

Proposal for breed rules for the Kabulya Meat Goat

Preamble

This document includes suggestions for a breed classification system for meat goats. The concept is based on the system used for the Kabulya Smallholders' Goat.

Introduction

The purpose of this system of goat certification is to establish breed registration in a way that is accessible to small-holder farmers as well as larger-scale breeders. It is also designed to make selective breeding a natural part of the registration process.

A new breed is needed because local goats are slow-growing, but exotic breeds do not adapt well to Ugandan conditions.

The most important characteristic of a meat goat is that it should be fast growing. In addition, a meaty conformation is valuable – i.e. good muscling all over, not just a fat belly. Profitability is improved if twins and triplets predominate. Disease and climate adaptation are also very important for profitability.

Appearance does not affect productivity, but it is an important factor for sellers of breeding stock. Every breed has characteristics that make it readily identifiable. In Uganda, the Boer goat is well-established as the best for meat production. We are therefore suggesting that the Kabulya Meat Goat is developed as a 'Ugandan Boer Goat'. However, it would be perfectly feasible to adopt any other target appearance. Because our starting stock are crossbreeds, it will be important to avoid confusion with the Mubende goat.

It is easier to plan selection for growth than for disease resistance or climate adaptation. That means that the ideal starting point is lower-grade crosses – no more than 50% exotic ancestry, and ideally less than that. That will ensure that there is adequate disease resistance from the start, and the breeding programme can concentrate on growth and, if necessary, appearance.

This document focuses on dairy goats suitable for people who want to make a business from selling milk (Kabulya Commercial Goat). Separate documents exist for disease-resistant goats suitable for producing milk for home consumption (Kabulya Smallholders' Goat) and for meat goats (Kabulya Meat Goat).

To make the breeding process available to the maximum number of people it is important that it is based on an "open herd book" – i.e. that it is possible to start from any goat and grade up.

Overview of the system

The registration will be a series of grades that depend purely on performance, not on percentage of Boer or Kabulya genetics. We are proposing a system whereby each goat will have two grades – one for growth and one for appearance. Other systems are also possible, such as assigning a single grade on the basis of a combined score that has contributions from growth and appearance. Alternatively, successive grades could require successively stricter requirements for both growth and appearance.

Proposed growth grades

There are claims on the internet for typical Boer goat weights as high as 48 kg at 9 months of age. That may be over-stated, or may require levels of feeding that would be uneconomic in the Ugandan

context. We have a working target of 40 kg for males and 34 kg for females at 270 days (around 9 months). The suggested starting point is 18 kg for males and around 15½ kg for females. Especially for the lower grades, it may be sufficient to estimate the weight using the heart-girth method. The suggested thresholds for the grades are set out in the following table.

Grade	Minimum weight		Minimum heart-girth	
	male	female	male	female
1	18.0	15.6	60.3	57.5
2	19.1	16.5	61.5	58.6
3	20.2	17.5	62.7	59.7
4	21.4	18.5	63.9	60.8
5	22.6	19.5	65.1	62.0
6	23.9	20.7	66.3	63.2
7	25.3	21.8	67.6	64.4
8	26.8	23.1	68.9	65.6
9	28.4	24.4	70.2	66.8
10	30.1	25.8	71.6	68.1
11	31.8	27.3	73.0	69.3
12	33.7	28.9	74.4	70.7
13	35.7	30.6	75.8	72.0
14	37.8	32.3	77.2	73.3
15	40.0	34.2	78.7	74.7
16	42.3	36.2	80.2	76.1
17	44.8	38.3	81.8	77.6
18	47.5	40.5	83.4	79.0
19	50.3	42.8	85.0	80.5
20	53.2	45.3	86.6	82.0
21	56.3	47.9	88.2	83.6
22	59.6	50.6	89.9	85.2
23	63.1	53.5	91.7	86.8
24	66.8	56.6	93.4	88.4
25	70.8	59.9	95.2	90.1

Proposed appearance grades

Assuming that the target appearance is like the Boer Goat, the following factors are important

Characteristic	Desired form
Main colour	White
Head colour	Red (orange) or Brown
Blaze (white stripe between nose and forehead)	(Neither encouraged nor discouraged)
Minimum extent of head colour	Extending to base of ears and to the throat
Maximum extent of head colour	Extending to the edge of the shoulder joint
Symmetry	Perfectly symmetric
Purity of body colour	No coloured spots/patches on the body, legs or feet

Ear length	Reach the lips when pushed against the side of the head
Lop or Prick ears	Lop eared: ears hanging vertically down
Shape of ears	Rounded, not pointed
Horns	Not excessively long, curved downwards in a smooth arc
Face shape	Roman (convex) nose

This is a long list. The easiest way to handle it is to score each characteristic separately and then combine the scores into a single aggregate. The different characteristics may be weighted differently – for instance, purity of body colour might be scored from 0 to 10, while horn shape is scored from 0 to 5.

Alternative appearance targets.

There are a number of reasons why the Boer appearance may not be the desired target. One is that we are developing a new breed and want to give it its own identity. Also, making it look like the Boer Goat could be considered deceptive.

In that case, there are alternatives such as:

Black headed Boer	Like Boer goats except that the head colour is black instead of brown
Prick-eared Boer	The same colour pattern as Boer goats, but the ears are the size and shape of local goats, and the face is concave not convex.

Other alternatives are also possible, whether based on the Boer pattern, or completely independent.

Detailed rules

1. Genetic background
 - a. Admission to the breed is only for goats with non-East African ancestry not exceeding 50%.
 - b. There is no lower limit to exotic ancestry.
2. Certifying Officers for Performance Grades
[Lower grades can be assigned by village groups, but successively higher grades require approval from an officer from a different parish, sub-county or district.]
3. Birth Grades
 - a. The Birth Grade of a male or female goat shall be the lower of the grades of the sire and dam.
4. Weight Grade
 - a. The maximum weight grade that can be assigned is 2 above the birth grade
 - b. Subject to clause 4.b, the Weight Grade is determined from a table of threshold weights/heart girth such as the one shown in the overview above.
5. Appearance Grade
[Rules for the Appearance grade can be formulated once the target appearance has been decided]
6. Registration fees
 - a. Registration for lowest grades is free. [The grade at which free registration ends will need to be decided.]
 - b. Registration for higher grades will be on a sliding scale.

7. Certificates

[A similar system of certification to that of the Kabulya Smallholders' Goat and Kabulya Commercial Goat)