

Dogwood Farms

Randy and Nan Brock

Palestine, Texas

“So, you want to raise meat goats?”, was the question posed early to Randy and I in our beginning goat days. Early goat years consisted of Spanish goats, untouched by humans, imported SA Boers and, later, Savannas. You could say we ran the gamut of the goat world. We gleaned the most information from excellent mentors in the caprine world and the old fashion school of hard knocks. Finally settling on raising savannas because of what we learned and what we know of the breed itself.

In the beginning, we were looking for animals that we could use for pasture improvement. We have over 60 combined years in the equine field. Ranging from breeding and showing horses at the national level. In the mid-nineties, we began looking for an animal that would work well with horses and improve our pastures. An animal that would mainly take the work load away for clearing recently purchased land. We consulted the local goat farmer, Dr. Frank Pinkerton, aka “the goat man” for advice. For those who don’t know Dr. Frank, he is a well-respected researcher and professor, he has a PhD from Texas A&M, and is now a private goat consultant focusing on marketing and management. I did receive my coveted blue cap with braid as a “the goat lady” from Dr. Frank, so I must have passed the goat management test. Dr. Frank introduced us to the Pape family.

Elgin and Shirley Pape began raising goats in the 60’s. The Texas ranch, located near Harper, is a vast area used for sheep and angora goats since 1920. The Pape’s raise Spanish goats on hilly, dry, rocky areas where forage is their main source of nutrition. Deworming is completed twice a year and no hoof trimming was required due to the rocky ground. Tough? Yes, they were tough goats, just the way we felt goats should be. Culling was a continual process, but the herd was never culled for horn set and color. Animals with defects in conformation, size and udder structure were removed from the gene pool. The Pape’s mixture of inbreeding and linebreeding has worked well for them throughout the years. Groups of 300 – 350 goats ranged over a few hundred acres. Mrs. Pape passed away in 2010, but not before we enjoyed several conversations about raising goats in Texas. And, so our

goat business began. Ten of the wildest, never seen a human, or a barn goats arrived. They were environmentally challenged by their new habitat and the Spanish goats thrived. They did their job, clearing away tons of brush and saplings. Closing the small herd, still worked as it did for the Pape's. Culling heavily, we sold lots of meat and brush goats, while keeping our best does to start the next adventure.



Turning again to Dr. Frank, we wanted to improve our herd and increase the value of our kid crop. We purchased our first Boer doe - a triplet South African imported thru Canada. She had triplets. We kept the best buck as our herd sire. Heterosis was the key to an excellent kid crop. Our herd increased not only in size but quality due to the toughness of Pape Spanish and the old SA bloodlines. Multiples were frequent. We began looking not at ADG but what was the 90-day weight of the kid crop that was produced per doe. As a meat goat producer, we wanted animals that required little to no human intervention, produced increased pounds per year, that required little deworming or hoof trimming, and could kid with ease were our goal. We sold goats from Texas to Florida and enjoyed our adventure.



We were doing so well. We, then, began breeding higher percentage Boer x Pape Spanish. Soon we thought we needed a new herd sire. We turned to Dr. Frank again, who in turn, introduced us to Brian Payne. Brian, and his wife Katie brought us an excellent imported SA Boer buck. Brian is the president of Keri-Rose livestock and consulting and was instrumental in bringing the idea of "pasture to plate" for goat meat to the forefront. Many discussions were held about the future of goat meat and the goat industry between the Pinkertons, the Paynes, the Papes and us. 808, a Canadian Champion was delivered to our farm in east Texas. Our herd grew and we began expanding into show goats and 4H prospects. We were using our knowledge of horse confirmation to improve our herd. During this time, we joined a local goat group and enjoyed the monthly meeting and instruction. During one meeting, I prepared goat chili and goat Spanish rice for nearly 200 people. It was a hit! At this meeting, we met Dr. Ken McMillian, LSU professor of Animal Science, who introduced us to grading meat carcasses. We now understood the difference between the selection number 1, selection number 2 and selection number 3 for

grading goat meat. We learned that fit and fat are not the same, led us to understand goats tend to lay fat around the organs and do not marble. Therefore, overfeeding does not produce marbled meat, only a fat unhealthy goat. And we met Dr. Louis Nutti, Research Scientist for Texas A&M. He explained the need for reproductive performance and how it applies to profitability.



Unfortunately, we lost sight of our original plan of hardy goats for the commercial breeder. We then purchased our first “SHOW AMERICAN” Boer buck. He was beautiful and typey, making him perfect for the show ring. He produced kids with high birth weights and show characteristics. This meant we were now spending nights worried about kids nursing. We were spending our days deworming, trimming feet, CDT, urinary issues and vaccinating. We spent money on special feed and feed supplements. We lost our new buck at 15 months. Oh my, let’s get back to basics.



We kept our full blood Boer and high percentage Pape x does. Remembering our humble beginnings, we returned to Dr. Frank to get back to the basics. At this time, Brian had importing Savannas. At a field day with Mr. Pape, Dr. Frank and Brian we saw our first Savanna. They were working in West Texas at Mr. Pape’s. They were working in East Texas at Dr. Frank’s. My words to Randy were, “That is the ugliest goat I have ever seen,” but remember we had only been blessed with beautiful Boer goats. The Savanna’s were meat goats. They were thriving in harsh West Texas and thriving in worm-infested East Texas. My next thought was that they were perfect because they were tough, just like our first Spanish goats. We acquired two FB Savannah does, and picked Y8 up from Oklahoma. We knew he was special. Without hesitation, we took him directly from the breeding pen to REI for collection. The specialists were amazed at the quality of his semen. As we look back on this journey, we realize that our herd started out with over 100 red, redhead and dapple goats and it has now become totally white. We do miss the excitement during kidding of what color we will have this time, but we know that the white goat from the Vaal River is for good for us.



Y8 has old breeding directly from SA. We were able to use Y8 for several years. Again, heterosis did make a difference. We sold white goats from Virginia, to Florida, and to the West, and at no time did we hype bloodlines. We only spoke of results. If our buyers only knew what a special connection to the African savannah they had in their meat goats. We became ambassadors

of the Savanna breed by selling and providing commercial breeders with Y8 offspring to produce selection number 1 kids. We thought we needed to bring in a new bloodline so we purchased other Savanna bucks, but their kids never performed like the Y8 kids. We ended up selling all the offspring that was not Y8, closing that part of our herd. Our birth weights were not always high, but the does produced superior 90-day weights. I liken this to Angus cattle. Easy calving – High ADG. The main difference was there was a lack of human intervention. The mothers are great mothers. I have seen kids come out backwards and upside down without help. We don't worry if they nurse. They get up quickly and search for mamma's teat. We do not feed supplements. We do feed a little inexpensive cattle feed. It gives us a chance to look at our tiny herd daily. We do not trim feet and we ended up selling the equipment. We haven't dewormed in years. So, please don't ask us about the latest and greatest dewormer cocktails. Our bucks are not fat, but are fit because they are living on forage with minimal feed. We have downsized to our first Y8 does and their offspring. Yes, linebreeding and inbreeding does work, but only if you can start with the best.



What we learned through this journey is you need to remember what your goals. There is no perfect breed of goat, only the one that is perfect for you. If you are raising blood stock for meat goats, evaluate them on their potential and purpose. Cull heavy and remember the breed standard. Don't be swayed by hype and show ring qualities. Select goats that will remain as brood stock that have adaptability, excellent growth rate and superior reproductive qualities. These animals will continue to make significant contribution to advancing the breed, and, as for us, we will keep savannas. We are quietly raising quality.

North American
SAVANNATM
Herdbook

Certificate of Registration
Issued For:

Herd Name: **Keri-Rose Boer Goats**
Animal Name: **KRI Y8**

Registration Number:
13816 SV-Fullblood/DNA-S



Date of Birth: 3/5/04

Gender: BUCK

Breed: 100 %

Imported: No

Littersize:

Horns: Horned

Breeding: Natural

Micro Chip:

Tattoo:

R. Ear:

L. Ear:

Issued by Pedigree International:
1/24/2008

Breeder: 122
Brian & Katie Payne

PO Box SN 528
Southampton, Bermuda SN BX

Owner: 122
Brian & Katie Payne

PO Box SN 528
Southampton, Bermuda SN BX

G SS Sire

11017
Junior DSU 97023 (JMR)

Sire's Sire

10697 SV-original SA stud
981370 SAV 4

Sire

11022 SV - IMPORTED E.T.
Keri Rose Dawie S 512 (DNA-
G)

G SS Dam

NONE
S.A. Registered

G SD Sire

None
S.A. Registered

Sire's Dam

11041
JLK 7101

GSD Dam

None
S.A. Registered

G DS Sire

10697 SV-original SA stud stock
981370 SAV 4

Dam's Sire

11024 SV - IMPORTED E.T.
Keri Rose S506 Scandia

G DS Dam

11023
JLK 7097

Dam

13656
S23

G DD Sire

None
93138 S.A.

Dam's Dam

13655 SV-Fullblood
S7

G DD Dam

None
7094 S.A.