



The Massif Central goat



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Population :

660 goats including 600 females in 2009,

Qualities :

Hardiness, versatility
Appreciated for the work of cheese and a good milking persistence.

Contact :

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Origin and breeding area.....

The Massif Central goat traditionally inhabited the centre of France (Massif Central, Limousin, Berry, and Rhone Valley). In the Southeast, it was present in the Gard, Hérault, Lozère, Ardèche, Haute-Loire, Loire, Rhone and the foothills of the Alpes (western part of Isère and Drome).

Protection actions.....

Until the early sixties, a large population was recorded and kept intact. During this decade, « neo rural people from the city settled and with them specialised breeding based on the use of two Swiss breeds: the Alpine Chamois and the Saanen. The arrival of these new breeders coincided with the gradual disappearance of the traditional local farming. The Alpine and Saanen males quickly spread and the local population was replaced by these breeds. In 1994 the association for the renewal of the Massif Central goat was formed to try to save the last Massif Central goats.

Volunteers from the association organized the first census where about 120 goats from 23 farms are

recorded. Many animals showed obvious signs of crossbreeding; the situation was therefore becoming critical. Since the early 2000's an accurate record of the animals has been held by the Institute of Animal Husbandry.

Description.....

This goat is rather large, stocky, bone and it has generally long hair on the back, the thighs and under the belly. Traditionally the animals without horns were preferred. Standardization of the population by selecting a single type of dress (« White of Cevennes ») was locally tested by some farmers but these efforts always remained temporary. This resulted in a huge variety of dresses but with a dominant of black or black and white and the presence of the « Poitevin » colour.

Ability and performances.....

Like with many breeds with a small population, there are very few technical references about the production for this goat that is appreciated for its hardiness and milk qualities. Its ability to walk, and

to graze even in the thickets allow it to take advantage of the flora, brambles and shrubs. It values pastures and roughage very well . This breed was historically known to be a good dairy goat. For pastoralists living on the farm, its production is satisfactory with a good length of lactation and a good cheese yield. Its hardiness and adaptability to climate (especially cold weather) makes it a good animal with almost no health problems.

