



International Boer Goat Association Breed Standards (Revised November, 2009)

The International Boer Goat Association Breed Standards detailed here are intended to describe goats whose physical characteristics equip them to thrive in the climate and geographic conditions of North America. They also reflect the general attitude of the North American rancher toward conformation of cattle and sheep, the traditional meat-producing livestock on the continent. The International Boer Goat Association is determined to keep always in mind that the Boer goat is first and foremost a meat goat. It is intended to be strong and hardy enough to live in a pasture and raise several fast-growing kids whose carcasses will yield the maximum percentage of meat.

These standards were updated in November of 2009 as part of an ongoing effort by the Association to help dedicated ranchers produce a better Boer goat. No one goat will perfectly fulfill every characteristic described as ideal in these standards, so the goat must be judged as a whole. Its positive characteristics must be weighed against its defects both in planning a breeding program and in placing goats in the show ring. It is important to keep in mind that analyzing goats only by a list of negative traits can result in choosing a mediocre goat with no particular defects, but no outstanding good qualities either. It is more productive to look for a goat that is superior in those areas important to a meat goat whose small defects can be offset by the choice of a mate.

Shows serve as opportunities for the public to observe a trained person apply the breed standards to a specific group of goats. International Boer Goat Association judges will consider the positive and negative qualities of each goat and rank them comparatively. Placement within a class means that from the goats presented for inspection that day the first place goat as a whole represents the Boer goat described in the International Boer Goat Association's Breed Standards better than the other goats in that group. The Grand Champion of one show may not be placed above all the other goats gathered at another place on another day because judging is always comparative.

A producer's evaluation must be based on the same principle. In particular, the sire he or she chooses should exemplify as a whole the most important traits they want to develop in that producer's herd. One parent's strong characteristics should offset the other's weaknesses.

Because the goat should be judged as a whole, both the producer and exhibitor must weigh the presence of positive characteristics against the defects of that animal before deciding to use the goat for shows or breeding.

Definition of Terms:

To best use these guidelines the reader needs to understand the meaning of the terms “serious defects” and “very serious defects”. The severity of a fault is based on the extent to which it would jeopardize the three most important functions of the Boer goat: to produce meat, to be pasture-hardy and to produce offspring. “Very serious defects” interfere with the ability of a goat to carry a suitable amount of meat on its body, walk well, eat efficiently or rear healthy offspring, therefore making that goat unsuitable for showing or breeding.

I. CONFORMATION

- A. HEAD: The head should be strong with large brown eyes that mirror the naturally gentle disposition of the Boer Goat. It should have a Roman nose and protruding forehead that makes a gently curving profile beginning at the nostrils and going back through the horns. Viewed while facing the goat the head is an elongated triangle with a bottom point that is blunt and moderately wide. The bottom jaw of the goat should be strong and deep in keeping with the depth and strength of the head. The nostril openings should be wide and set wide apart. The horns should be strong, round and set wide apart with a gradual backward curve. The horns should not grow so close together that they rub into the neck **but shall allow** the head to be free to move in a full range of motion.

The teeth of all goats over three months old must touch the upper pad. Two exceptions are provided for in these standards. First, the mouth of a goat over two years old may be considered acceptable if the fit between the teeth and the upper pad has no more than a ¼ inch-gap. Second, nursing kids under three months old may have the base rather than the top of their teeth lined up with the pad. This latter provision allows for the tendency of a kid’s teeth to slant slightly forward during the period of time it is nursing. The teeth of all goats should be rooted in the correct place along the lower jaw. Permanent teeth should appear in the correct sequence so that each pair is contiguous to the previous pair. Baby teeth should not be present between, behind or in front of permanent teeth.

The lower jaw should be broad across the end and be of sufficient depth to be strong. The ears should be wide, pendulous and long enough to hang below the bottom line of the lower jaw.

It is in the head that differences of gender are most easily seen. A buck should have a larger, broader head than a doe. His horns should be bigger around and longer. Often he has wrinkles in the skin across the nose.

The head may be completely colored or have a white blaze in the face. As a minimum, the head should have enough color to surround the eyes and cover 50% of the head. Each ear should ideally be 90% colored, but 50% coloring of each ear is acceptable if the skin under the white hair is pigmented.

“Disbudded goats will not be discriminated against in the show ring”.
If conformation and structure **are** equal, the horned goat will receive preference.

Serious Defects: Horns that are too straight, horns that grow so close to the neck that they rub into the skin, a lower jaw that is so shallow it makes the goat’s profile look pointed, ears that are too short, ears that protrude stiffly. (The tip of the ear folded up and growing to the higher part of the ear is not considered a defect because it is a result of being folded in its mother’s womb, not of heredity.)

Very serious defects: Concave forehead, blue eyes, undershot jaw (parrot mouth), overshot jaw (shovel mouth), hare lip, and ears that **are folded (twisted) at their attachment to the head, even though they may or may not be folded for their entire length. This type fold (twist) of the ear frequently results in closure of the ear canal which can further result in trapped material and consequent infection.**

B. NECK AND FOREQUARTERS

The neck should connect at the top of the withers. The neck should be moderately long in relation to the length of the body. Gender differences are readily apparent in the neck. Bucks should have a masculine, heavily muscled neck. Does should have a neck that is refined and feminine.

The chest should be broad and deep without excessive flesh or excessive skin in the brisket because packers in the United States consider excessive flesh and skin in that area waste. The breast bone of the goat should not protrude to make a sharp edge in front of the vertical line made by the forelegs but should give the appearance of being flat across.

The shoulders must fit snugly against the body leaving the withers broad and well rounded. The shoulder blades should not be visible above the line of the withers when the goat is standing with its head up. When walking with its head up, the shoulder blades should not move out from the body or move above the line of the withers.

The forelegs should be straight, strong and of moderate length in proportion to the body. A buck should have masculine forelegs with a heavier bone than that of a doe. They should be set out on the corners of the goat’s body and go straight

down to the ground so that the body is carried between the legs rather than on top of the legs. The forearm should be well muscled.

The pasterns must be strong and short. Age weakens pasterns and hauling can cause a temporary flexibility of the pastern as can excessive weight such as that of a heavy pregnancy. Poorly trimmed hooves can make the pastern appear faulty. In determining breeding values of a goat the producer can consider that the pastern weakness is temporary. The judge of a show, however, must appraise the goat by its appearance on the day of the show. The hoof must be dark and well shaped.

Serious Defects: Neck too thin, too long, too short or set wrong, shoulders too loose, pasterns too long or too flexible, fine-boned legs, bowed legs, “knock knee”, narrow chest, toes on the same foot that do not both point forward.

Very Serious Defects: Extremely bowed legs or “knock knees”, extremely deformed feet.

C. BODY (BARREL):

The Boer goat’s body should be deep, long and wide. It should have a good spring of rib, that is to say, the rib cage should be rounded on the sides like a barrel, not flat like a box. It is important that the body not pinch in just behind the shoulders. This is where the long back muscle begins and that muscle should be full at the point of attachment as well as along the rest of the back. It is important that this backbone structure be wide as well as long and well covered with muscle.

A Boer goat should be straight from the shoulder to the point of the hip, although a slight dip can be tolerated. The goat’s back should be strong and not show signs of sagging in the middle. The distance between the last rib and the front edge of the hipbone should be long. The loin should be wide from side to side and deep from top to bottom. This is where the length of the loin is measured.

Serious Defects: Narrow back, pinched heart girth, swayback, short loin, flat sides, or shallow body.

Very serious Defects: Extreme swayback, extremely pinched heart girth, or lack of a substantial long back muscle when the goat is in good condition.

D. HINDQUATERS:

The slope of the rump beginning on the top line at the point of the hips and going to the tail should not be steep, and the distance between those two points should be long. When looked at from the side the hind leg should be full and well-rounded, extending all the way to the hock. Viewed from the rear, the rump

should be wide, full and deep. Beginning from the hairless area under the tail and extending to the point at which the legs split apart is the “twist”. A buck’s twist should be deep. The rump in that area should be wide and heavily muscled. It is a plus if a doe also has some depth to her twist. The doe will carry more femininity in her muscling than the buck.

The shank of the hind leg should be muscled on both the outside and inside of the leg bone. A Boer goat should have good width between the hocks and the hocks should point straight back, not in or out.

The hind leg should have a slight angle and not be entirely straight up and down from the hip through the hock and the pastern. That angle should not be too acute.

The pasterns must be short and strong. When the animal walks the feet should move straight ahead.

The tail should come straight out from the dock and the tip could be carried to one side or the other. The hairless skin around the anal area ideally should be 100% pigmented and it must be at least 75% pigmented. Pigmentation is present if that skin area is any shade of color from light tan to black. Lack of pigmentation causes skin in that area to be pink. The purpose of this requirement is to prevent cancer of the skin from sun damage. Kids under six months of age may have 50% pigmentation.

Serious Defects: Inadequate pigmentation, hindquarters that come to a screwdriver point, steep rump, short hips, not enough muscling in the rump or hip, a hip muscle that fails to come down to the hock leaving a portion of the shank bare of meat, hocks that come together (cow hocked) or bow apart, a rayed tail, weak pasterns, badly shaped feet or feet that point in or out. A hind leg that is too straight (post legged), or too sharply angled (sickle hocked).

Very Serious Defects: Extremely cow hocked or sickle hocked hind legs, extremely weak pasterns, extremely deformed feet, lack of sufficient meat on the hindquarters when the goat is in good condition.

II. SKIN AND COVERINGS:

The skin should be loose and supple because this is an indication of the goat’s ability to grow. Eyelids and hairless parts of the body should be 100% pigmented, but 75% is acceptable. Hair should be short. Soft, fur-like cashmere that grows under and through the hair is acceptable in winter. If the goat has been in cold climates this cashmere may be more abundant.

Serious Defects: Inadequate pigmentation, very coarse hair, long, rough, shaggy hair.

III. REPRODUCTIVE ORGANS:

E. DOES:

A doe should have a well-developed, wide udder that is firmly attached, not hanging low with pendulous teats. Boer goats were developed to produce multiple kids. For this reason South African producers selectively bred them to have more than the two teats that other goats have in order to feed triplets and quadruplets. **While one or two functional teats per side is the preferred udder structure, three functional teats per side are acceptable until January 1, 2011, at which time these breed standards will change to allow not more than two functional teats per side.** A split teat is acceptable if it is not joined for more than 50% of its length. **A double-orifice teat is acceptable if the end is not too large for a newborn kid to nurse unaided.**

Serious Defects: Small, poorly formed udder incapable of producing adequate milk to properly nourish at least two kids.

Very Serious Defects: Low hanging, pendulous teats or balloon teats too large for a newborn kid to nurse unaided. A split teat joined for more than 50% of its length, a double-**orifice** teat that does not separate but has a wide end that is too large for the newborn kid to nurse unaided. Any teat formation that would present a hazard to a newborn kid's survival such as a cluster of teats too close together to be successfully suckled should be considered a very serious defect.

F. BUCKS:

A buck should have two well-formed, approximately equal-sized testes in a single scrotum. He should have a well-developed epididymis at the bottom of each testicle and a clean cord connected to the apex of each testicle. A split of no more than 1/2 inch of the scrotum is acceptable. The size of the testes will vary with age and season but the circumference should be large enough to indicate fertility and libido.

Serious Defects: A split in the scrotum of more than 1/2 inch.

Very serious Defects: One testicle or no testicles. Small or abnormal testes, nodules on the cords connected to the testes.

IV. PERCENTAGE DOES

Percentage does will be judged under the same standards used for fullblood/purebred does with the exception that color will not be a consideration. Note: Percentage does seeking registration under the "Non-Traditional Colored Registry" must meet the requirements of that registry. **Percentage does over six-months of age must have at least 50% pigmentation.**