

# **Meat & Fiber Goat Breeds**

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# Boer

## **Origin:** South Africa

The development of the boer goat in the early 1900's can be traced to the Dutch farmers in South Africa. "Boer" is a Dutch word which means farmer. With meat production setting the selection criteria, the Dutch farmers created the boer goat as a unique breed of livestock. The first full-blooded boer goats came to the United States in 1993. Since that time, a tremendous amount of interest in breeding boer goats has exploded in the United States. There is a breed association dedicated to this goat called "The American Boer Goat Association (ABGA)."

## **Breed Characteristics:**

- Boer goats are noted for being the largest of the meat goat breeds. They are fast growing, docile, and have high fertility rates.
- Compared to the other goat breeds, Boer does have been reported to have superior mothering skills.
- Boers are a hardy breed which can adopt themselves to most weather and climate conditions.
- They are typically white bodied with a brown head, but no preference is given to hair color (per current ABGA breed standards). Some may be completely white or brown.
- They possess long pendulous ears.
- A mature Boer buck can weigh between 200-340 pounds while females can range from 190-230 pounds.



# Kiko

**Origin:** New Zealand

The “Kiko” is a Maori word which means flesh or meat. The breed was developed by Garrick and Anne Batten of Nelson in the northern South island in the 1980’s. They cross bred local feral goats with imported dairy goat bucks of the Anglo-Nubian, Toggenburg, and Saanen breeds. Their goal was to create a hardy, fast growing breed which could survive with little input from farmers. Kiko goats were exported to the United States in the 1990’s. There is a breed association of this goat named “The American Kiko Goat Association (AKGA).”

## **Breed Characteristics:**

- Kikos are a medium to large size goat.
- They have a muscular appearance with erect ears.
- The dominant coat color is white or cream, but any other color patterns are acceptable.
- Kiko goats are excellent meat goats that are usually lower priced than Boer goats, but higher than other meat breeds.
- They are noted for their greater parasite resistance, fast growing bodies, and excellent mothering skills.
- They have a high feed to meat conversion ratio and can achieve substantial weight gains when raised under optimal natural conditions without supplementary feeding.
- Mature bucks can weigh up to around 180 pounds and females can weigh up to 120 pounds.
- Crossbreeding Kiko does with Boer bucks produces a better quality offspring that generally tend to grow faster and reach maturity earlier.



# Myotonic

**Origin:** Tennessee

Also known as “wooden leg,” “stiff leg,” or “Tennessee fainting” goat, these goats are one of the few breeds indigenous to the United States. Breed associations of this goat are “The International Fainting Goat Association” and the “Myotonic Goat Registry.”

## **Breed Characteristics:**

- These goats have a recessive gene that makes their muscles lock up when startled, possibly causing them to fall over briefly.
- The Myotonic characteristic makes them easier to keep fenced in, but also makes them more susceptible to predators.
- The Myotonic goat is heavily muscled in the rump and deep in the chest, but smaller than other meat breeds.
- They tend to be dark in color, but there is no preference for particular colors or color patterns.
- This breed is used primarily to introduce more muscularity into commercial stock.
- Prairie View A & M found that any meat goat that was at least 50% Myotonic yielded 6-10% more usable meat.





# Spanish

**Origin:** Texas

This breed type has been developed through natural selection from goats first placed in Texas in the early 1540's by Spanish explorers. Also known as "brush goats" in some regions because of their use of controlling brush. The name is used loosely to refer to local or brush goats but strictly speaking, it is an inaccurate name designation. They have been crossed with Nubians or Boers to improve size, fleshiness, and milk production. The Spanish type once provided the majority of the goat meat in the U.S., but this has changed with the introduction of the Boer breed.

## **Breed Characteristics:**

- Spanish goats can be found in any color or color pattern.
- They are tolerant of difficult conditions and forage well on local plants.
- They are very active and are considered flighty.
- There is a lot of variation in growth rate and selection is key to that growth trait.
- Producers appreciate this breed for their hardiness and ability to thrive with minimal care.
- Both bucks and does possess horns.



# Angora

**Origin:** Turkey

Angora goats originated in Turkey and are raised primarily for their valuable mohair fiber. This breed dates back to biblical history. Mohair became a valuable product for trade in early 19th century. The average goat in the U.S. shears approximately 5.3 pounds of mohair per shearing and is usually sheared twice a year. The fiber is approximately 4-6 inches long. They also provide meat in the U.S. Breed associations for this goat are “The American Angora Goat Breeders Association,” “Colored Angora Goat Breeders Association” and “Mohair Council of America.”

**Breed Characteristics:**

- Angoras have a small body which produces a good quality carcass. However, they lack hardiness, especially in cold wet conditions and do better in dry, open range conditions.
- They tend to have single kids over twins and a tendency to abort under stress. Angoras generally do not kid until about 2 years of age and have a lower reproductive rate.



# Pygora

## **Origin:** Oregon

The Pygora goat is a breed developed and registered in Oregon by Katherine Jorgensen. They produce fine fiber for hand spinning. The Pygora is a cross between the Pygmy goat who has a short and soft undercoat and the Angora goat who has long silky fleece. The Pygora may contain up to 75% of one of the parent breeds. There is a breed association of this goat named “The Pygora Breeders Association” formed in 1987.

## **Breed Characteristics:**

- Pygoras bucks weigh 75-95 pounds and does weigh 65-75 pounds.
- Bucks should be at least 23 inches in height and does a minimum of 18 inches in height.
- Pygoras produce 6 ounces to 2 pounds of hair per shearing and have three types of wool: Type A (Angora), Type B (Blend), or Type C (cashmere). True Type A animals must be sheared while Types B and C will shed out their fleeces in the spring if the fiber is not removed. All types will mat if left on too long. Little or no lanolin exists on Pygora fleece, so it must not be overspun. The fiber blends very well with wool and silk and takes dyes very well.