



**ZAGP**

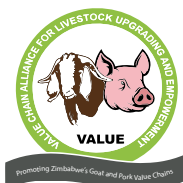
Zimbabwe  
**AGRICULTURAL  
GROWTH**  
Programme



Funded by the European Union



# BREED STANDARDS FOR THE MATABELE GOAT TYPE



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The VALUE project is grateful to the Goat Breeders Association of Zimbabwe for the technical input into the indigenous breed standards. We also extend our gratitude to Matopos for their invaluable contribution to the success of this assignment. Many thanks to the consultant, Mr. Joseph Sikhosana for leading the process of developing these standards, his experience in the field of indigenous goats was invaluable.

We express profound gratitude for the financial support of the European Union and the CIPS Foundation.



# BREED STANDARDS MATABELE GOAT BREED STANDARDS

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Value Chain Alliance for Livestock Upgrading (VALUE) project under the European Union funded Zimbabwe Agricultural Growth Program in partnership with the Government of Zimbabwe is working on the commercialization of goat production in Zimbabwe. The project is working with the Goat Breeders Association of Zimbabwe (GBAZ) and has commissioned an assignment to develop breeding standards for the Matabele goats. The standards are meant to promote conservation, utilization of indigenous goat types in Zimbabwe, and a training guide for farmers, who keep indigenous goats, to be stud breeders.

Currently tropical breeds, for example, the Boer, Kalahari, Savanna and Indigenous Veld Goat( four ecotypes) have breed standards developed from their countries of origin. On the contrary we do not have breeds standards for our own indigenous goat types in Zimbabwe.

In Zimbabwe, the majority of goats are of the indigenous type: the medium to large type in size is known as the 'Matabele goat'. Synonyms/ local names include Nguni, Ndebele. The Matabele goat types come in all sorts of colours. Farmers/ breeders of indigenous goats have a choice to select coat colours to promote. They can then register with the Zimbabwe Herd Book.

The Matabele goat is mainly found in the drier parts of Zimbabwe mainly in: Matabeleland North province ( Nkayi, Lupane, Umguza, Bubi, Hwange and Tsholotsho districts); Matabeleland South province: (Matobo, Mzingwane, Insiza Gwanda, and Beitbridge districts) and some parts of Midlands province ( Mberengwa, district).

# EXPLANATION OF BREED STANDARDS

Breed standards are based on fertility, hardiness and visual appraisal for lack of genetic defects. Conformation is related to functional efficiency without affecting the inherent traits. In general breed standards increase the economic value of a breed.



**BREED:**  
The Matabele goat type



**SYNONYMS/LOCAL NAMES:**  
Nguni, Ndebele



**ORIGIN:**  
The goat population is derived from various breeds which were brought from Bantu tribes in the North.



**PURPOSE OF THE BREED:**  
meat (and milk)

## GENERAL APPEARANCE AND TYPE

### CONFORMATION

- They are heterogenous and a medium to large breed with a height to withers of about 65cm.
- They are animals whose ears are long or pendulous/drooping with turned-up tips (lopped) and many of intermediate-type ears, varied hairiness and wide range in coat colours.
- Tassels or toggles or wattles hanging under the neck are common. Traditionally a goat with toggles is said to be very “fertile”.
- The males often have a pronounced mane running the full length of the back. Females and males are large body framed goats. Both sexes have horns and they have beards sometimes.



## HEAD

**Male:** The head of the male should be strong and masculine. The head should be straight, flat and concave face.

**Female:** The head of the female should be dished (concave)

- The head sometimes has distinct colour markings/patterns on the face denoting a particular ecotype. Distinct colour markings/patterns can be between the eyes stretching down to the nose. It forms a V shape in black, white, brown and other colour combinations. Black, brown and white are very common with the same colours influencing body colour. Most goats have brown eyes.
- **Teeth:** the lower teeth should meet evenly on the upper jaw.

### Characteristic cull defects:

**jaws too long, bottom jaw short, broken teeth, head is flat**

## HORNS

- The horns should be moderately long (25cm).
- In males they appear flattened in cross-section directed backwards with little lateral tendency. In females they are finer and scimitar-shaped.
- Ears are medium long and lop, and drooping with or without turned up tips.

### Characteristic cull defects

**horns too straight, no horns (polled), short ears**



## BEARDS

May exist in both sexes. Males have long and bushy beards, females have short beards or none.

## TOGGLES

Toggles occasionally occur in both sexes.

## NECK AND FOREQUARTERS

**(females and males)** Short and moderate neck and in proportionate to the length of the body. The chest should be shallow. Height at withers is about 65cm. Withers are well fitted and placed.

Legs are generally long and lightly boned. Front legs are of medium length, straight, strong and well placed.

**Characteristic cull defects:**

**long neck disproportionate to the body length**

## BARREL

Both male and female should have a hollow, and straight profile.

**Characteristic cull defects:**

**pinched behind the shoulder**

## HINDQUARTER

The goats should have a sloping rump with the buttocks well fleshed

**Characteristic cull defects:**

**rump hangs loose, flat buttocks**

## LEGS

A good male must present masculine characteristic: masculinity

- Legs must be straight, strong and long, to enable him to serve females. A female must present good strong legs (essential for a breeding female)
- Both male and female should have strong legs for browsing higher (bi-pedal stance) up the trees.

**Characteristic cull defects:**

**Legs looking weak or bowed (highly heritable); knock knees**

## HOOVES

Dark and striped in colour

**Characteristic cull defects:**

**Hooves pointing outwards**

## HAIR AND SKIN COLOURING

- Colour may denote a particular ecotype
- The hair must be short and straight
- Colours range from white, black, brown and cream colours or mixed/pied (speckled). Some of the colours may represent an ecotype. Colours vary but whites and creams dominate.

**Characteristic cull defects:**

**too long and hairy (furry), brown neck and head, mixed colour patterns resembling Boer/Kalahari origin/crosses.**



## SEXUAL ORGANS

### Bucks/Rams

- Bucks/Rams should have two big balanced, healthy looking testes in one scrotum.
- The scrotum should be “well attached and hang straight from the attached area of the body”.
- The scrotum should be at least 25cm in circumference

#### Characteristic cull defects:

**Split scrotum more than 5 centimeters, one testicle**

### Does/Ewes

- Should have a well developed udders with strong, protruding and functional teats.
- The udder should be soft to touch, any hardness indicates that the female has had a previous problem, e.g. mastitis
- Hair around the teat is not common but can be found in very few animals.

#### Characteristic cull defects:

**Drooping / long pendulous udder, more than two teats**



## SIZE

The goat should be of medium to large animal for meat production. In the flock there should be some uniformity in size.

**Characteristic cull defects:**

**small frame, not showing characteristics of a Matabele goat**

## TAIL

The tail must be straight from the base/dock , and always swing to either side. The tail is short. The tail should have the colour of the body of the animal.

**Characteristic cull defects:**

**Different colour from the body colour**







# REPRODUCTIVE PERFORMANCE MATABELE GOAT

Mature weights for the Matabele goat range from 35kgs to 55kgs. The average kid birth weight is about 2.5kgs, with weaning weights ranging from 12 kg to 16kgs. Fertility is about 86.6% and twinning rate is 62%. Litter size ranges from 1.19 to 1.7. Gestation period is about 5 months on average.



Head Profile



*Matabele male goat*



*Mashona male goat*



*Matabele female goat*



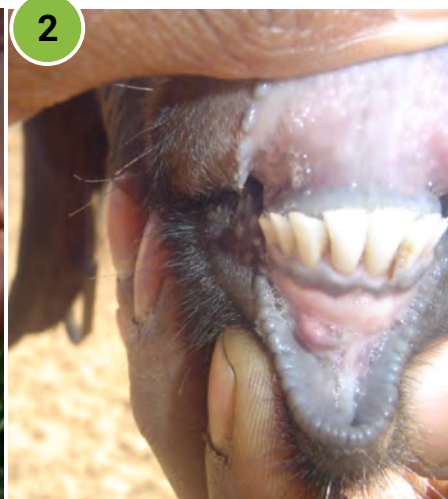
*Mashona female goat*

## TEETH

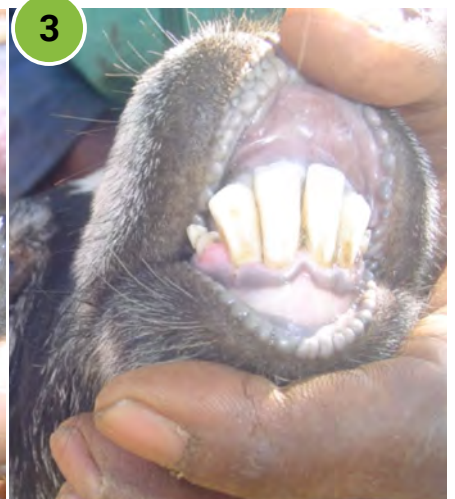
Goats have no teeth in the upper jaw but have eight front teeth (incisors) in the lower jaw.



1



2



3

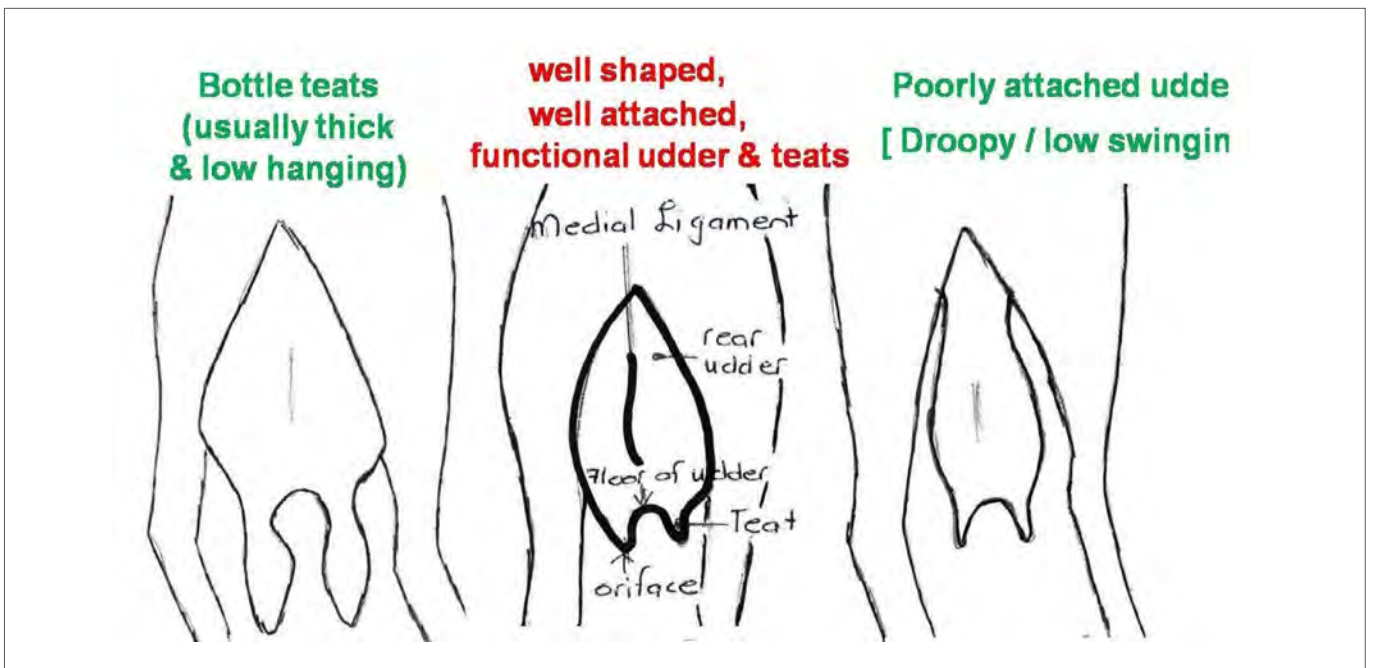


1. Milk tooth stage: less than twelve months old
2. The two-tooth stage: twelve months old
3. The four-tooth stage: about two years of age
4. The six-tooth stage: 3-4 years of age
5. The full mouth stage: 4-5 years of age.
6. As the animal grows older (from six years onwards) the teeth start to wear out, spread apart, become loose and finally drop out. Front teeth worn out at adult stage
7. All teeth have dropped at old age: broken mouth

*Pictures on Dentition adopted from: Goat Farming as a business: a farmer's manual to a successful goat production and marketing. Sikosana J.L.N and Senda, T.S. (2007)*

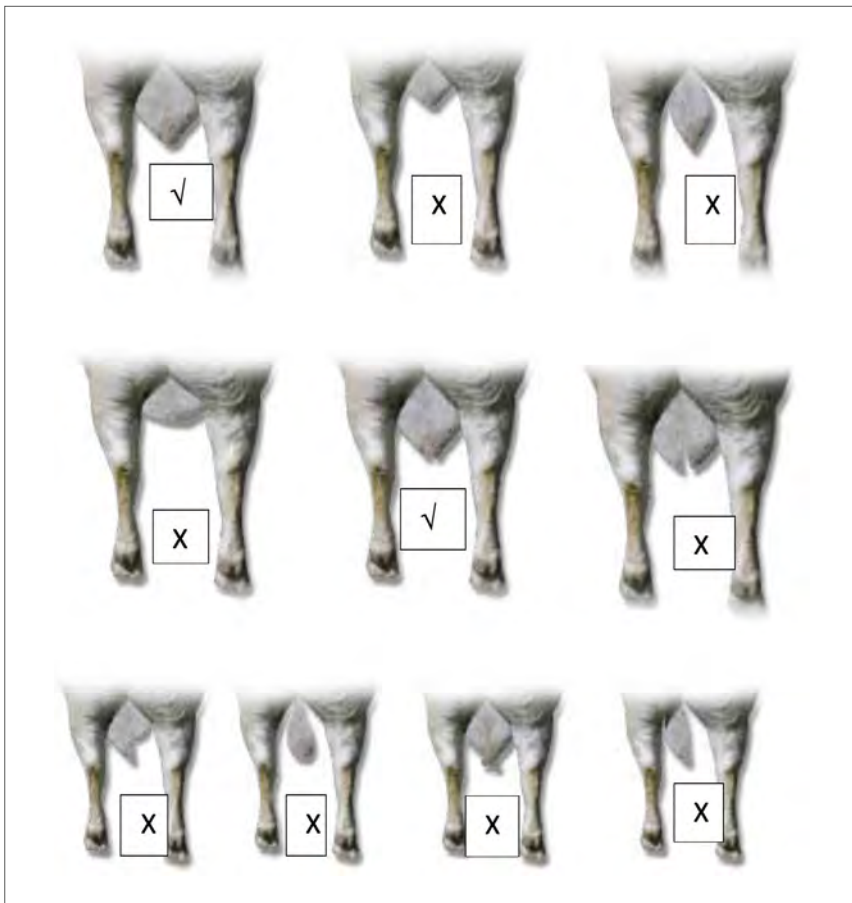
# EXAMPLES OF CULL DEFECTS

## UDDER AND TEATS



Source: IVG Joernaal 2019, page 85

## TESTICLES



Source:  
BOERBOK\_studente Boek ,2014, page 61

## LEGS STANCE



**HORNLESS (POLLED) GOAT**



**CROSSBRED GOAT**



**VERY SHORT EARS**



# REFERENCES

1. Devendra, C. and Burns, M. 1983. Goat Production in the tropics, Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux, Farmham Royal, Bucks, England. 184 pp.
2. Farm-Africa, 1996. Goat types of Ethiopia and Eritrea, physical description and management systems. Published jointly by Farm-Africa, London, United Kingdom, and International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), Nairobi, Kenya.76pp.
3. Gall, Christian.1996.Goat breeds of the world. Centre for Agriculture in the Tropics and Sub-Tropics (CTA).
4. Matopos Research Station. 2003. Fact Sheet: Animal Genetic Resources ( AnGR) Survey.
5. Payne and Wilson. 1999. Introduction to animal husbandry in the tropics. Wiley-Blackwell.768pp
6. Sikosana J.L.N. and Senda, T.S. 2007.Goat farming as a business: A farmer's manual to successful goat production and marketing. Supported by SNV, Netherlands Development Organization.49pp.
7. Steele, M. 1996. Goats. Centre for Agriculture in the Tropics and Sub-Tropics (CTA).

**act:onaid**



**Shamiso Farms**

