- Select goat breeds for mating according to specific breeding objectives and goals
- Breeding goal should clearly define the specific objective for breeding e.g. meat, milk or both
- Boer goats are used to breed for meat while Toggenburg and Saanen are for milk. All goats are generally meat producers
- Choose a breeding goal according to availability of exixting and future markets
- Chose a breeding strategy such as pure breeding or crossbreeding and upgrading depending on your capacity
- Seek advice from animal breeders in the Ministry of Agriculture, NARO and NAADS before starting your enterprise

Record keeping practices

- A good farmer / breeder always keeps written records
- Always keep accurate records of your farm inputs and sales
- Always keep records that are written clearly for all important activities such on production, health, sales and costs involved
- Records are useful for management, monitoring and evaluating performance, profitability and sustainability. Make use of your records to evaluate profitability of your enterprise

Examples of exotic and crossbred goats



Boer crossbred goats



Pure Boer goat



Pure Toggenburg goat



Toggenburg crossbred goat

Crossbreeding using Boer goats

Boer bucks are most commonly used for crossbreeding for meat. The Boer goats originate from South Africa and are characteristically white with a chestnut-red head and white blaze. The horns are prominently rounded and set well apart growing with a gradual backward curve. The head is strong with Roman nose and large eyes. Ears are very visibly broad, drooping and of medium length. The coat is soft, smooth and glossy and the hairs are short to medium in length. Boer goats are excellent meat producers and produce good quality skin. They have high reproductive rates of up to 7% triplets and 50% twins.

Inbreeding problem

Mating closely related animals results in inbreeding depression especially in small populations. Inbreeding is common among farmers small flocks especially if the farmers do not replace their breeding bucks. The signs of inbreeding are

- reduction in fertility
- reduction in fecundity
- poor growth and small offspring size
- low survival of offspring
- occurrence of physical deformities.
- Poor sales and profits

Inbreeding can be avoided by frequently replacing breeding males, preventing mating between closely related animals and culling or castrating those that are not required for mating.

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A simple guide for identification and breeding of indigenous goat breeds of Uganda

Introduction

The National Livestock Resources Research Institute (NaLIRRI) generates technologies to improve livestock productivity with the aim to increase meat and milk yields and income for poverty reduction. Goats contribute significantly to the livestock sector in Uganda. During the past decades, goat populations in Uganda have increased rapidly from 3.9 million estimated in 1990, 5.7 million in 1996 to 12.5 million in 2009 (Fig. 1).

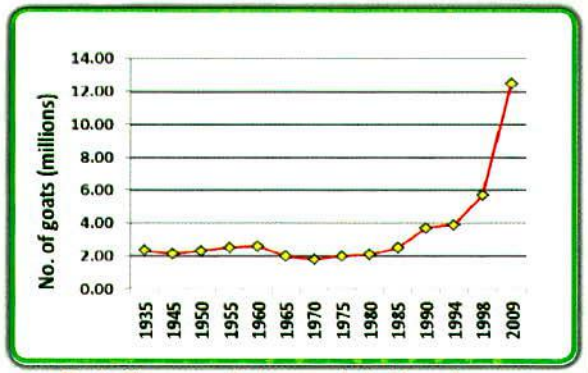

Fig.1: Goat population trends in Uganda

About 95% of the goats in Uganda are indigenous breeds, the rest being exotic and their crossbred. Exotic goats, especially Boer, Toggenburg and Anglo-Nubian breeds, were imported to improve meat and milk production from crossbred offspring. However, farmers cannot identify and distinguish the various goat breeds leading to indiscriminate crossbreeding, unsuccessful breeding programmes and downgrading of the intended benefits of selection and crossbreeding

in improving goat productivity.

Information in this brochure is meant to guide farmers and other stakeholders in the identification and proper goat breeding practices, choice of good breeding goals and stimulate record keeping for effective evaluation, pedigree recording and development of suitable breed improvement programmes.

Characteristics of indigenous goat breeds

Three distinct indigenous goat breeds of Uganda are the Mubende, Kigezi, and the Small East African. Other types are the Karamoja and Sebei goats.



Mubende Goats

Origin: The central region, Mpigi, Masaka, Sembabule, Mbarara and Mubende. The breed derives its name from Mubende district. The goat is now widely found in many parts of Uganda. It is the largest indigenous goat breed and most commonly used for meat production and replacement of the Small East African goat.

Predominant color: Mainly black but also white patches on black and varying proportions of brown with black and white

Coat hair: Short fine smooth hairs.

Live weights: Overall average adult weight between 30-35kg. The average adult female weight is 32 kg and 35 kg for males which can reach up to 50 Kg

Horns: Horns turn backwards to the nape of the neck but some are hornless or polled

Reproduction: High average twinning or fecundity rates of up to 1.5 young per litter with kidding intervals of 300 days
Age at first kidding: 18.9 months
Kidding intervals: 9.9 months
Average kid birth weight: 2.0kg
Average weaning weight: 12.0kg
Average weight at one year: 20.0kg
Special attributes:

(a) Have best skins in market and exhibit very high potential for meat production
(b) High prolificacy and fertility rates
(c) High twinning of 68.3% singles, 30% twins and 1.7% triplets
(d) High average number of 6 kids per female over a period of 5.5 years.



Kigezi Goat

Kigezi goats

Origin:
The cooler south western highland region districts of Kabale, Kisoro and Rukunjiri. The breed derives its name from the former Kigezi district. The goat is intermediate in size. It has a peculiar hairy coat especially on the hind quarters. It is found predominantly in high numbers in the cool highland areas in the south western region.

Predominant color: Black

Live weights: Average adult live weight of between 25-30 kg. Castrates and mature females can reach individual live weights of up to 30 kg

Coat hair: Characteristic long hair at the hindquarters and neck nape

Horns: Horns turn backwards

Small East African goats



Small East African Goats

Origin: The northern (Acholi), West Nile, and eastern short Savannah districts (Lango and Teso, Busoga and Bukedi) and the drier areas of Buganda, Luweero and Mukono districts. They are said to include the Karamoja and Sebei types

Predominant color: Various colour mixtures but predominance of lighter colours especially white and brown as patches, spots or stripes with or without black

Coat hair: Smooth short hair

Live weights: Average adult live weight between 20 - 25 kg

Horns: Small short horns pointed backwards

Reproduction:

Small East African goats attain sexual maturity under good management at about the age of 7 months (14 - 16 kg live weight). Twinning constitutes 5 - 15 % of births with an average gestation period of about 146 days. They breed all year round with an average of 2.3 services per year.

The Karamoja and Sebei goats

The Karamoja goat is similar to the Galla type both being mainly white in colour and short haired. It is heavier than the average Small East African goat and well adapted to dry environment being good at water conservation. The Sebei goat is a highland meat type predominantly found in Mount Elgon highland areas in Kapchorwa. The goat has various colour patterns. Both the Karamoja and the Sebei goats are described as types by location. The two breeds have not been adequately studied.

Recommended breeding practices

- Plan your breeding by selecting the right goat breeds suited to your breeding goals and production environment
- Crossbreed by mating two purebred animals to produce better offspring with high productivity
- Avoid mating related animals to prevent inbreeding and reduced productivity
- Crossbreed and upgrade up to 75% exotic blood to maintain a good level of adaptation to local conditions and survival