South African goat breeds: Indigenous veld goat

SCOPE: This Info-pack provides a brief description of the Indigenous veld goat breeds.
KEY WORDS: Type, Origin, Description, Production, Products, Distribution, Numbers.


Type
Indigenous meat goat.

The vision of the Indigenous Veld Goat Breeders’ Society is to preserve the purity of these indigenous South African eco-types.

Description
The Indigenous Veld Goat of South Africa is naturally bred for functional efficiency; they are antelope-like with longer legs, so they move with ease and can walk long distances, to either graze or browse on a variety of plants.

Origin of the breed
Indigenous goats arrived in South Africa with migrating tribes and are found in the specific areas where the different ethnic groups settled. The general appearance of these goats tends to support theories that they originated in different ecosystems and specific types have been described fairly accurately. The Indigenous Veld Goat was officially registered as a breed in 2006 and a breeders’ society was established.

Various ecotypes are distinguished:
- Nguni Type Goats (Mbuzi) - multicoloured with semi pendulous ears
- Eastern Cape Xhosa – multicoloured with lob ears
- Northern Cape, Lob Eared, Speckled (Skilder) Goats
- Kunene Type (Kaokoland) – multicoloured with lob ears.

Production norms
They are highly fertile even from a young age, have a long breeding season and produce offspring the year through.

Milk production / lactation: 400 kg
Days in milk: 274
Milk production: 1.46 kg/day
Milk fat: 5.2%
Milk protein: 3.8%
Lactose: 4.8%
Products
- Meat – The meat (Chevon) is succulent with good flavour, and very low in cholesterol.
- The ecotypes in heart water areas are resistant to the disease.
- Skins - Variety of colour patterns that can be used as a value-added trait in making “hair-on” items.
- Quality leather - unblemished by tick bites.
- Milk – used in many households.

Role in breed development
The Boer goat, Kalahari Red goat and Savannah goat all stem from the indigenous goats. Selection and breeding resulted in these various meat goat breeds.

Normal production environment
Hot, dry to hot, humid bush veld and savannah.

Breed numbers
The Indigenous Veld Goat Breeders’ Society was established in February 2006 and currently has 61 members. The total number of Indigenous veld goats in South Africa is unknown.

Nguni Type Goats (Mbuzi)
Description
They are small to medium frame, well-proportioned goats. Sexual dimorphism is a characteristic of the breed, where females are much smaller than the much larger males.

Naturally polled animals are found in the breed, but are rare in most areas. The ears of the Nguni-type goat are medium to small and semi-pendulous, but not dwarf- and milk goat ears. The ears have a lateral and slightly forward orientation; some are semi droopy - first pointing laterally and then starting to droop. Toggles are present in a percentage of male and female animals. Beards are present in both sexes, where they are small in females and large in males, where it flows into the longer hair of the neck.

The Nguni goat is a multicoloured breed, with a wide variety of uniform colours, white, black, fawn, brown and red-brown, pied, dappled and speckled, and all combinations of these colours.
Most goats have a short, glossy hair coat, and some goats are inclined to grow cashmere in cold winters. Individuals with longer hair on the lower body and hindquarters are sometimes found.

**Production norms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weight at:</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-tooth age (kg)</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-tooth age (kg)</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-tooth age (kg)</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-tooth age (kg)</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of kids born / number of does kidded: 147

Inter kidding period: 8 months.

**Normal production environment**

The Nguni type is probably more abundant than the other distinct types of indigenous goats in southern Africa. They occur specifically in the higher rainfall area stretching from the Ciskei, Transkei, KwaZulu-Natal, Swaziland, Mpumalanga, Northern Province, Botswana, the Caprivi, and extreme northern, high rainfall area of Namibia.

**Description**

This is a medium to large frame goat, rather well muscled. The face is rather long with a profile that is flat or slightly convex. The ears are long and droopy (lob ears). Horns are present in both sexes. Naturally polled animals rarely occur. Toggles are present in some male and female animals. Beards are present in males, and in a small percentage of females. Male beards are large.

A wide variety of uniform colours, white, black, fawn, brown, and red-brown, pied, speckled and especially dappled and marble patterns, and all combinations of these colours, occur. Most goats have a short, glossy hair coat, and are inclined to grow cashmere in cold winters. Occasionally some individuals are found with longer hair on the lower body and hindquarters.

**Normal production environment**

This strain originally occurred in the medium to lower rainfall area of the Eastern Cape.

**Origin of the breed**

The Speckled goat has its origin in the dry Northern Cape, Karoo area, stretching from Sutherland to Upington. Barrow wrote in 1801 that near the Hartbees river in the Northern Cape...
he encountered some "Namaqua Hottentots (Khoisan) who possessed a herd of small handsome goats that were spotted like the leopard". The Speckled goat was taken by pioneer farmers to Namibia, around World War 1 and the "Dorslandtrek" during the previous century. Here some Namibian farmers preserved them and kept them pure. Over time breeders in South Africa bought Speckled goats from these farmers, and brought them back to various parts of South Africa.

**Description**
This is a medium to large frame goat, rather well muscled. The face is rather long with a profile that is flat or slightly convex, with a slight dip in front of the eyes. The ears are large and droopy (lob ears). Horns are present in both sexes. Naturally polled animals rarely occur. Toggles are present in some goats. Beards are present in males, and a small percentage of females. Male beards tend to be large.

The Speckled goat's whole body is covered with red, red-brown or black spots. The head and legs are almost a solid colour, with a white blaze on the forehead between the horns. They have a dark stripe on top of the back, and on the front of the neck. The lower part of the legs is an almost solid dark pigmented colour. Speckled goats have excellent pigmentation with good colouration on the most vulnerable parts of the body (muzzle, eyes, ears, top of the back, lower legs, front of the neck). Most goats have short glossy hair, and are inclined to grow cashmere in cold winters.
boned legs, well adapted to the harsh climate of the Kunene Region. They are excellent walkers, adapted to walking the long distances between water points or any available water.

These goats have long narrow faces with a flat to slightly convex profile. The ears are large and droopy, similar to those of the Boer goat. Horns are present in both sexes. A very small percentage of the population is naturally polled. Toggles are rare in both sexes. Beards occur in both sexes, although the occurrence is much lower in females than in males. In females the beard is small, and in males it may vary from small to large.

The Kaokoland goat is a multicoloured breed, with a wide variety of uniform colours, white, black, fawn, brown and red-brown, pied and all combinations of these colours, including speckled combinations. The goats are sometimes covered with hair varying from short straight hair, to long straight hair, and long slightly curly hair. Hair covering of the legs and lower body also varies.

**Normal production environment**

This breed is found in the North-Western areas of Namibia, known as the Kunene Region. It is a very dry, mountainous area with low and very variable rainfall. The vegetation is Mopani-Savannah veld. The Himba people live a semi-transhumance lifestyle, moving with their animals to where grazing is available.

**References**

This info-pack was compiled from various sources of information. The text may contain extracts from the following:

Indigenous Veld Goat Club:
www.landbou.com/.../f2297405-a93f-4399-bdb7-6f3de538d75d.pdf
www.indigenousveldgoats.co.za