



The Ditches goat



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Population :

690 animals registered in 2006 , including 515 females

Weight of the male : 50 to 60 kg

Weight of the female : 30 to 40 kg

Qualities :

Hardiness, adaptation to mild and humid climate

Prolificacy, mothering qualities

Obedience, respect for confined spaces

Dairy potential (being evaluated)

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Origin and breeding area.....

The common West goat, sometimes called « slope goat » or more often « Ditches goat » is a population that has survived for many years. It traditionally occupied the provinces of Normandy and Bretagne, overflowing to the neighboring departments of Pays de la Loire.

History and ability.....

A symbol for family subsistence in the most modest backgrounds, this goat was the « poor man's cow », providing milk, meat, skin and sometimes work for the rural landless and destitute. The goat was bred while in confinement and often attached to fencing, grazing in the brambles and brush trails, on the edges of ditches or along the slopes... Hence its name, docility and hardiness.

Type of farming and development

Most of the animals existing today are raised in dual purpose; preserving the breed and maintaining natural areas. A large

proportion of farmers belonging to the association are amateurs passionate for this breed of goat. This docile and familiar animal then acts as a brushcutter-mower.

This goat also has its place in the maintenance of protected ecosystems, where its ability to enhance the wood is effective in limiting the development of scrubs. Some professional breeders have also started the agricultural use of the race:

- Milk: the manufacture and direct sale of farmhouse cheeses.
- Meat: the selling of heavy or light kids.

Characteristic.....

The Ditches goat has a small to medium sized body and is lightly boned. Its ears are small and thin and worn in a V shape even when at rest. All dress colors are possible (there is no standardization on this criteria). Its hair is quite long all over the body and often filled with a thick wad during the winter.

Conservation program.....

The Association for the safeguarding and promotion of the Ditches goat together with its technical partners, contributes to the conservation of this livestock. Supported by the Institute of Animal Husbandry, it participates in the genetic monitoring of the herd. By facilitating communication between farmers, it helps to develop the workforce and ensure the sustainability of the breed.