



Note: As of 1-1-05, ADGA now recognizes the Sable as a breed of dairy goat.

Article Written For the Record Stockman

by Gwen Goodey

The Sable Dairy Goat

Although not currently recognized by the American Dairy Goat Association (ADGA), the Sable goat as a breed is receiving more and more attention because of its color in addition to the conformation, quiet temperament, and milk production of the Saanen dairy goat . Many people know Saanens, the white breed, but not Sables, the colored Saanen produced by recessive genes similar to those in the red Holstein and red Angus. The verb "sable" means literally "to darken," and "Sables" are the darker-colored Saanen.

Some people believe that Sables result from an accidental breeding of the Saanen with another colored breed, but that is not true. Historically the first shipment of Saanens to the US included the Sable sisters Panama Louise and Panama Zaire. In Europe colored Saanens were routinely bred to white Saanens to avoid albinism and to "keep the size" of the white goats. Most all purebred Saanen bloodlines include genetics of these Sables, and hence occasionally a purebred Saanen will produce a colored kid. The original American Milch Goat Record Association (AMGRA) changed to the American Dairy Goat Association (ADGA), and in the 1950's, however, the Saanen standard included white or cream goats only, omitting the darker colored Saanen from the Saanen herdbook entirely and putting Sables into the Recorded Grade Herdbook as an Experimental.

Breeding Sables began seriously in 1950's by well-known Saanen breeders like Harvey Considine, WI, and Don West, AZ, and later other Sable breeders like Judie Nelson, ID, who struggled to get Sables recognized as a separate breed - fighting opposition from many Saanen breeders who did not want color brought

back into the white lineage and who usually destroyed colored kids at birth or sold them as meat goats.

Originally many Sable breeders thought that Sables were only sundgau, the black goat with white facial stripes, ears, belly, and legs, and owners tried to breed exclusively for that color. They were disappointed in the inconsistency of achieving sundgaus consistently.

Nowadays more is known about the genetics and color pattern. Sable bred to Sable consistently produces colored kids, but not necessarily only the sundgau.

Sables breed true, as true as the white Saanens produce white, when genetic principles are used. The breeding of Sables is unusual in that white is the dominant gene; normally only about 5% pairing of the white genes produce color. But a color gene must come from each parent to result in a colored kid. However a solid-colored Sable bred to Sable often produces white offspring. Sables come in many colors and patterns: sundgau, chocolate with white points, red or blue roan (silver), white front half and black back half (cou blank), or white or cream front half with brown back half and brown points (two-tone chamoisee), black and white or brown and white pintos, solid black or solid brown, and some with white striping on the sides and neck. Sables may also result from color appearing as a Saanen matures, most commonly developing a reddish color on the poll and down the neck or a roaning out all over the body or a creamy swirl over the sides.

Currently the most visible Sable breeder is Klisse Foster, nee Goodey, of IN who has owned the Grand Champion Recorded Grade doe at the ADGA National Show for the last three years. She won these championships exclusively with Sables, being the Recorded Grade Premier Breeder and Exhibitor with her Sable dairy herd each year. She is also on DHIR test and has Linear Appraisal regularly. Other Sable breeders live in all parts of the U.S. from California and Washington to Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Missouri, New Mexico, New York, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island. In fact Sables are found wherever Saanens are found; they're just not as numerous nor as recognized.

The most prominent Sable doe is GCH Klisse's GSMS Triumph of Hope that has been the ADGA National Grand Champion Recorded Grade doe and that also has the Best Udder of the breed for the last two years. Her linear appraisal score is 92 EEEEE. She is number two out of five placings nationwide for Recorded Grade milk production (3690# for the lactation), butterfat, and protein. This outstanding five year old doe earned her grand champion status as a three year

old on an abortion lactation. The subsequent two years she has been Best Doe in Show 18 out of 20 times. The next year after the abortion she kidded out with quintuplets, and this year she had quads. Triumph has done it all.

Her maternal half sister, GCH Klisse's NL Desire of Hope, is a registered American Saanen, a white doe, also earning many championships - the point being that if Triumph were white, she would be classified as an American Saanen instead of a "Grade Experimental" by ADGA and that she could compete favorably in either breed.

At the present time Sables are not officially recognized by ADGA, but ADGA does have a color description in the official ADGA Guidebook. The problem is that an ADGA policy has relegated both the purebred (pure) or American (bred up to 88.5+% for does or 93.75+% for bucks) percentage of the Sable to 50% American Saanen and put Sables in the Recorded Grade herdbook as Experimentals. The kids out of these cannot be moved into any registry because (1) they do not have the correct color for Saanens, (2) Sables are not recognized, and (3 extremely serious) buck kids that could be used as breeding stock cannot be registered because they do not and can not ever qualify as meeting the 93.75% designation for buck registration! Hence over the years much good breed stock for the Sable has been eliminated.

The International Sable Breeders of America (ISBA) is currently working on restoring the correct percentage designation as well as getting the Sable as a breed officially recognized by ADGA Anyone interested in learning more about this "new" breed that is actually as old as the Saanen breed, contact ISBA at

[ISBA / 1998 Hwy 29 N / Cantonment, Fl 32533 / 850-937-2570](#)