

SELECTION CRITERIA FOR KIKO REPLACEMENT BREEDING STOCK



As you embark on your journey to select the highest quality and most conformation correct individuals for your farm/ranch, remember the initial selection criteria for the KIKO breed. The KIKO was selected solely on survivability and growth rate on steep rugged hill country (on the south island of New Zealand) where nutritional conditions are classed as demanding and no supplementary feeding provided. To accomplish this, the KIKO breed is based on does screened from the large feral population mated to bucks from the Anglo Nubian, British Toggenburg and Saanen breeds. The implicit challenge of developing a new breed capable of high performance to increase meat production under adverse environmental and nutritional conditions has been met through population genetics – the KIKO as a breed is here – the KIKO is here to stay.

Goats Unlimited has been selecting female and male replacement breeding stock for our purebred KIKO mob using stringent production requirements and ruthless culling practices.

The young doelings are initially selected at weaning (3 months of age) for the possibility of being retained for the future breeding mob. They must be a twin with average or above birth weight, two teats, a perfect bite, functioning third eyelid, structurally sound feet and legs, and correct/consistent body conformation. At eight months they are re-evaluated and final selection is concluded at one year of age.

Final selection criteria for a yearling is based upon structurally correct feet, pasterns and sturdy legs, the angle of shoulder at 46 - 52 degrees, width across the withers and rump and depth of heart girth at or below the elbow. Both top line and underline are level with length and width through the back and loin. Spring of rib is vital as is depth and width of chest floor. To enhance kidding (parturition) ease and eliminate dystocia, a 5 - 7 degree angle of the pelvic cradle is desired. Body weight during this growth period is approximately 90 to 100 pounds and body condition score should be between a 5 and 6. If an individual has a hard time maintaining that score, they are culled. These doelings must be athletic, aggressive browsers (always looking for the next bush) and have a pleasing disposition.

These doelings, bred as yearlings, are expected to navigate long distances across rugged topography while browsing and grazing native vegetation. They need body capacity for the rumen and twin fetuses, structurally correct legs and feet for peregrination and chest capacity for lungs with increased intake volume. Fullness of hindquarter, inside rear leg muscling and depth of twist are also assessed. By waiting to breed as yearlings, the doelings better accommodate a 36 day breeding season, calcium and phosphorus deposition in their long bones is augmented, the immune system becomes highly functional and longevity within the breeding mob is increased.

Yearling does are culled for breakdown of feet and legs, not twinning or not raising twins, poor motherability and/or poor milkability, unsound udder conformation and a rapidly diminishing, hard to regain body condition score. The udder of KIKO meat goats browsing under harsh conditions needs a tight fore and rear attachment, internal residual milk capacity and two teats correctly spaced and shaped. As the yearlings dry off after weaning kids, the udder should become compact and tight against the abdominal wall to prevent damage from dense vegetation.

Our young bucklings are screened at weaning (3 months of age), eight months, yearlings and selected as a major herd sire at two years of age.

The bucks are selected on many of the same rigid conformation standards as the females – structure of feet, legs and pasterns, width across the withers and rump, length and width of back and loin, depth of heart girth and chest floor, as well as both the shoulder and pelvic angles and expressed muscle definition of the hindquarter and inside hindleg. A pear shaped scrotum that is not split containing firm testicles of equal size is a major criteria.

As yearlings, herdsire potentials are bred to a select number of does. Before final ‘seed stock’ selection is completed, progeny profiles are carefully reviewed and evaluated.

Other criteria used to help make major KIKO breeding stock replacement selection decisions include evaluation of environmental effects, health status, carcass data analysis, pedigree and progeny profile data, breeding values and performance, heritability and repeatability of genotypic and phenotypic traits, genetic prediction(s) and the use of sire summaries.

Goats Unlimited is ruthless in culling with culled females going to our niche meat market sales and our males (castrated) to our land enhancement projects.