

Milking Goats

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FEW people realise the extent to which the milking goat has been developed. In relation to her size she produces a greater quantity of human food than any other domestic animal; a good milking goat is quite capable of producing her own weight of milk in less than a fortnight.

VARIOUS aspects of keeping milking goats will be discussed in this article, the second part of which will appear in next month's "Journal".

The value of goat's milk, especially for the feeding of infants and children where there has been an unfavourable reaction to cow's milk, has been proved beyond doubt.

This, together with the ease with which goats can be kept and their comparative freedom from disease, accounts for most of their popularity. The demand for goat's milk has brought about the development of some commercial herds, but these are still too few to produce the amount required. Further development may make desirable the inclusion of goat's milk under the Dairy (Milk Supply) Regulation 1939 of the Dairy Industry Act. This will insure that the milk is produced and handled under the same standards of hygiene as cow's milk for town supply.

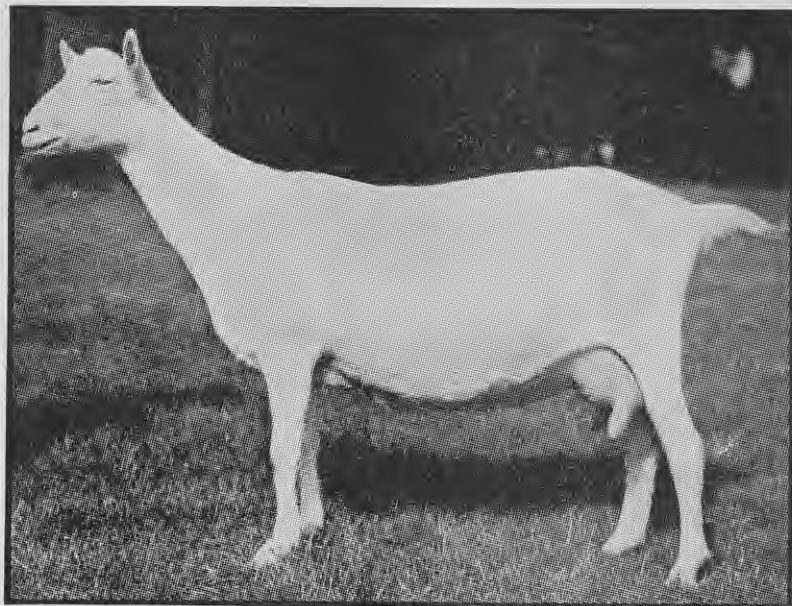
Farm Dairy Instructors can give advice on the construction of reliable goat milk dairy premises.

Breeds

There are many goats in New Zealand, but they are of mixed types and generally inferior as milkers. Of the better types those showing Saanen or Toggenburg characteristics predominate. Milk goats are usually short haired and their colour varies with the breed. As in dairy cows good breeding is important for milk production, and milk recording is essential both for pedigree and commercial producers. Saanen and Toggenburg goats—both Swiss types—have been bred especially for abundant production of a high-quality milk which is entirely free from taint. Pedigree goats of both breeds are available in New Zealand, though in short supply, and imported animals are being used by breeders to improve their stock. The Saanen is by far the more popular breed.

The Department of Agriculture can supply information which will assist anyone wishing to purchase milking goats of good type in New Zealand.

Saanen: The Saanen is pure white or pale biscuit coloured. It is an Alpine type with upright ears giving it an alert, deerlike appearance. The dairy conformation is especially well



[From "The British Goat Society's Year Book"
A British Saanen female goat.

developed. The hair is short and fine, sometimes with a fringe of longer hair along the back and down the hind-quarters. It is usually hornless, but horns are not uncommon.

Toggenburg: The Toggenburg is another Alpine type with erect ears. The colour varies from a silver fawn through all the shades of drab and brown to dark chocolate. White markings occur as bars down each side of the face from above the eyes to the muzzle, on the edges and tips of the ears, on the rump, and on or about the tail. The legs are white from the knees and hocks downward. The hair is usually short, but as in the Saanen, may be longer along the back and down the hindquarters. The breed is hornless, though a goat with horns is seen occasionally.

British Alpine: Goats of this breed are alert and resemble fairly closely the Saanen in general conformation. They are black or rusty black with the same white markings as the Toggenburg. The hair is short. They are usually hornless.

Anglo-Nubian: This is an Oriental type which may be any colour with no uniform pattern. It is lop-eared. The outline of the face is convex, the forehead being especially prominent. The Nubian, which is a large goat and carries more flesh than the Swiss breeds, is also considered a hornless breed. It gives rich milk, but not in quantity. Tassels are seldom present.

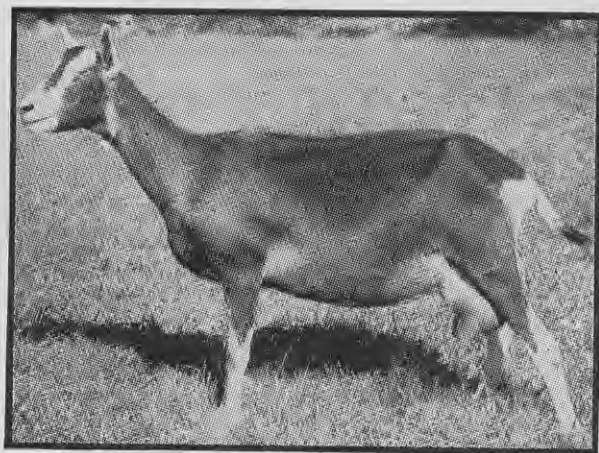
Points of a Good Milking Goat

In general conformation all goats bred for milk production are similar.

The breed characteristics in which they differ are mainly colour, shape of head and ears, and to some extent size and length of leg and coat. In conformation Toggenburg, Saanen, and British Alpine goats are identical.

In general appearance the doe should be alert and active with good health indicated by a soft, pliable skin and silky hair. She should be truly feminine with absence of coarseness and should possess a mild temperament. Good conformation and breed character should give an all-over appearance of quality.

The head should be carried well and possess a feminine appearance. It should be of medium length with plenty of width between the eyes, the facial line being straight or slightly dished. The absence of horns,



[From "The Modern Dairy Goat", by J. and H. Shields
A British Toggenburg female goat.