

Raising Kiko Percentages

By Terry Hankins

A profitable aspect of our goat raising has been the production of crossbred Kikos. The bucks and wethers go to the meat market and the doelings are sold as replacements to other breeders. It took us a couple of years to get it right, but once we hit our stride, the goat-making enterprise pretty much runs itself.

After a disastrous experience with Nubian does and a Boer buck in the mid-1990s, we purchased our first Kiko buck in 1997 from Kiko pioneers Frank and Mary Dyson near Waco, Texas. "King Tut", as we called him, was a yearling son of the famous Moneymaker. We brought him home and put him with a herd of black Spanish nannies. The next spring we had dozens of white and champagne kids running around the pasture. We didn't lose any of those hardy little animals - not to sickness, predators or parasites. We sold the boys that fall for meat. All but one of the does were sold as breeding nannies and as far as I know, none of those original Kiko x Spanish does were ever seriously ill or died from anything other than old age.

Back then we were getting \$100 a head for unregistered half-Kiko doelings, so our \$1,000 buck was paid for after selling only 10 goats. Everything after that was pretty much profit. We have found that just adding 50 percent Kiko blood to a goat can make a world of difference. A Kiko x Boer percentage kid is close to 100 percent hardier than its Boer mom - at least it seems like it to me.

From that 1998 kid crop through the present, we have continually produced Kiko percentage offspring for the commercial market. In the early years, we raised very few three-quarter Kikos. There was such a demand for the half-Kiko does that we usually sold out each year. It was hard to turn down cash money. So we would turn around and raise another crop of half-Kikos. Eventually we got our numbers high enough that we were able to retain some percentage Kiko does while still having enough to satisfy our buyers.

While a person may not want to jump directly into the fullblood Kiko business, it is relatively inexpensive to get into the crossbred business. I recommend that a beginner purchase a nice fullblood Kiko buck (\$500 & up). You can turn him in with almost any type of nannies and expect good results. In our part of the country, you can purchase nice, unregistered Boer-Spanish or Boer-Nubian nannies for less than \$100 apiece. These are nice does that cross well with Kiko bucks. A better bet is half- or three-quarter Kiko does. Because of demand, they cost a little more, but you'll save time and money in the long run because of the minimal upkeep needed to maintain them.

This production scheme gives the producer an excellent meat goat operation. The percentage Kiko kids will grow off fast during the summer if given free rein in lush pasture, cutover timber or other browse. The boys will be ready for market by winter and the girls should be big enough to breed or sell.