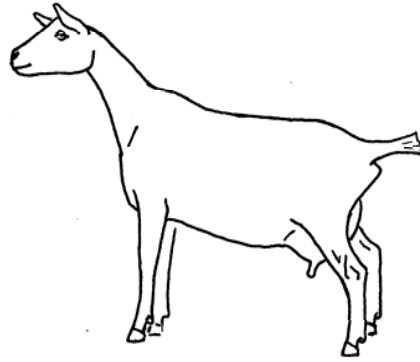


THE NIGERIAN DWARF IN AMERICA

Dwarf goats are found throughout central and western Africa. These small animals generally stand less than 23½" at the withers, and, while body types range from compact and blocky in some varieties to more upstanding and refined in others, all exhibit the rear-angled ribbing indicative of dairy animals.



How dwarf goats first came to America is a subject of much speculation. As early as 1918, Joseph Crepin reported in the second edition of *la Chevre* that they had been imported to the States. There were a number of documented importations from the 1930s through the 60s. These shipments originated from various ports along the West African coast, and it is likely that the goats sent here were representative of the range of body types and colorations found in the dwarf population.

For many years, the animals known today as Nigerian Dwarves were grouped indiscriminately with African Pygmies, in spite of the fact that Nigerians differ from them in body structure. The Pygmy is cobby and compact, with width and depth of body greater in relation to its height. Its legs are shorter (including shorter cannon bones). Its head is large but short. The bone is heavy, and it carries much more heavy muscling than a dairy goat. The Pygmy has rounder, flatter shoulders and a shorter rump. The Nigerian Dwarf shares the desirable characteristics of dairy conformation evidenced in the standard-sized breeds, though on a proportionately smaller scale. Compared to the Pygmy, it is more angular and refined, with flatter, flintier bone and much less muscling. Its legs are refined and longer in relation to its body size. The Nigerian evidences more "stretch", from a longer, leaner neck to a longer more level rump.

In 1983 the American Goat Society, a purebred dairy goat registry, responded to the need to distinguish between these dairy-type animals and their cobbler Pygmy cousins by adopting a breed standard and opening a herdbook for the Nigerian Dwarf. Height limits were based upon information then current on the breed's size range. However, these figures represented data on stock originally selected as the smallest specimens available for importation from Africa. These animals' appearance belied the fact that many carried genes for a broader range of heights. As breeders began to select for traits other than small stature, such as production and improved dairy conformation, it became apparent that the gene pool could readily produce animals taller than the heights specified in the original standard. Over time, slight alterations have been made in the AGS standard to emphasize the breed's dairy conformation and clarify its proper proportions. The Nigerian is judged by the dairy scorecard and classified according to how closely it approaches ideal dairy type.

All Nigerian Dwarves competing in AGS-sanctioned shows must be measured before they enter the ring. Over-sized animals must be disqualified, and the actual heights of the champions and reserves must be recorded on the show report. Measurements are taken with AGS' official measuring device, which all AGS judges are required to own. The animal is placed on a solid platform in the show stance — head up, all four legs squarely set, handler's hand on collar only. The vertical "ruler" is held beside the animal, and the measurement is taken with horizontal bar over highest point of withers, perpendicular to the front leg and no further back than the point of elbow.

THE BREED STANDARD

(AMERICAN GOAT SOCIETY, 1996)

The Nigerian Dwarf is a miniature dairy breed of West African origin. Its conformation is similar to that of the larger breeds. The parts of the body are in balanced proportion; an animal with disproportionately large head, or one with a relatively large body on short legs, is not acceptable. The profile of the face is straight, though there may be a small break or stop at the level of the eyes. The ears are upright. The coat is straight, with hair that is short to medium length. There is no minimum height for either sex. Any color or combination of colors is acceptable. Breed specific disqualifications: curly coat, Roman nose, pendulous ears, bucks over 23.6" at withers, does over 22.4" at withers, evidence of myatonia

MANAGING & BREEDING

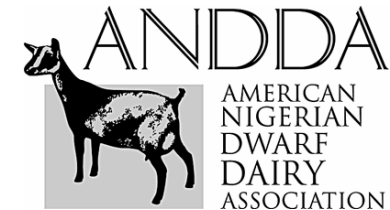
Nigerian Dwarves are managed just like their larger dairy goat cousins. Housing and feed requirements are simply reduced in proportion to their size — they need about 75% of the space of the larger breeds and eat considerably less, being "easy keepers." The one requirement that does not change is fencing. Nigerians can jump as well as any goat, sharing their species' "fence-defeating" aptitude. They do learn to respect a good fence, though, and thrive in both drylot and range environments.

Thanks to its inherently functional type, the Nigerian Dwarf is a reproductively sound breed, and it does not evidence the kidding difficulties for which the Pygmy is known. Does kid with ease, delivering anywhere from two to five kids. Because of its tropical origin, the Nigerian will breed all year round, though most breeders kid their does only once a year.

Nigerian kids are rather precocious and vigorous at birth. Their small size can be startling to a first-time Nigerian "goat-midwife," as the kids often weigh in the 3-pound range! Kids can be dam-raised on CAE-negative does and will still readily socialize with their human caregivers, though bottle-raising on pasteurized milk is preferred for dairy replacements. Like their standard-sized counterparts, Nigerian buck kids are fertile by about 3 months of age and should be separated from the doelings. Most doelings are well-grown enough to be bred as yearlings.

Nigerians are vaccinated against the common goat diseases and wormed with the same medications as the large breeds. Dosages are simply adjusted to the animals' lower weights.

For More Information About Nigerian Dwarf Dairy Goats
Contact



the breed club dedicated to promoting the Nigerian Dwarf dairy goat, supporting its breeders, and encouraging others to consider the Nigerian as an attractive option when they begin or expand their dairy goat herds.

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NIGERIAN DWARF

The breed averages 799 lbs. of milk and 49 lbs. of butterfat for a 305-day lactation. Butterfat percentage is an impressive 6.1%. In layman's terms, that comes out to about a quart and a half of rich, sweet milk. Nigerian does, who are little taller than knee-high and weigh an average of less than 75 lbs. when mature, are efficient and steady producers.

The standard-sized breeds have had the advantage of many decades of Dairy Herd Improvement testing in order to accumulate official production data and thereby increase the accuracy of genetic selection for production traits. As in the case for dairy cattle, this has resulted in steady gains in both milk and butterfat yields. Nigerians have only been production-tested for little over a decade, and their full dairy potential is just beginning to be realized. However, many does produce enough pounds of butterfat in a lactation to meet the AR requirement for butterfat set for the large breeds.

AGS NIGERIAN DWARF AR REQUIREMENTS (FOR LACTATIONS

AGE	MILK (lbs.)	FAT (lbs.)
2-00 & less	500	25.0
2-01	502	25.1
2-02	504	25.2
2-06	512	25.6
3-00	524	26.2
3-06	536	26.8
4-00	548	27.4
5-00 & over	572	28.6

BEGINNING 1/1/98 OR LATER)

NOTE: The minimum requirements for milk production is 1/3 that of the standard-sized breeds. It increases by 2 pounds of milk for each additional

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THE AMERICAN NIGERIAN DWARF DAIRY ASSOCIATION

An Introduction to THE NIGERIAN DWARF

We keep dairy goats for a variety of reasons: for our household milk and perhaps extra meat for the freezer and manure for the garden; for the wholesome environment that seems to naturally spring up around them; for their affection and our entertainment; for the healthy exercise; for the social network that arises from meeting other like-minded folk; for the challenge of breeding better and better animals; for the thrill of showing competition; for the satisfaction of nurturing healthy or responsive animals; or, quite simply, because we cannot imagine our lives without them.

Our choice of breed is a matter of individual preference and practical concerns. Because families are often smaller, many of us have no need for gallons and gallons of milk each day and may lack acceptable, convenient, or legal outlets for the surplus, yet we may wish to keep enough animals to maintain progressive breeding programs. We may have limited space for livestock, or we may bear the burden of the goats' care alone and so require animals that can be easily managed by one person. In such situations, standard-sized goats may be more than we need.



NIGERIANS ARE THE LOGICAL