

Characteristics of the Kiko Goat

General characteristics

The primary characteristic of the Kiko goat is its hardiness and its ability to achieve substantial weight gains when run under natural conditions without supplementary feeding. In New Zealand it has been called the "go anywhere, eat anything" goat signifying its ability to thrive under less than ideal conditions.

The Kiko is large framed, generally white (although many Kikos carry genes for color and colored Kikos are capable of registration) with a coat that ranges from slick in summer to flowing hair when run in mountain country in winter.

Mature males display substantial characteristic horns and are of a bold disposition. Mature females are ample, feminine and generally have good udder placement and attachment. The Kiko is a consummate browser and will range extensively when run in open country. The Kiko is not affected by substantial climatic variation and is equally at home in sub alpine mountain country and arid brushland.

Perhaps the defining characteristic of the breed is the rate of growth. The kids are born of average size but with considerable vigor. From birth to weaning the Kiko displays a rate of growth at least equivalent of any other purpose bred meat goat breed but this is achieved without the management and feed inputs generally required for satisfactory meat production in other breeds.

Indicative weight gains

In the 1995/96 kidding season kids reared under natural conditions attained an average daily weight gain of 314 grams daily in the period birth to weaning. This compares with the average daily gain of 311 grams in the 1994/95 season.

In the 1993 kidding season kids averaged 282 grams daily gain birth to weaning. This figure includes a significant number of late and out of season kids. Six month weight for 1993 males born was an average of 48.2 kilograms attained without any supplementary feeding and with the animals run under natural range conditions.

Goatex Group places emphasis on the birth to weaning weight since that is the weight that is most significant in respect of the production of carcasses of target weight. Weights are recorded of all animals born and so the weaning weight averages are those of the entire population. Following the weighing at weaning, a portion of the kid drop is sent for slaughter (generally those exhibiting structural unsoundness or failing to meet the average daily weight gain criteria). Accordingly, subsequent weight recording does not represent the full population of livestock born and is consequently skewed by the removal of poorer performing stock.

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