

NZAGA Newsletter

NZ Arapawa Goat Association - August 2017, Issue 11

From the Editor

Hello again. My goodness, how quickly 3 months have passed. A quick update on the NZ Arapawa goat DNA project. My first thought is why on earth did I decide to do this in the middle of winter? But on the positive side, how wonderful it was to meet so many lovely people who are absolutely devoted to their Arapawa goats. The beautiful, healthy animals that I saw was so heartening. Samples were taken from 40 animals across the country, with each sample matched with the animal's details, including lineage and a photograph. These were couriered to a laboratory in Dunedin where the DNA is currently being extracted. I have been assured that surplus tissue will be stored for future investigations. The data from the extraction process will be sent offshore where the 50K SNP CHPS are created and the analysis commences. I do not expect to have any results until well after Christmas.

On a personal note, Millard Farm has been sold to a gentleman who is keen to keep my Arapawa goats. I think this is the best outcome for my old girls and for the two does rescued from Arapawa Island, as I don't think they would adapt well to a change of environment.

I mentioned in the previous newsletter that as one door closes, another opens. I have joined the committee of NZ's Rare Breeds Conservation Society, and accepted the role of Registrar for NZ's heritage breeds. A privilege and a challenge. Of course, we will start with the Arapawa Goats in domestication who deserve the title of 'heritage' rather than 'feral'. (More details on page 3) ...

Keep warm and dry. Alison

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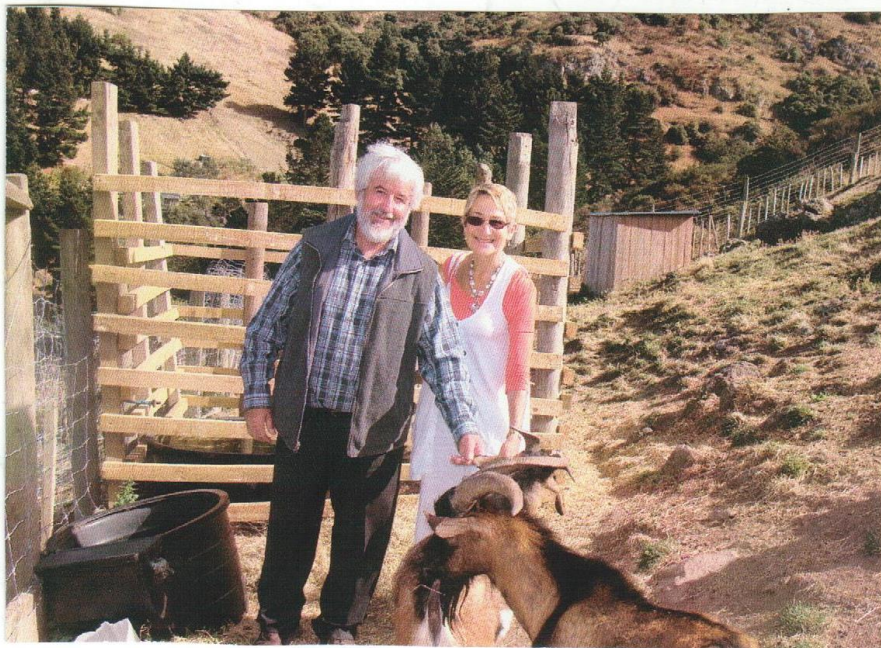
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The Gates' goats' tree fort

Looking back ...

NZ is so small, you just never know who you could be related to. Hi David and Patsy, if you are reading this newsletter, turns out we are related, albeit distant ... who would have thought? This relationship, along with the photographs below, came via my distant cousin, Colin Henderson. Love that photo of David's bucks – some of you may recognize them from years gone by. For those of you who are new to NZAGA, David took over Betty Rowe's 'home' goats when she passed. These would be the first Arapawa goats in domestication, changing their status from feral goat to NZ's heritage goats.



Looking forward ...

I suppose it was inevitable that the decision to sell our farm would bring about change in my relationship with the Arapawa goats. Without land one cannot offer a conducive environment for livestock. It is time for Alan and I to let go the day to day care of our beautiful Arapawa goats and trust that others will feel the same passion and care for them as we tried to do.

As fate would have it, rather than losing my involvement with the Arapawa goats, I was granted an opportunity to work for all of NZ's rare heritage breeds through the Rare Breeds Conservation Society of NZ (RBCSNZ). As the Registrar I have made a commitment to establish an online registry for all of NZ's rare heritage breeds, especially those that do not have their own Association. Unless we know who they are, how many there are, and where they are, how can we conserve them?

As you will be aware, we have a very basic Arapawa goat Registry on a table that anyone can access through the arapawagoat.com website. This is simplistic and lacks privacy. The online Registry, only accessible through the RBCSNZ website if you are a member, provides considerable advantages, including the ability to create pedigree charts for your animals, look at trial matings, check for inbreeding, and create certificates. Because I have the data on our goats, it seems logical to start the RBCSNZ website Registry with the Arapawa goats, however the NZAGA will continue to register our goats through me.

Membership of the RBCSNZ is inexpensive; currently just \$40 pa for an individual and \$55 for a couple. Not only will membership give you access to the Registry, it also provides you with a platform to market your goats, you receive a very informative quarterly magazine, and an annual conference where you can meet other advocates for NZ's endangered heritage breeds. **Just click on the link to join:**
www.rarebreeds.co.nz/join.html

The secret of positive change is to focus all of your energy, not on clinging to the past, but on building the new. [Socrates]



www.rarebreeds.co.nz/join.html

BioBrew Update



The good news is that the probiotic BioBrew can now be purchased directly through Farmlands under the name of StockBrew (although the company name remains as BioBrew). You can continue to purchase it through the company but their price has gone up slightly to \$25.95 including shipping. The increase in price is due to them changing couriers to Fastway for all packages (quite a few got lost so they needed the tracking ability).

Alternatively, you may find that you can buy it slightly cheaper at Farmlands. They have only just put it in their system so some of the sales staff may not have heard of it, but if you say “StockBrew” they can bring it up. If you order in advance they can always pop one in the box of EquiBrew that they regularly order.



Handy hint

Tired of the goats fighting over their pellets/multinuts? Sick of the chooks and ducks getting more of the food than your goats?

Easy fix – purchase cheap bowls with handles and put along the fence line.

Coats for New-born kids

One of our members wrote on the Arapawa Goat Facebook page (quick link is <https://www.facebook.com/groups/110199966569/>):

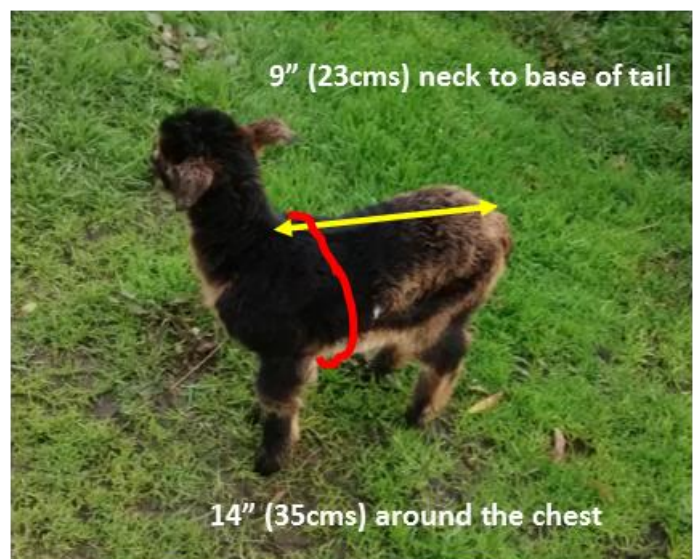
Thought I would pick people's brains about what size coats should be made for maybe new-born to 4 week old baby Arapawas. Am thinking the lamb sizes given would be way too big. We are due to have our first ever winter kids anytime now and am worried with all the cold weather (started with summer babies). I have someone just itching to make some for me.

Andrea Gauland responded:

I get fleece hoodies and pullovers as well as fleece track pants. I cut off the lower leg and arms of the jackets and pants and cut to length for each kid and cut holes for the legs. Fleece is nice and stretchy and warm, and they take about 5 minutes to make. I get the jackets and pants from op shops, so I usually get 2 kid coats for about \$1-3, and the main body of the hoodie or pants gets turned into rags or animal bedding for our cats dogs and goat kids.

This is my little 'Shady Lady' who was only 5 days old at the time. As a guideline, these measurements are probably typical of an Arapawa singleton kid of this age.

Below is a link to a baby goat coat knitting pattern. I haven't tried it so would be interested to hear if it works:



<http://phoenixdownfarm.blogspot.co.nz/2011/01/baby-goat-sweater-patterns-part-two.html>

IN AN EMERGENCY – Get an old (clean) wool sock, cut off the toe, cut holes where the legs go, and whammy – a warm little kid. You'll have to remove it in a day or two as the wool starts to unravel, but a great temporary stopgap. And the doe won't mind!

Who needs plastic toys? Give any kid an old box and/or rings of firewood and they make their own fun.



Northland courier

There has been an increased demand for Arapawa Goats in the north of the North Island. For those of you wanting to send a goat up there, I recommend:

NORTHLAND COURIER, Debbie Spridgeon,

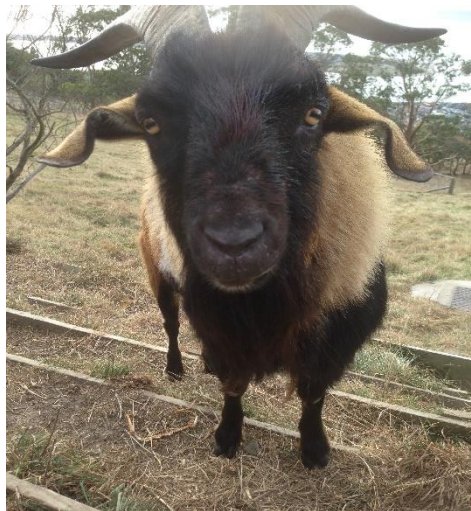
Phone 0210535326 or 094316707

Email: petcourier@vodafone.co.nz

Meadow left Masterton on the Northland Pet Courier (aligned to PetBus), heading to her new home and beau in Warkworth (umm, a bit late; unknown to me, it seems she was already in kid to our Anzac). This was the 2nd time I used Debbie's courier service and am comfortable with the way she treats the animals - as loved pets rather than stock! On the earlier occasion, two goats were transported by Debbie to Whangarei. In both cases a long trip, but they arrived safely.

Available for stud duty ...

There are two registered brothers living in Christchurch keen to acquire the status of being studs. Their lineage is Home Farm Muffin (AG065) & Tutukinoa Willis (AG120):



Home Farm
Theseus #133
(pick me, pick
me!) on the left



and Home Farm
Hephaestus #134
(on the right)

Their owner is Branton Kenton-Dau.

Contact details: Phone 022 101 9057, or email: branton1@me.com

When registering your goats ...

Remember to provide photos that easily identify your animal. Two excellent examples are photos of doelings: Rakahuri Wilhelmina and Rakahuri Fern by L Julian.



I love receiving the questions, please keep them coming.

Q & A

Q. Future DNA testing to ID Arapawa Goats

I have this goat that I am told is Arapawa but don't personally know her original owners or if she is registered. The man I got her from became unwell and could no longer look after her. Do you know how I could I find out if she is registered? She has no tags or branding of any kind.

A. Sorry but unless you can trace her history back to the person you purchased her from, there is, at this time, no way to prove she is a 'pure' Arapawa goat. However, we are in the process of analysing Arapawa goats' DNA and from the results we anticipate being able to ascertain, through DNA tests, goats that are true Arapawa rather than feral goats that have similar physical characteristics.

Q. Why is my doe so unhappy?

I have an Arapawa Island goat. She has been a part of our family for about 4 months now. I think she was 4-6 months old when we got her. She was given to me as the previous owner could no longer care for her. She is super friendly and just a delight to have. She has been so happy up until the past few weeks. A few weeks ago she woke us up with her bleating in the middle of the night. She just wouldn't stop for 2 days, and through the night also. We checked all the obvious things such as other creatures around, her health, food and water. We found 2 baby hedgehogs by her house and just figured we had solved the issue by making additions to her house so critters couldn't get in. But now, a few weeks later, we find ourselves having the same problem. We are coming to the end of our tether, coming to the fact that possibly, we are not providing her with the happy life she desires.

A. I couldn't help smiling when I received your email as I can tell you exactly what is wrong – she is in heat! Arapawa goats come in heat every 3 weeks or so, although this tends to become less during the winter months. Some girls can be very noisy, others are more subtle. She is too young to mate at the moment (I personally leave them until they are about 18 months old but others will mate them earlier as this is what happens in the wild). If she is a lone little goat, she is also likely to be calling out for attention; this can be solved by getting her a wethered friend, but won't solve the heat calling.

Q. Balls for brains

My 2 bucklings are now 7 weeks old and they both seem to have balls for brains! They are humping everyone. I'm assuming that nothing can happen at this stage?

- A.** The balls for brains (love the phrase) is your typical little buckling behaviour. If you are planning to neuter them, now is about the right time (we do them at 8 weeks, ringing them like we do ram lambs). I would definitely separate entire bucklings and doelings at (or even before) 3 months of age, just to be on the safe side.

Q. Why do my Arapawa does look different from each other?

I've noticed several quite different body shapes in my collection of does. Some have longer more slender legs and generally a more slender body, and some have shorter more stumpy legs and a chubbier body. And some have longer, more pointed faces than others. Are these differences anything to do with genetics from the island and different family groups, or are they just naturally occurring changes?

- A.** The first one I believe comes down to genetics. Just as two sisters may differ, so too do the goats come with their own unique appearance. In saying that, when the rescue was done on the Island in 2013, we noticed similarities in the goats that came from the same regional area. For example, the does that came from the outer NW of Arapawa tended to have a gingery tinge, while those who came from East Bay tended towards your classic tan and black. This could suggest later introductions influenced the gene-pool and were restricted to certain areas. We know that feral goats tend to stay within a certain area. The DNA results should be able to give us some clue to this, as each goat sampled is identifiable and therefore colouring, etc. can be explored.

Q. What is the average height and weight for adult Arapawa goats?

I don't have any way to weigh my goats so what is considered an average height and weight for a grown doe and buck? Are they considered adult at 2 years?

- A.** This one is more easily answered through the website (which incidentally we must update given recent research findings):
<http://www.arapawagoats.com/standard.html>.

Q. Can a buck run with a doe that has a kid at foot?

Can anyone offer some advice re males showing a great deal of interest in a female with a young kid at foot, he is beginning to smell and chasing the female about as if she is in season although she is not showing any signs as yet. We have separated them and have made a note of the date as we have not actually seen a mating but they are not watched overnight. A third party said she was calling but as I didn't witness it I don't know if this was a "come on" or a "Leave me alone!".

A. No mistake I'm afraid, she's ready! - separate them and as you said, mark the calendar! Incidentally, I now separate my bucks and does a month or more prior to the due date, and don't put them back together until I am planning a new coupling. Not only for the reason you mention here, but because the buck can be a risk to the in-kid doe; usually through an aggressive act because he wants the choicest food, but also because I like to ensure the well-being and comfort of the doe.

An excellent tip from Lex McKay:

If you have marked the date on your calendar, check her in three weeks' time as she may cycle again if not already in kid. Sometimes does can be 'quiet cyclers', others yell theirs heads off! You could always make a 'buck rag' by rubbing a cloth over the buck to transfer odours onto it. In about three weeks time if you hang it somewhere she can access it, she may indicate that she is in season by seeking out the rag and showing signs of coming into season.

Q. What is an appropriate amount/volume to feed an Arapawa goat daily beyond their own free browsing and hay eating?

A. From personal experience with a beautiful doe dying from being overfed (too much love), this is one of the most painful lessons for owners and has been the cause of people giving up their goats. My goats have access to paddocks throughout the day and dry hay in the evening to entice them back to their night paddock (where I can safely enclose them as our farm is in a residential area and sometimes stray dogs walk by). They also like to eat the barley straw I put down for their bedding, garden veges (less of the cabbage!) and garden weeds. So everything else is really just a supplement. As far as Goat performance or multifeed nuts - at most, mine now only get a cup a day (during the winter; and only every couple of days in the spring, summer and Autumn). When I want them to have Bio Brew, or to come to me for grooming,

I will also offer them a cup of the nuts. I give a lactating doe a cup of the nuts morning and night.

Q. Can I give my goats' barley or other grain mixes (crushed or whole)?

A. I no longer give my does grains as this was the mistake I made that resulted in the death of my 1 doe who had only recently given birth. She seemed to reject one of her twins so to encourage her to stand for him, I fed her a grain mix I made up from a recipe given to me by a milking goat breeder. At the start, it was my standard 1 cup. The problem was that a few hours later, I wanted the little kid to have another feed – hence another cup of the grain mix. And you guessed it – in my ignorance, later on I did the same thing. When I went to check on her in the morning she was very unwell. She struggled up, went to her water bowl, then went down. Before the vet arrived she died. Apparently she hadn't digested the grain, the water mixed with the grain in her stomach and gave her bloat, and from there she was unable to recover. An awful experience I share so that others might also learn from this. I now believe that most 'recommended amounts' are aimed at milking goats which probably means they are too much for the smaller meat/feral/heritage goats.



*Introducing baby Zack, an unexpected surprise
for Kitt and Michelle from Meadow and Anzac*

If you do want to supplement your goats' feed, one of our members, Heather, sent me Andrea Gauland's recipe:

Goat Feed recipe for winter

(I buy a big sack of each then **combine all** the **Grains** in a drum and add the rest as I need it ... Andrea)

Ingredients:

Rolled Barley	
Crushed Maize	
Crushed Peas	
Rolled Oats	= 1x ice-cream container
Bran (FRESH as you can find)	1 cup
Seaweed Meal/Kelp powder	1 cup
Lucerne chaff	2x ice cream container
Nutrient Drench (recipe below)	2-3 caps

Method:

Mix all of the above in a bucket in the quantities shown above.

Feed each goat approx. **1 cup** of the above mix every **2nd day**, working up to approx. **2 cups daily** in 1-2 weeks. Lessen if they start to scour. I like to feed with hay also.

Nutrient drench:

1x 500g livestock molasses (or blackstrap molasses from the supermarket)
1 litre apple cider vinegar (ACV)
2 fat heads of garlic, cloves separated out

Dissolve the molasses with 1 litre of hot/boiling water. Put the garlic in a blender and just cover with ACV. Whiz till the garlic is liquidised. Add the rest of the ACV, whiz again and then combine all liquid ingredients.

The next NZAGA newsletter is due in November; articles, photos and questions welcome. **Alison Sutherland**, alison@xtra.co.nz