



Native Goat Breeds of Kerala

taluk and on the west by Mannarghat taluk of the Palaghat District and Eranad taluk of the Malappuram district.

This region is inhabited by some of the major tribal communities of the State known as Irules, Mudukas and Kurumbas. The tribal economy is dependent mainly on goat rearing and agricultural activities. They treat goats as their family members and call kids affectionately as “vava” (Baby). The goat has cultural values too. The wealth of a tribal family is measured by the number of goats reared in the house. Many times, they are gifted to newly married couples. Tribal communities believe that milk and meat of the goat act to a certain extent, the milk and meat of the goat as a safeguard against malnutrition in these remote areas.

The local goat variety evolved and developed solely by these tribes over the ages are medium sized, lean, slender bodied and black in the color. They have bronze colored eyes and black and pendulous and the tail is curved and bunchy. The insight of the tribes who have evolved the sturdy indigenous goat is beyond doubt. They have very intelligently combined the characteristics of meat production, hardiness; disease-resistance and survivability without laying much emphasis on individual productivity. These black goats are poor milk producers reared mainly by women and old people for meat and manure purpose. The birth weight of males and females is around 1.73 Kg and 1.60 Kg respectively. The average live weight of males at 6th, 9th and 12th month of age is 14.61 Kg, 18.0 Kg and 20.8 Kg respectively. This goat is found mainly in the remote hamlets

of Pudur, Agali and Sholayur panchayaths, which have scanty vegetation. They are tailored to grazing habit. When food is limited, these animals are good at adapting to the available fodder.

Facing Extinction

The uncontrolled natural breeding of female goats by non-descript bucks which occur during grazing time has led to the dilution of the breed at a faster rate. Attappady Black goats represent only 40% of the total goat population in the area now. According to a recent survey by Kerala Agricultural University the estimated total population of Attappady black goats in their breeding tract is as low as 5,595, putting this breed of goats under the insecure category listed by the FAO.

During the year 1989 a Government Goat Farm was established at Attappadi with a view to help the tribal families of Attappadi to rear goats as a subsidiary occupation; by improving the economic traits of the local goat population and functioning as foundation seed distribution farm. A selective breeding policy has been adopted to produce “Attappadi Black” variety of goats and supply them to the tribal people. The Kerala Livestock Development Board (KLDB) has taken up a conservation project to save this breed. The objectives of the project are to identify the best Attappady Black goats in their native tract and establish an elite germplasm centre of this goat breed as a genetic insurance against future calamities. The project will encourage the tribes to retain the breed's purity to conserve its unique characters. Selected

Attappadi Black Goat

Attappadi Black goats are found exclusively in the attappady region of Kerala, India. They have been an integral part of the life of tribes of Attappady. Now the population of these goats has been reduced to a larger extent and measures to conserve this valuable breed have been launched.

‘Poor Man’s Cow’

Attappadi is an extensive mountain valley at the headwaters of the Bhavani River nestled below the Nilgiri Hills of the Western Ghats. It is bordered to the east by Coimbatore district in Tamilnadu, on the north by the Nilgiris, south by the Palaghat

bucks of the variety will be distributed for the purpose. Frozen semen of superior Attappady Black bucks will be distributed in their native tracts and in other parts of Kerala. Let us hope that the black beauties of Attappadi will their past glory.

Malabari Goat

This is the first recognised breed of Kerala among livestock. The Malabari breed of goat is known for its quality meat with less fat, prolific breeding, and is ideally suited for the Kerala climate. Malabari is a breed of medium-sized goats seen widely in the northern districts of Kerala. They are known to be well-adapted to the hot humid conditions of the State.

Double purpose Breed

According to rough estimates, majority of the goat population of the State belonged to the Malabari variety. Malabari goats were seen mainly in white, white and black, white and brown in color. Their average yield was about 500 - 700 ml of milk a day and can be milked for four to five months. Malabari goats show early maturity and conceive at an age of 8 to 10 months. The male starts breeding at an age of 9 – 12 months. The breed is having a good prolificary i.e. 50% twinning, 25% triplets and 5% quadruplets. They weigh about 15-20 kg at one year of age. Fully grown males weigh 30 to 35 kg and the females 25 to 30 kg. Both males and females have a protuberance hanging from the neck. The main threat to the Malabari goats is the invasion of Boer goats and also goats from other parts of the country to the breeding tract of Malabari resulting in the dilution of the breed.



Attappadi Black Goat



Malabari Goat



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