

Buying Boer Goats

Avoiding the pitfalls

Before you buy Boer goats Sharon Peacock shares some useful things you should know, and do, to avoid some common pitfalls.

1) Do your research

- Know what a Boer looks like
- Know who is local to you
- See the members list online for current members
- Take advice from a current experienced breeder
- Make sure you know how to look after goats (they are NOT easier, cheaper etc to look after than other stock)
- Check your market, where do you plan to sell on what you breed

2) Know what you are looking for and what you want to do with them

- Do you want pedigree Boers for breeding Boer goats
- Do you want to breed semi commercial meat goats
- Do you want a functional pet
- Do you want stock from herds with certificated health status

3) Have patience

- Demand for Boers outstrips supply
- Lots of producers have waiting lists
- Don't choose the wrong animals because you were in too much of a rush to buy. You will only be disappointed later

4) Understand the grading and registrations system

- All males must be 100% if they are to be used for breeding stock that can be registered
- The words *Graded*, *Percentage* and *Cross* can all be used to describe animals which are not pure bred Boer
- Graded females are often ok to use in meat and pet situations
- Registered animals will have a card from the society showing their breeding
- Unregistered animals can be used for breeding meat or as pets but not for breeding future breeding stock

5) Visit as many herds as possible and see a wide range of Boers.

- Boers vary massively, they can be tall and thin or short and stocky

- The Boer SHOULD be a solid well conformed animal which has potential to carry a good carcass. They are after all a meat producer
- Remember that for pedigree production you should choose only the very best, in conformation, colour, general health, ears and nose shape etc
- However for meat production the colour and shape of the nose etc is really of less importance

6) Decide who you would like to buy from

- Ask about health on their farm
- Ask about kidding percentage etc
- Ask about their management systems
- Ask about their selection criteria
- Ask if they have a waiting list

7) Remember to ask about the particular animal you are looking at

- Which are its parents, can you see them
- Will it be registered/transferred (only the current owner can do this, not you after the event)
- Why is it for sale
- How old is it
- Has it bred before and if so how successfully

8) Do any paperwork required

- All paperwork must be completed by a current paid up member of the society
- If the animal needs registering the BREEDER must complete and sign the relevant forms
- If the animal is registered it will need transferring, the CURRENT OWNER must complete and sign the relevant forms
- All forms and payments must be returned to the current society secretary
- The goat will not be registered to your name if you do not do this and you WILL NOT be able to register it afterward or register its offspring if this is not done
- Make sure you let the vendor have your 6 digit herd number, the society cannot register goats to your name without this information
- Consider joining the society. You will receive newsletters, herd books and be able to register your goats offspring if you do
- **DO ASK FOR A RECEIPT SHOWING EXACTLY WHAT YOU HAVE BOUGHT, INCLUDING REGISTRATION DETAILS, TRANSFER DETAILS & THE AMOUNT YOU HAVE PAID. THIS ALLOWS TRADING STANDARDS, UNDER THE TRADES DESCRIPTION ACT TO HELP YOU IF THE GOAT TURNS OUT NOT TO HAVE THE REGISTRATION OR TRANSFER STATUS YOU WERE TOLD – OR YOU WOULD BE IN A POSITION TO RETURN THE GOAT & ASK FOR A FULL REFUND. NO HONEST VENDOR SHOULD HAVE A PROBLEM WITH THIS REQUEST.**

The DO NOTs

These are some of the things which the society recommends you do not do

- DO NOT buy unseen, by all means ask for photographs etc before you commit to driving a long way but if you do not like what you see when you get there don't buy
- DO NOT think you can *get around* the system and register unregistered animals or get them transferred into your name without the current owner signing the paperwork
- DO NOT buy animals which do not suit your purpose, it doesn't take long to put bad things into your herd but it does take a long time to get rid of them later