

Spotlight on Agriculture

No 26

Ministry of Agriculture,
Water and Rural Development
Directorate of Agriculture Research and Training
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November • 1999



INDIGENOUS GOATS COMMUNAL FARMER'S WEALTH

Indigenous livestock represent a cost effective, environmental friendly means of producing quality products. Indigenous goats are valuable as they convert low quality plant materials into high quality protein. They also play a vital role as a source of proteins and income generation through the sale of meat, milk and other by-products such as hides, skins, dung (for fuel and manure) and hair. Due to the high demand for their meat and milk products, indigenous goats are threatened by replacements and cross breeding with exotic breeds which are not adapted to local environmental conditions. The importance of this indigenous goat population lies in their unique qualities which they poses such as high disease resistance, low maintenance requirements, good reproductive ability and high survival rate.

BLOOD SAMPLING

Genetic uniqueness of different indigenous goat populations is measured by the relative genetic distance of these populations from one another. Blood sampling was done to determine the genetic drift of these populations. In the first phase blood samples were taken from the indigenous goat population of South Africa (Richtersveld), Namibia (North Central, Kuseb and Kunene) and Mozambique. The results showed that the North Central and the Kuseb goats, as well as the North Central and Richtersveld, and the Kunene and Richtersveld goat population are closely related respectively. The goat population from Mozambique is also closely related with the North Central goats of Namibia (Soyinka et al., 1997).

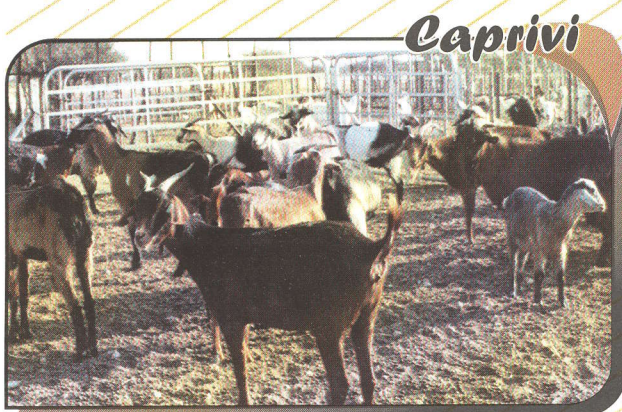


PERFORMANCE TRAITS OF THE INDIGENOUS GOAT POPULATION

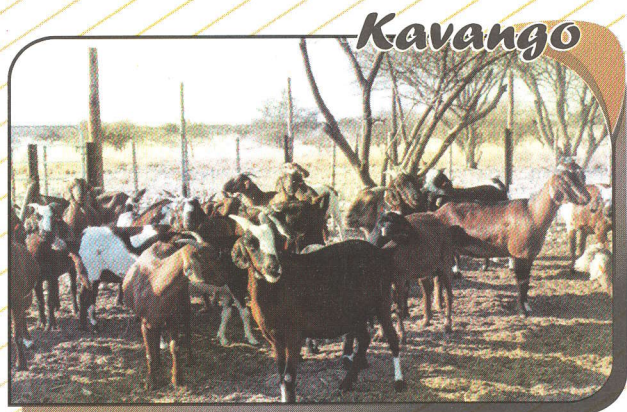
Table 1. Performance traits of the indigenous goat population of Namibia in comparison with the commercial Boer goat

Parameters	Caprivi	Kavango	North Central	Kunene	Boer Goat
Mature body weight (kg)					
Ram	41.83	40.50	40.00	51.14	58.00
Ewe	29.27	31.42	29.95	36.82	45.71
Birth weight (kg)	2.12	2.01	1.98	2.38	2.92
Weaning weight (kg)	11.73	11.87	13.50	15.29	17.76
Aver. gain per day of age (g/day)	100	100	120	130	150

Mature body weight as seen from Table 1 ranged for the rams from 40,0kg for North Central goats up to 51,14kg for Kunene goats and for ewes 29,27kg for Caprivi goats up to 36,82kg for Kunene goats. The Average Gain per day of Age (ADA) from birth to wean ranged from 100 to 130 g/day in comparison with the commercial Boer Goat at 150 g/day.



Local name: Impene (Puli)



Local names: Nghombo; Sikombo

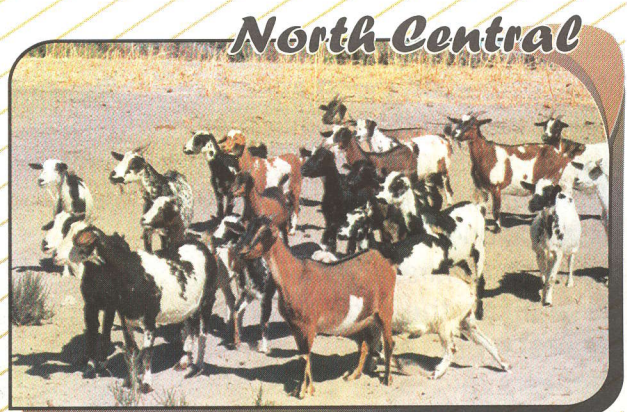
CONCLUSION

As communal farmers are also involved in the conservation of their goat population, it will be wise to teach them the future importance of the indigenous goat population they possess. It would therefore emanate that indigenous goats are a communal farmer's wealth and a breeder's only hope in a breeding program. Conserving these genetic materials will ensure the future for all.

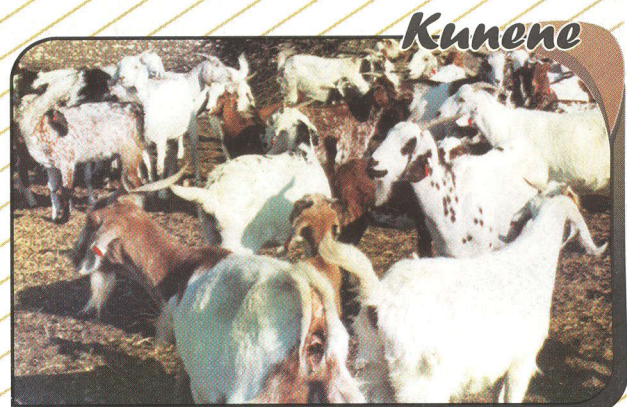
References

Soyinka, A., Cronje, P.B. & Kotze, A., 1997. Genetic relationship between indigenous goat population of Southern Africa. ARC (R.S.A)

Compiled by: S.B. Thawana and W.H. Visser



Local name: Oshikombo



Local name: Ongombo