

# NZAGA Newsletter

NZ Arapawa Goat Association November 2016, Issue 8



## From the Editor

Hello everyone. Spring at last, and lots of little kids running around. While it was my intention to keep any girls that we bred this year, circumstances around my husband's health means we have to reduce the workload so that we can stay on our little farm in Masterton. The good news is that I can continue to keep my home goats consisting of 9 does, 2 bucks and a wether. Recently I put an advertisement on Trade Me and was stunned by the response – 1473 views and 71 watchers. While they are not all buyers, clearly there is interest. What a great way to increase awareness of the Arapawa goats.

Probably my other biggest news is that I have completed the book '**No ordinary goat, the story of NZ's Arapawa goats**'. Some of you will be aware that I have spent the last four years researching the origins of the Arapawa goats. This book is the result of that research, commencing with the English milking goat that sailed on Endeavour with Lieutenant Cook, to goats being left on Arapawa Island on Captain Cook's second and third voyages to the Southern Seas. There is a section discussing the origins of the Arapawa goats, a 'Post Cook' section that provides evidence the goats survived, and a 'modern-day' section that demonstrates the plight of the Arapawa goats. I have made an executive decision to advertise the book in this newsletter in the belief that NZAGA members (a) want to know the facts that make our beautiful animals so unique, and (b) will appreciate how important your role is in ensuring the survival of New Zealand's critically endangered Arapawa goats.

Warm regards

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# No Ordinary Goat

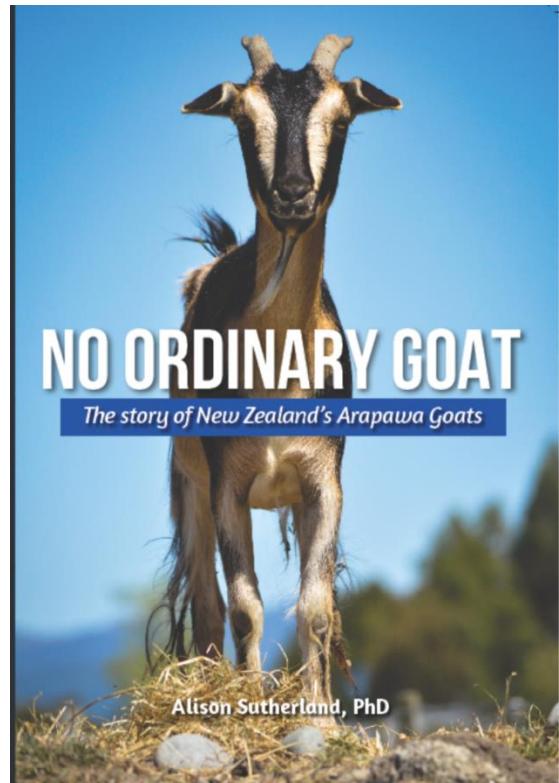
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## THE STORY OF NZ'S ARAPAWA GOATS

Perhaps the best way to inform the reader of what a book is like is through another person's perception. Michael Willis, a member of the Rare Breeds Conservation Society of NZ and the NZAGA, has done me the honour of writing the foreword for 'No Ordinary Goat'. In his review he states:

Alison takes us on a journey that is not only extremely readable and fascinating in its content, but it also gives an historical insight into part of our nation's early history. Years of research has enabled Alison to systematically paint a verbal picture, bringing all the elements together in a way that has never been done before. This is an extremely enjoyable book to read, and an incredibly valuable documentation of a little known animal that has helped shape our country and identity.

Michael H Willis. MNZM  
Willowbank Wildlife Reserve  
Christchurch.



Printed in New Zealand, 'No ordinary goat, the story of NZ's Arapawa goats' is a large (255x175), soft cover book consisting of 224 pages, with over 50 illustrations in colour. The price is set at \$33 (GST inclusive) to keep it affordable for people wanting to know about the Arapawa goats. Postage is \$7 for 1 or 2 books, \$14 for 3 or more.

The first edition is currently in print, due for release on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2016. There are only 100 in this first edition, so if you would like to purchase a copy (or more), either contact me directly (for a signed copy?) or go through the formal channel via 'Your Books' website. The link is:

<http://www.yourbooks.co.nz/no-ordinary-goat-alison-sutherland/>

*Sometimes I am just amazed at the depth of care and commitment people will go to in supporting and rescuing our endangered Arapawa goats. You are the 'beautiful people' Betty Rowe used to speak about. This is Silver's story, sent in by Sharon Taylor.*

## Siluer's Story

Meet Silver. A cheeky little 6 month old rascal we hand reared from when she was 5 days old, bought to be part of our small breeding programme when she is older with 2 Millard Farm girls and a Staglands buck. Or so she was until about a month ago when she was found crying weakly one evening unable to stand up so was rushed to vet literally on deaths door (she stopped breathing half way there). She was rushed straight in. We were told to go home and that they would be in touch, admitting they didn't know what was wrong with her, but that they would support her with drips and run tests. We got a phone call an hour or two later telling us she had low blood sugar (she had symptoms similar to a diabetic coma) so they put her on glucose and



hoped she would get through the night. She did – but then she crashed again the next morning, but then she came right and they let us take her home after 2 days. We were happy but concerned as to us she still wasn't her normal self. She looked a bit drunk and really wasn't with it but she was better than she had been so we thought she would just come right. The next day though she wasn't. So she was back at the vet and it started again. Again it was low blood sugar and she just kept building it up and then crashing. The vet (who classed herself as quite knowable about goats) was baffled and consulted international vet forums. She also prepared us for the worse as she didn't know what else to do. To me (after googling) it sounded like it may be ketosis which can be caused by poor diet. We had had a problem getting her to eat anything other than grass and hay as she just didn't see nuts or grains or even fruit/veg as food so made it difficult to get extra nutrients into her. I was convinced if we could get her eating (which she had stopped completely) she would come right so I suggested (in desperation) that maybe we could give a try to bottle feeding (as she had never refused that). The vet had been against this earlier as it could cause rumen problems but we were at the stage where that was a lesser evil and the vet said we could manage that if it did cause a problem. So we gave it a try and it worked (though don't think the vet nurse appreciated the initial diarrhoea). She spent another week in the vets with her blood sugar continuing to go up and down but her behaviour became normal. The vet gave up measuring blood sugar in the end as she said the behaviour was a better indicator and it might be down to her body trying to sort itself out. She is now back at home – still being bottle fed (slowly weaning her off again which she is not happy about), eating everything in sight. The vet got a local feed mill to mix a special concoction of something called kidstart, grains and molasses to help build her up – which was hard to convince her to eat at first but she now loves it. That and some bio-brew as recommended by Alison Sutherland (which is magic stuff). Five weeks on I am happy to report we have a happy end to our story and she is back to being her noisy cheeky self (though she is still an inside goat at night in case she gets too cold due to being shaved to do all the blood tests, etc.)

## Life after Caesar - Our own little miracle

In February 2013 we were involved in the rescue of nine feral goats from Arapawa Island. Six went to Staglands and we brought three does home with us. One of the does was elderly, another we perceived to be two to three years old, the other was an adolescent and turned out to be the daughter of the younger doe. Despite merging with our small herd, the three rescued does kept their distance and remained wary of us. The following year, when we knew the doe was at least 18 months old, we put the two younger does to our buck, Tutukino Dobby. Island Girl of Arapawa Island (the mother) duly had twins. Island Babe of Arapawa Island (the youngest) came into labour but also became very distressed. We brought in the vet who confirmed she was in labour but her cervix was not dilating. Nor was there any sign the kids were alive. With no hesitation we rushed her to the surgery where the vet performed an emergency caesarean section. The result was twins; a male and female. To everyone's amazement, both were alive. Island Babe rejected her babies and so they were hand-raised. Earlier this year we decided to put Island Girl to a buck which required separating the two does for the first time. The following morning we found a distressed Island Babe in the same paddock as her mother and the buck. I made the decision to leave her with them. What followed was an anxious, guilt-ridden 5 months. Kept in the closest paddock to our house with her mum, both girls blossomed with extra feeds and tit-bits of foliage, lots of nurturing and twice weekly doses of Bio-Brew. I had marked the calendar with their expected due dates and the mum delivered healthy twins a week earlier than expected. Four days later, on my early morning rounds, I noticed Island Babe was reluctant to eat her breakfast. I went back a few hours later and was shocked to see her condition; while still standing, she had deteriorated rapidly. Leaving a message on my husband's mobile, I rushed to the barn to get some Bio-Brew and hurried back to her paddock. There she was, nibbling at some hay, a tiny little tan kid standing under her. My first thought was that her mother's new kid was trying to sneak a feed off her. Then I saw some blood beneath her tail. The most amazing revelation – Island Babe had delivered naturally! She nudged the little fellow under her and he began to suckle. He was so small that I wondered if there was another kid somewhere. I went over to her house and there on a wooden pallet was the tiniest, most pathetic little kid. I warmed her, sprayed her umbilical cord with iodine and carried her out to her mother. The little one bleated and tried to stand up. As the kid wobbled on the spot, Island Babe came over and began licking her. Somehow the tiny little kid found herself near the teats, her head reached up, her tail wagged, and she latched on. Our little Miracle.



## Goat on a boat

### *An Interislander experience*

We had a beautiful little buckling in the North Island and a breeder who wanted him in the South Island. Morley's transport were not available and the Pet Bus, even if they would take him, were just too expensive. Having earlier booked a few days holiday in the South Island, we decided to take him across the Strait with us. The arrangement was made for the new owners of little Mitch (named after Betty Rowe's son) to drive up from Christchurch and meet us at Picton. This is what happened ...



First I checked with the Interislander Ferry office, and spoke with Phil from 'Commercial' who assured me a small goat could go in the kennel reserved for dogs (we didn't want to get to the terminal and be turned away!). We booked a dog kennel online for \$15. On the day of travel, we put Mitch in a foldable cage with straw (see next page for size and type of cage) and drove from Masterton. Arriving at the ferry terminal, I booked us and our luggage in then went back to the car to get Mitch. We waited on the seat in front of the ferry terminal allocated for dogs, canoes and bikes (It's not undercover and was freezing). Two staff members came and carried the cage, with Mitch inside, onto the **Kaiarahi** via the vehicle entrance. Al and I followed behind. A set of three clean kennels, with fresh water in containers were there, secured to the deck (another single cage was on the other side of the deck). Mitch's cage fitted inside the kennel so we didn't have to take him out, reducing the risk of escape. I put a blanket over the top and front of the cage so Mitch could feel secure, and left the sides uncovered for ventilation. A small dog went into one of the other kennels (where the black bag is). Because no-one is allowed on the vehicle deck when the ship is sailing, we had to leave him there on his own. I think we coped better with this rule than the lady with the little dog.

A few minutes before our arrival at Picton we rushed down to the vehicle deck to find a calm little goat and an equally laid back little dog. The first real problem occurred when we realised we wouldn't be able to carry the cage between the cars and trucks all lined up waiting to disembark. Easily sorted! There were queues of stationary vehicles there, some almost empty. I approached a man who had some space in his van and he agreed to transport Mitch plus the cage, off the ship. I sat in the passenger seat and left Al to follow behind. The alternative would have been to wait until every vehicle had left, then either carry a pretty heavy cage, or perhaps find room on the luggage truck. The van dropped Mitch, the cage and me off to the left of the ramp onshore where there was a gate. Fortunately, the new owners were there waiting for us. Al arrived a few minutes later, having been offered a lift on the luggage truck.

Mitch was transferred into the waiting car which was all set up with a new cage. Phew. But the adventure wasn't over. Our next problem was where to leave the folded up cage? It was too big to fit into the lockers at the terminal. We were booked on a bus that would take us to Christchurch

where we were booked on the Trans-Alpine train to Greymouth. A heavy cage was not a suitable accessory. An approach to the man at the baggage counter resulted in the cage (minus most of its straw and goat droppings), wrapped in the blanket, being left in the Picton office for a few days. On the return trip a few days later, the cage returned on the ferry as baggage.

Would I do it again? Hmm, good question. If I was young, fit, and had someone who could help me (AI is disabled with arthritis and needs a walking stick), absolutely. But unless there was somewhere else to leave the cage, only if I was returning the same day. Previously we had transported goats from the South Island to the North Island in a vehicle – much easier all round, and a lot less stressful on all parties. And this does give us another option to transport our kids from one island to the other.

I must acknowledge the Interislander ferry staff. Every staff member we met went out of their way to help us. It was an amazing example of outstanding service.

Alison



The cage was similar to the picture on the left. The size we took was 760L x 480W x 530H. There was more height and width space but not much more length/depth.

## **The missing UK Arapawa goats**

*Why the Arapawa goats need you! By having even two or three Arapawa goats you are doing a hugely important job. While seeking information for the book about the Arapawa goats that were exported to the UK, I was faced with the result of what happens when one breeder monopolises the breed.*

***Angela Timms from Wales is appealing for more Arapawa goats for the UK breeding programme:***

“There is a real shortage of Arapawas in the UK. When I got the first pair I expected to be spreading the kids to new sites to start herds and for new herds to give kids back. Poor Brenin (her buck), he only has one girl (Mistie). He has three daughters but the bloodlines are too tight to let him mate with them for breeding goats. We did let Hope mate with him last year. That was because she was coming up to four and hadn't had the opportunity of a kid. The boy was healthy in all ways but we wethered him because of the close breeding. I'm going to try to get Brenin a pygmy goat or two for companionship. I know the offspring won't be Arapawa but he will at least have a better time of it! I let him mate with AN and BT but the offspring were Arapawa sized with tiny udders and went as pets. As there are no Arapawa bucks for his daughters I did breed one with an Anglo Nubian last year. The result is a fabulous Anglo Nubian sized kid which looks like an Arapawa with only slightly longer ears and longer legs. She had to be bottle fed as her mouth really didn't work with the tiny Arapawa teat. So I milked mum to feed baby. We will see how she milks herself when mated. So I guess she may be the first British Arapawa? The future of the breed is secure, I'm sure of that. It is so sad that we have lost contact with a whole herd of Arapawas in the UK due to the charity owner falling off of all forms of communication. If anyone knows the whereabouts of Artisan Rarebreeds, we would very much like to hear from you! We DESPERATELY need them for the breeding program. There are too few Arapawas in the UK so if you have any information please get in touch.”

*The problem here is that Artisan Rarebreeds of Kent, with the best of intentions, gathered up most of the goats from the satellite herds and has since dropped off the radar, taking not only the Arapawa goats but other rare breeds as well. I have since heard that the owner of Artisan Rarebreeds is unwell; where his animals are, no one seems to know.*

*What we can learn from the UK experience is the importance of spreading our Arapawa goat herds around a number of owners and breeders, and across regions and Islands. In this way we can be assured the NZ Arapawa goat breeding programme will continue to ensure the survival and the revival of the breed in domestication.*

## Q & A

**Q.** *Do you notice that the does have less or lower grade heat cycles during the winter months? I suspect that my young buck may have already done the business but really don't know for sure.*

**A.** Going by our own experience, if you run a buck with a doe, you can expect kids at any time. We now separate our bucks from the does and select what we believe is the optimum time for mating to occur (February-June). Arapawa goats are a unique breed, so don't follow the breeding patterns of the dairy breeds (who are seasonal breeders) or the meat breeds (usually from hot climates, they mate all year round). Our does appear to cycle every three weeks but their interest in the bucks is relatively minor during the 'off' season. The same holds true for our bucks. They show little interest in the does during the 'off' season (unless they are running in the same paddock), but when the rut comes, we all know it!

**Q.** *Is my goat an Arapawa? I was wondering if you could please help me identify the breed of this little thing I rescued recently from the animal shelter. She was run over when they found her on the outskirts of Auckland. I am just curious to know what she might be and her age. She seems very young still and very playful. Her colouring is a bit like the Arapawa. Do you think she might be one? I understand they are not very common in NZ.*

**A.** First let me thank you for rescuing this beautiful goat, she is a very lucky girl. I am unable to determine if she is of the Arapawa breed based on this photograph. In all probability she is of the feral breed that exist in the area. These have some similarities to the Arapawa goats as their ancestors were also of the Old English Breed. Unless we have some evidence of her lineage, she cannot be considered an Arapawa goat. The crucial characteristic of an Arapawa goat is that its lineage can be traced back to Arapawa Island.

**Q.** *I'm looking for some nice goats to keep a lifestyle block tidy but we have deer netting. Do these ones grow horns?*

**A.** Yes, the Arapawas have horns. While the bucks grow magnificent, wide sweeping horns that will get caught in your fencing, the wethers grow horns like the does, which usually sweep to the back. Some of our owners also have deer fencing and, to date, have reported no problems. The only difficulty I can foresee is that small kids could get through the fence.



## *In brief ...*

### **New kids leaving home**

Millard Farm is now at the end of our breeding season. As well as advertising our kids on the Rare Breeds Website (they have a Buy & Sell Webmart: <http://www.rarebreeds.co.nz/>), we put the ad on Trade Me in the hope of encouraging new breeders and owners into the Arapawa Goat world. I have been delighted by the response, especially the interest in neutered boys going as 'paddock pets'. From communications, clearly there is an emerging market through life-stylers wanting an easy-care, manageable animal with an interesting history.

Many new owners are relatively new to farm animals, and one of the common questions is: will they have their injection before leaving home? Others probably have a different regime, but over the past few years I have developed the following programme for my kids. Boys not being sold as entire are neutered at 8 weeks. They are all drenched at 10 weeks of age (or earlier if it is necessary) and have the 5:1 vaccine at least a week before they leave home to ensure no negative reaction. Each get a dusting of DE on the day they are picked up to go to their new home, and 10 mls of Bio Brew to help with the stress of being taken away. Allowing for a failing memory, I created the following chart which I keep in sight to remind me of the appropriate dates and who the kids are going to:

### ***Kids Health Record***

| Kid | DOB | M/F | Wethered<br>(7-8 weeks) | Vaccinated<br>5 in 1<br>(8-11 weeks old) | Drenched<br>(10 weeks or as needed) | Dusting (DE)<br>(12 weeks & as needed) | New owner |
|-----|-----|-----|-------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--|-----------|
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## **Interested in swapping bucks?**

One of our new breeders sent me the following email:

*[We] have been pondering about how we can start keeping some of our own lines and have been thinking about maybe getting an unrelated boy so we can keep some girls. We would really want a kid if possible. Do you know of anyone who might like to do a boy for boy swap? Or another option maybe - how we go about getting a rescue one from the island if that still happens.*

My response:

So you have reached the next step in becoming breeders - time for your own buck. Excellent news. You have a variety of options. But before I start ... personally, I would never recommend taking on a mature buck, even an adolescent one, for a variety of reasons, including your safety. I am just so grateful to Staglands for taking the three bucks from the Island rescue as they had the facilities and the man-power to manage and keep those bucks which were feral, enabling us to inject strong new genes into the breeding pool.

So - to your options:

1. First you could approach DOC in Picton to see if they can get you a buck off the Island, but I doubt they will want to know as we had agreed the rescue in 2013 was to be a 'one off'.
2. Second, we could advertise in the NZAGA newsletter that you want to sell or swap your buckling - given the sire is a buck from Staglands, there should be quite a bit of interest. Being able to transport kids on the Interislander relatively cheaply provides us with new opportunities.
3. Third - keep your buckling entire as a companion for another stud buckling. Two bucks in the same paddock go well together, with one quickly asserting his dominance. One buck on his own leads to its own problems. Providing you have the facilities to handle the situation, you choose which one to put with a doe when the time comes. It also means you can offer servicing to other breeders in the North Island.

**If any owners would like to participate in 'buckling swapping', I would be happy to connect owners, but I have a policy of not handing out others' names and email addresses without first gaining the recipient's permission.**

## The Winter coat

Like most breeds of goats, Arapawa goats grow a thick undercoat of cashmere in winter. While this cashmere keeps the goats warm, it does not provide insulation against rain, snow or strong winds. While Angora goats are sheared to get their undercoat, which is referred to as mohair, goats' coats do not require shearing or combing. Although your doe might appreciate a bit of light brushing. Lorna (below) loves me combing my fingers through her goat to release some of the loose hair.



**Postscript:** *A man in Taranaki is looking for an entire buckling; he has an older female Saneen and wants to start small, moving into Arapawa goat breeding. Please let me know if you have anything available and I'll pass your details on.*

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The next NZAGA newsletter is due in February 2017; articles, photos, advice and questions are more than welcome.

**Alison**  
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