

International Marketing

I have seen very few, if any, articles written about international marketing and sales of Boer goats overseas. I have been blessed to sell quite a few goats in other countries over the past twenty years. I have learned many things about such endeavors over time. International marketing and sales is not for the weak hearted. It requires solution of difficult logistical problems rapidly on the fly as the goats leave the U.S. bound for other places.

Every country that accepts the importation of goats (goats and sheep are small ruminants) from the United States has a mutually agreed upon health protocol that the goats must meet before they can be shipped. Every country's health protocol requirements are different and some are almost impossible to satisfy. In most cases the cost on an international health paper and the shipping costs of the animal(s) may exceed the actual cost of the animal initially. It is hard to sell a goat for \$1000 when it costs \$2,000 to get the health tests and acquire transportation.

Most of the health testing involves blood tests but some of the requirements may involve quarantining the animal for up to 90 days before it leaves the States. You may also be required to treat the animals for external parasites and other things prior to shipment. Tests other than blood tests might be for example, TB or tuberculosis, which is performed by giving a shot in the tail web and then observing the tail web for a lump a few days later. Many of the blood tests are only good for a short period of time, usually 30 days, which implies that the goat must leave the U.S. and arrive in the foreign country in 30 days or less from the time the blood sample was taken. The blood is usually taken from a large vein in the goat's neck and is normally done by a vet.

Normally you will be involved in one form or another with the federal veterinarian in the foreign country. In some cases this is very difficult and time consuming as the health department and federal vet's office in the other country may not be open when you can call them as many countries are six hours or more ahead of the U.S. In that case much or most of the communication with the federal veterinarian in the other country is done through email or fax. This is one of the situations that is not for the weak hearted.

You have to have a great deal of determination and patience and be willing to never give up. In most cases the goats will have to be quarantined at least 24 hours in a U.S. Department of Agricultural facility prior to their shipment and must be examined by a U.S. Federal veterinarian prior to shipment. Your local veterinarian can draw blood, send the blood for testing and complete the international health paper in most instances but many veterinarians are not willing to put up with the hassle and paperwork for the small fee that they might charge.

One of the most frustrating things about international health papers that I have had completed is that they have to be typed on an official form using a typewriter. When is the last time that you actually used a typewriter and could you find one in a short period of time? I asked one of the Federal vets in Austin a while back if we couldn't fill out the forms on the computer as pdf files and send them over the internet. His response was, "We are looking into that possibility?" So along with everything else you may have to deal with out of date equipment and procedures. In my observation the government is not known for efficiency and clarity.

If you would like to check on the health protocol requirements for exporting goats to foreign countries you can access the website: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/regulations/vs/iregs/animals/>.

You select the country you are interested in knowing about and look for "shipping small ruminants or sheep and goats". If you check this website out you will realize that we cannot ship goats to a lot of places in the world including Europe. I get inquiries from several countries in Europe every month. In fact, exporting Boer goats to Mexico is not currently very easy unless you want to ship them as slaughter animals which may very well be slaughtered before they arrive at their intended destination. Shipping Boer goats to Canada is also pretty difficult as only bucks can be imported to Canada at this time with a voluntary scrapie ID. Shipping does cannot be accomplished without a complete scrapie history of your ranch and your participation in the scrapie free herd program for at least five years. I think this is about to change and bucks will

come under the same requirements as does. If this requirement is adopted by Canada they will greatly limit the Boer genetics that can go to Canada as few U.S. Boer goat breeders are participating in the Five Year Scrapie Free Herd program. Check with the Department of Agriculture in Canada for the most up-to-date information on their import requirements for Boer goats.

Selling Boer goats to foreign countries usually involves many emails and phone calls prior to a sale. You may send a lot of photos of the goats under consideration. Normal payment for goats going internationally is by bank wire. It is customary to have the money in your bank prior to shipping the animals. A check written on a foreign bank is very difficult to cash or redeem if it turns out to be an "insufficient funds" check. If your goats are already in the other country your chance of getting your money is very remote.

International marketing and sales involves a lot of trust and integrity on the part of all parties concerned. I have found over time that advertising in foreign countries in their language and communicating in their language means more business for you. Thanks to "google translate" on the internet you can type almost anything you want in English and have it translated into many other languages instantly. You simply "cut and paste" this translated text into an email and Presto! You are communicating with your potential customer in their language. Of course you take their communication and put it through google translate to get the translation in English...

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