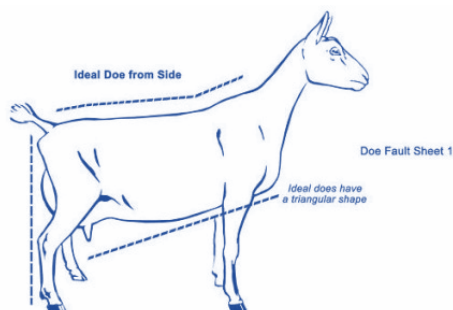
Selection is the process that determines which goats become parents, how many kids they will produce and for how long they persist in the breeding flock. The following characteristics are desirable when selecting does and bucks for breeding

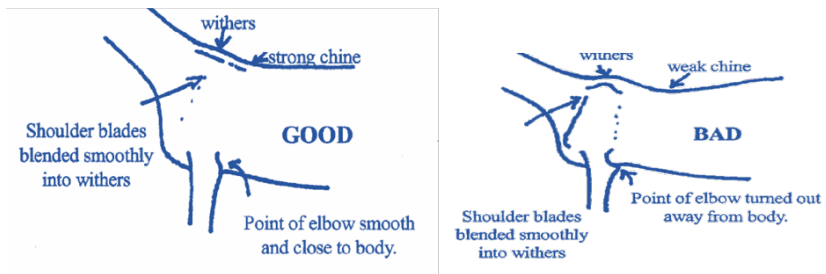
Desirable characteristics of a breeding doe

- True to type to the preferred breed
- Strong legs and feet
- Fertility: can have up to 1.5 kiddings per year
- A healthy doe with ability to maintain good body condition
- Wedge shape
- Good mothering ability
- Good temperament
- Proper placed and long teats
- Prominent, well attached and deep udder



A rear view of a doe showing a deep udder and proper teat placement

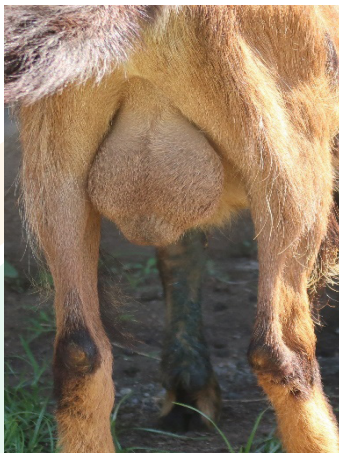




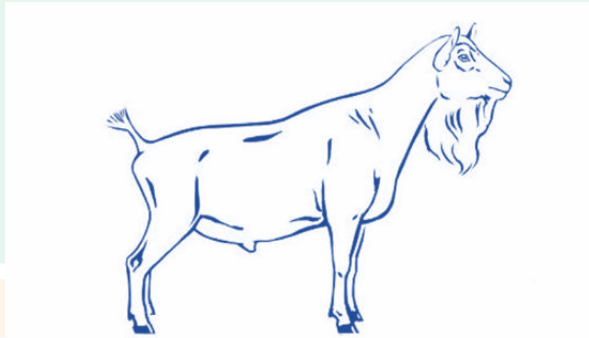
Comparative morphology of a typically good and bad doe

Desirable characteristics of a breeding Buck

- True to type to the preferred breed
- No deformities
- Good body condition with strong feet and legs
- Two well-developed testicles and high libido



A rear view of a buck showing well developed testicles



Morphology of a typically good buck

Heat detection

An understanding of the signs of oestrus and close observation is the best way to determine when a doe is on heat. A buck can be put in the neighbouring pen to stimulate explicit expression of heat signs, which include:

- Increased restlessness
- Redness and swelling of the vulva
- Head butting
- Mucus discharge (may become white toward the end of oestrus)
- Tail twitching/wags the tail
- Increased bleating (vocalization)
- Frequent urination

Note: A doe standing to be mounted or riding another doe are not seen as signs of heat in goats as in cows.

Does have an oestrus cycle of 18 to 22 days. Oestrus (heat) lasts between 12 - 48 hours, averaging 36 hours and ovulation occurs 24 to 36 hours after onset of heat. Therefore, goats should be bred 24 hours af-

ter onset of heat or every 12 hours until the receptive period is over.

Culling

Culling is defined as the departure or exit of dairy goats from the flock. Reasons for culling include:

- Physical defects — for example, undesirable leg conformation
- Fertility problems
- Health problems – for example, Mastitis, pneumonia
- Udder disorders
- Low milk production
- Slow growth rate
- Old age
- To avoid inbreeding
- Voluntary culling because of having excess number of goats



Kenya Climate Smart
Agriculture Project



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