

# ***Fact Sheet: - Goats***

## **TERMS**

*buck* (male any age - sometimes called a Billy goats)

*doe* (female)

*kid* (baby)

## **HISTORY**

Angora & Cashmere goats have a history dating back to early biblical times. There is mention of mohair at the time of Moses and cashmere fiber, (which is extremely fine and luxurious), lined and curtained the Arc of the Covenant.

The first goats introduced to Australia were by Captain Phillip on the first convict ships to provide meat and milk for the first settlers.

- \* Dairy Goats were one of the first animals to be domesticated having provided us with food and clothing for 7000 years
- \* More people consume goat milk and milk products from goats worldwide than any other animal
- \* Goats are able to live in dry, hilly areas that cattle cannot survive
- \* Goats milk is used in the treatment of ulcers and for people with allergies or lactose intolerance
- \* Goats milk is higher in Vitamin A and riboflavin than cow's milk
- \* Goats are browsers. This means they will eat scrub vegetation and farmers use them to control weeds and scrub growth. (Will eat shrubs, blackberry, rose and gum tree bushes!!)

## **GOAT PRODUCTS**

- \* *milk* – from which yogurt, ice-cream, variety of cheeses and powdered milk are produced
- \* *meat* – young goat meat is a delicacy called chevon
- \* *wool*- mohair and cashmere
- \* *leather products*

### ***Dairy Goats, (in Australia):-***

Toggenburgs, British Alpines, Saanen. Anglo Nubians & Australian Melaan

**Toggenburgs:** - originated in the Toggenburg Valley in Switzerland. They are credited as the oldest dairy goat breed. Colour varies from a light fawn to a chocolate colour with white ears that have a dark spot in the middle and 2 white stripes down their faces. Excellent milker but prefer cooler climates

**British Alpines:** - minority breed in Australia Black with white markings similar to the Toggenburg. Though good milk producers perform poorly in regions with high humidity.

**Saanen:** - originated from the Saanen Valley, Switzerland are white in colour and have quite a placid nature. They are considered one of the best milk producers in the world.

**Anglo Nubians:** - were developed in England by crossing British goats with bucks from Africa & India. All purpose goat used for milk, meat and hide productions. Extended breeding season allows the Anglo Nubian to produce milk year round. Is suited to hot conditions. They vary in colours but black red or tan is the most common colours, sometimes producing beautiful patterns.

**Australian Melaan:** - developed in Australia and **registered** as a breed within its own right in 2001. The Australian Melaan is similar to a Saanen in size and build but completely Black

**Australian Goat:** - the original feral or wild goat has been present in Australia in quite large numbers since the turn of the century. They originated with the abandonment of goat flocks in unprofitable and drought times mixed in with escapees from herds. They have multiplied and have effectively adjusted to rough environments.

They possess strong fiber and milking producing qualities. Domesticated and carefully selected they provide an excellent base for the development of cashmere, mohair, leather and meat production programmes. The domesticated animal is now being referred to as the Australian Goat. Sheep farmers run the Australian Goat in conjunction with their sheep as means of controlling weed and scrub growth.

Does are often used for breeding with Cashmeres and Angoras.

They are now being used for the overseas export of meat and skin.

### ***Meat Goats, (in Australia):-***

**Boer:** - there has been much discussion as to the origin of the Boer goat. It is believed that it probably originated from southward migrating Bantu tribes with some infusion of the European, Angora & Indian goat! The name Boer is derived from the Dutch word for farmer and was probably used to distinguish the native goat from the Angora goats which were imported into South Africa during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The present day Boer goat appeared in the early 1900's when ranchers started selecting for a meat type goat. It has lop ears and in Australia are known for their distinctive brown head with thick white line down center of face

Goat carcasses have been sold as low-grade sheep carcasses. Angora goat breeders have endeavored to have the Angora goat carcass referred to as “chevon” and it is now sold on the market as a delicacy.

### ***Goats, (wool fiber)***

***Angora:*** - Originated in Asia Minor. Use of mohair was mentioned at the time of Moses (sometime between 1571 and 1451 BC) Main suppliers of Mohair are Turkey, USA and South Africa. Each country has developed a slightly different angora by cross breeding which has produced different types of ringlet or lock hair (flat lock)

On the whole they are smaller than sheep and usually only produce one kid. At a time. They are considered the most delicate of our domesticated animals and are more susceptible to damage from internal parasites than sheep. (Some cross Angoras from America are quite sturdy and less curly).

***Cashmere:*** - Cashmere the fiber of kings, produced from the lowly Cashmere goat. This fiber is so luxurious that the Arc of the Covenant of the Old Testament was lined and curtained with it. Sixty percent of the world’s supply of cashmere is produced in China and the remainder from Turkey, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Kashmere, Australia and New Zealand. It is a new industry in America.

Cashmere goats are easy to raise, needing only minimal care. They are not jumpers therefore only need standard woven fence to contain them. They are sheared once a year. Their fleece consists of cashmere and guard hair. (Only about 20% being cashmere). It requires a number of processes to produce the beautiful fine cashmere material. At present cashmere produced in Australia has to be sent overseas to be dehaired and processed.