



An Angora goat

The Angora breed of goats produces long, curling, lustrous locks of mohair. The entire body of the goat is covered with mohair and there are no guard hairs. The locks constantly grow and can be four inches or more in length. Angora crossbreeds, such as the pygora and the nigora, have been created to produce mohair and/or cashgora on a smaller, easier-to-manage animal. The wool is shorn (cut from the body) twice a year, with an average yield of about 10 pounds.

Most goats have softer insulating hairs nearer the skin, and longer guard hairs on the surface. The desirable fiber for the textile industry is the former, and it goes by several names (down, cashmere and pashmina). The coarse guard hairs are of little value as they are too coarse, difficult to spin and difficult to

dye. The cashmere goat produces a commercial quantity of cashmere wool, which is one of the most expensive natural fibers commercially produced; cashmere is very fine and soft. The cashmere goat fiber is harvested once a year, yielding around 9 ounces (200 grammes) of down.

In South Asia, cashmere is called "pashmina" (from Persian *pashmina*, "fine wool"). In the 18th and early 19th century, Kashmir (then called Cashmere by the English), had a thriving industry producing shawls from goat down imported from Tibet and Tartary through Ladakh. The shawls were introduced into Western Europe when the General in Chief of the French campaign in Egypt (1799-1802) sent one to Paris. Since these shawls were produced in the upper Kashmir and Ladakh region, the wool came to be known as "cashmere".

Goat breeds

Main article: List of goat breeds

Goat breeds fall into overlapping, general categories. They are generally distributed in to those used for dairy, fiber, meat, skins, and as companion animals. Some breeds are also particularly noted as pack goats.

Showing



A Nigerian Dwarf milker in show clip. This doe is angular and dairy with a capacious and well supported mammary system.

Goat breeders' clubs frequently hold shows, where goats are judged on traits relating to conformation, udder quality, evidence of high production, longevity, build and muscling (meat goats and pet goats) and fiber production and the fiber itself (fiber goats). People who show their goats usually keep registered stock and the offspring of award-winning animals command a higher price. Registered goats, in general, are usually higher-priced if for no other reason than that records have been kept proving their ancestry and the production and other data of their sires, dams, and other ancestors. A registered doe is usually less of a gamble than buying a doe at random (as at an auction or sale barn) because of these records and the reputation of the breeder. Children's clubs such as 4-H also allow goats to be shown. Children's shows often include a showmanship class, where the cleanliness and presentation of both the animal and the exhibitor as well as the handler's ability and skill in handling the goat are scored. In a showmanship class, conformation is irrelevant since this is not what is being judged.

Various "Dairy Goat Scorecards" (milking does) are systems used for judging shows in the US. The American Dairy Goat Association (ADGA) scorecard for an adult doe includes a point system of a hundred total with major categories that include general appearance, the dairy character of a doe (physical traits that aid and increase milk production), body capacity, and specifically for the mammary system. Young stock and bucks are judged by different scorecards which place more emphasis on the other three categories; general appearance, body capacity,

and dairy character.

The American Goat Society (AGS) has a similar, but not identical scorecard that is used in their shows. The miniature dairy goats may be judged by either of the two scorecards. The "Angora Goat scorecard" used by the **Colored Angora Goat Breeder's Association CAGBA** (which covers the white and the colored goats) includes evaluation of an animal's fleece color, density, uniformity, fineness, and general body confirmation. Disqualifications include: a deformed mouth, broken down pasterns, deformed feet, crooked legs, abnormalities of testicles, missing testicles, more than 3 inch split in scrotum, and close-set or distorted horns.

Religion, mythology, and folklore



A Cashmere goat



The Scapegoat by William Holman Hunt (1854).

According to Norse mythology, the god of thunder, Thor, has a chariot that is pulled by the goats Tanngrisnir and Tanngrjóstr. At night when he sets up camp, Thor eats the meat of the goats, but take care that all bones remain whole. Then he wraps the remains up, and in the morning, the goats always come back to life to pull the chariot. When a farmer's son who is invited to share the meal breaks one of the goats' leg bones to suck the marrow, the animal's leg remains broken in the morning, and the boy is forced to serve Thor as a servant to compensate for the damage.

Possibly related, the Yule Goat is one of the oldest Scandinavian and Northern European Yule and Christmas symbols and traditions. Yule Goat originally denoted

the goat that was slaughtered around Yule, but it may also indicate a goat figure made out of straw. It is also used about the custom of going door-to-door singing carols and getting food and drinks in return, often fruit, cakes and sweets. "Going Yule Goat" is similar to the British custom wassailing, both with heathen roots. The Gävle Goat is a giant version of the Yule Goat, erected every year in the Swedish city of Gävle.

The Greek god, Pan, is said to have the upper body of a man and the horns and lower body of a goat. Pan was a very lustful god, nearly all of the myths involving him had to do with him chasing nymphs. He is also credited with creating the pan flute.

The goat is one of the twelve-year cycle of animals which appear in the Chinese zodiac related to the Chinese calendar. Each animal is associated with certain personality traits; those born in a year of the goat are predicted to be shy, introverted, creative, and perfectionist. See Goat (zodiac).

Several mythological hybrid creatures are believed to consist of parts of the goat, including the Chimera. The Capricorn sign in the Western zodiac is usually depicted as a goat with a fish's tail. Fauns and satyrs are mythological creatures that are part goat and part human. The mineral bromine is named from the Greek word "brómos," which means "stench of he-goats."

Goats are mentioned many times in the Bible. A goat is considered a "clean" animal by Jewish dietary laws and was slaughtered for an honored guest. It was also acceptable for some kinds of sacrifices. Goat-hair curtains were used in the tent that contained the tabernacle (Exodus 25:4). On Yom Kippur, the festival of the Day of Atonement, two goats were chosen and lots were drawn for them. One was sacrificed and the other allowed to escape into the wilderness, symbolically carrying with it the sins of the community. From this comes the word "scapegoat". A leader or king was sometimes compared to a male goat leading the flock. In the New Testament, Jesus told a parable of The Sheep and the Goats. (Gospel of Matthew 25)

Christianity has associated Satan with imagery of goats (see Pan (mythology)). A common superstition in the Middle Ages was that goats whispered lewd sentences in the ears of the saints. The origin of this belief was probably the behavior of the buck in rut, the very epitome of lust. The common medieval depiction of the Devil was that of a goat-like face with horns and small beard (a goatie). The Black Mass, a probably-mythological "Satanic mass," was said to involve a black goat, the form in which Satan supposedly manifested himself for worship.

The goat has had a lingering connection with Satanism and pagan religions, even into modern times. The inverted pentagram, a symbol used in Satanism, is said to be shaped like a goat's head. The "Baphomet of Mendes" refers to a satanic goat-like figure from 19th century occultism.

Feral goats

Main article: Feral goat



Feral goat in Aruba

Goats readily revert to the wild if given the opportunity. They have established themselves in many areas: feral goats occur in Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, the Galapagos and in many other places. When feral goats reach large populations in habitats which are not adapted to them, they may have serious negative effects, such as removing native scrub, trees and other vegetation. Feral goats are a severe problem in Australia.^[29] However, in other circumstances they may become a natural component of the habitat.

See also

- Dairy goat breeds
- Feral goats
- Fiber-producing goat breeds
- Goat breeds



The goat Heiðrún consumes the foliage of the tree Læraðr, while her udders produce mead, collected in a pot below (1895) by Lorenz Frølich.