

The beginnings of the Modern Alpine – A conversation with Randy Hoach

When studying the Alpine history, one has to agree that in the 1980s the American Alpine greatly influenced the breed. The Americans combined style with additional stature, a stronger substance of bone, and a longer, tighter fore udder extension. Much of this influence can be contributed to the Sodium Oaks and Shahena'ko Alpines. For many alpine enthusiasts, in the 1980s these two breeders set the trend and raised the bar. But as 1990s approached, breeders were looking for the "Modern Doe". They wanted the breed to evolve through genetics that kept the stature, strength and fore udder, but also contained more length to the doe, cleaner front ends, higher rear udders, increased dairy character and a feminine presence.

They found this modern style at the 1989 National Show in Oklahoma, under ADGA Judge Sheila Nixon, where GCH L. Reeds Farm Barbie Doll, an American Alpine, became National Champion and gave the Alpine breeders just what they had been wanting for their breeding programs. Barbie Doll brought the Hoach's herd to overnight notoriety and started a national infatuation with the Hoach style, a love affair that still stands.

Barbie Doll was not the only National Champion for Randy Hoach, but was an introduction to the Hoach breeding program. A program that to this day can be found not only in American Alpines, but French Alpines as well. Some of the most famous Hoach's animals are the French Alpines, which includes the legendary GoldenLark, the second National Champion for Randy Hoach. It is these lines that have been the foundation for some of the top herds in the country.

It has been awhile since we last saw the Hoach Alpines exhibited at a National Show, but the Hoach legacy is far from over, as evident in the 2005 National Champion, GCH Redwood Hill's Remember Jambalaya *M, sired by *B Hoach's Remembrance. Perhaps, there is another Hoach Farm national exhibition in waiting, as this month's front cover can attest to the quality of animals that the partnership between Brandt's Alpines and Hoach's Alpines is producing. Either way, the superior genetics of the Hoach's Alpines, as well as the dedication, and talents of Randy Hoach have influenced the bred. The following is a conversation with Randy, in his own words.

When and how did you start in dairy goats?

The first Dairy Goats that we owned were unregistered grade dairy goats. My father purchased two does from one of his friends that had raised unregistered milking stock for many years. One doe was a Toggenburg doe in appearance and the other was definitely an Alpine cross of some sort. I believe he purchased them when I was around 7 years old in 1973.

A few years later, in 1975 we purchased a registered Alpine doe for a 4-H project. I can still remember the pendulous udder on Mockingbird Hill Cricket, who was actually born in 1970; she was an aged doe at the time we purchased her. I can remember showing Cricket at fairs when I was about 9 years old. I was a small, skinny kid and she would drag me around the show ring. I would grab onto the show ring fence to get some leverage to slow her down. I vividly remember showing her for the first time at the National Orange Show in San Bernardino, California and the 2nd place ribbon that she won. That ribbon is still in my possession, tattered, torn and nearly all the gold lettering missing due to the fact that I slept with it for about a week!

In the fall of 1975, at the request of our 4-H leader, we took Cricket to be bred to a buck that Duane and Corinne Haas had purchased from Ray Horton. Duane and Corinne were brother and sister and had some really nice animals that stemmed back to a lot of the old Lockhaven (Melody's lineage) and a dash of Raymar thrown in for good measure (Corinne Haas Sharpe to this day has a beautiful herd of Alpines). The buck that we bred Cricket to was GCH +*B Raymar's Intensifier, out of the famed GCH Raymar's Ilene and sired by GCH +*B Raymar's Perpetuator. Intensifier was a magnificent animal, in every way, he was an extremely typey classic cou-blanc that exhibited tremendous power and masculinity but didn't give anything away in overall dairyness and spring to his body. He had been Best Buck in Show many times.

In the spring of 1976 Cricket kidded with twin does by Intensifier. We did not have a herd name, and as a 9yr. Old kid, to be honest, I did not think much about it, so we named the two doe kids Cricket's Ladybug and Cricket's Katydid. These two kids were outstanding and they won EVERYTHING there was to win as dry stock at our local 4-H and open club shows! Well, now the dye was cast and our family was "bitten by the goat bug."

It just so happened that the National show in 1976 was to be held at the Los Angeles County Fair, which was a local fair for us, only about 50 minutes away. I wanted to show in Showmanship and show Katydid at this National show but I really needed someone to mentor and teach me how to show well enough to be

competitive at that level and back then showmanship had huge numbers of entries and was fiercely competitive. We had 40-50 kids in just one age group at my local shows, what was the National going to produce?

My first Mentor in Dairy Goats was Janice McMahon of Fairhaven Farms. She took me under her wing and really helped more than anyone to develop my showmanship skills. Janice was an excellent showman herself and new more than anyone that I have ever met in Dairy Goats how to show a doe to her very best advantage. Under Janice's guidance, I win the Jr. Showmanship Class at the 1976 National Show. I would go on to win National Showmanship on two more occasions, and 2nd on two other occasions.

I met people at this show who would be extremely influential in my overall assessment of good type and became mentors as well. Sheila Nixon had a full Alpine showstring that she exhibited at that National Show and Janice introduced me to Sheila. Her animals were very typey, correct and consistent and I knew then I wanted my animals to look like Sheila's! I was also introduced to Nancy Lake, who had the premier Lamancha herd at the time, Dorothy Locklin of Lockhaven, Ray Horton of Raymar, Tom Koenig of Serendipity and of course we already new the Haa's of Haasenda.

The Alpine National Champion that year was GCH Diamond Sunshine Stella and Reserve was GCH Laurelwood Acres Yenda. I also remember that Sheila showed a gorgeous 2yr. Old that won her class named Nixon's Happy Janet, and there was this incredible long, tall, exquisitely dairy, milky doe that just took your breath away, named GCH Nixon's Eris. She had a presence about her, and that long beautiful neck, clean tidy body on one of the best structural frames I have ever seen, more sprung than any of the Alpines, even of the modern era, and good functional udder with a large area of udder attachment. Her true dairy-type was undeniable. This was a true Dairy Goat. From that day on I knew I wanted my Alpines tall and long like Eris, and I would put special emphasis on these traits and still do to this day. One of my earliest highlights and now a fond memory was showing Eris in Sr. Showmanship at the 1982 National show. Eris was 10 years old, she looked like she wasn't a day over 5, and was a joy to show.

Back to the beginning, Janice always felt that Cricket, the doe mentioned as my start, would not have the udder power to get us anywhere fast, although her two kids had shown well as dry stock, she felt it would only lead to heartache as they would probably be culls when they freshened. Intensifier was a good buck, but he could only do so much, and udders back then were not as consistent as they are now in some of the Alpine lines. Janice was right! We culled our Jr. Champions from that breeding, a difficult thing to do when you are a kid and you love the goat anyway!

Janice had a finished champion doe that had contacted mastitis and was very uneven on one side of her udder. She told my parents that she really wanted me to have this doe, but she was asking a lot of money for her because of her breeding and that she had already proven to pass on her outstanding qualities to her daughters. I remember standing by my Dad as he asked, "Which doe is it?" Janice replied, "GCH Nixon's Eraina * M." I was so excited at the prospect of owning and working with this daughter of +B A.I. Demetrius, and out of a +B Raymar's O'Hara daughter-Nixon's Arda. O'Hara was the sire of GCH ++B Nixon's Tomboy, who I had seen so many nice daughters from at the 1976 National Show. She was also a $\frac{3}{4}$ sister to Eris as the same buck sired Eris and Eraina's dams. I found out later in my life that Janice never really wanted to sell Eraina, but she wanted me to have something nice that she knew would be a real asset to the herd. I appreciate Janice's sacrifice now that I look back on things and know that she gave up something she really loved so that I could have a good start.

My family did not have a lot of money back then and I can still see my mother putting dollar bills and sometimes even change into envelopes to help pay for Eraina. My family and I have bred Dairy Goats together for many years, I have taken or received much of the credit, but without them, there would never have been the Hoach's Alpines herd. When my biological father died, and mother remarried, there was more money to be spent on the goats. My stepfather John, never once complained about the animals or spending his hard earned money to buy the next \$1000.00 buck, or build the next barn, or put in a new lixit line, both my parents spent tireless hours sacrificing for the animals and the herds advancement. The goats kept us a very close family and today, I think they are responsible (the goats) for our closeness as a family.

Eraina ended up being the fountainhead and start of an extremely strong purebred line, we named most of these does with "R" for the first letter in their name. You may remember, GCH Reflection, GCH Raino, GCH Rebel, GCH Dark Rain and GCH Rose. This line also spawned the Crystal Creek Alpine herd that had great success both at home and the 2 National shows they attended. The majority of the Crystal Creek Alpine lineage found their way to Trisha Duggar's Sand-Dance herd.

We remained an exclusive purebred herd for many years. We purchased the fountain of the "L" line, Lollipop, in the early 80's and this line is behind many successful purebred lines today, producing animals like GCH Goldenlark, GCH Lacey, GCH Lyric, GCH Limelight, GCH Cariari, and a plethora of extremely good bucks that have been used to advantage throughout the country.

We brought in the best bucks we could from Nixon, Serendipity, and added the Snowbird line as a cross back with nice results. We advanced the herd tremendously with GCH+*B Serendipity's FDS Jubilation. This buck was the turning point that made the herd nationally competitive. Jubilation was sired by Serendipity's Jackson Brown and out of Serendipity's Daydream Jubilee. In a nutshell he was a cross between Sheila's lines and a dash of Sunshine thrown in. Tom Koenig (Serendipity) had a real knack for getting the best results out of these two top herds by crossing them back and forth.

At the 1984 National show, when Jubilation's daughters were yearlings, I spotted a doe that was the last doe to be pulled in to the "keeper" line in the milking yearling class. She was tall and long, and somewhat narrow in the chest floor and extremely immature, but dairy, milky and stylish with tremendous length to her cannon bones and one of the shapeliest, glued on udders I had seen. I told her owner who was Shirley Benson that if she ever wanted to sell her I wanted to buy her. I also found out that she was a Jackson Brown daughter out of the sister to GCH Thunderhead SS Fantastic Lass. Since I was already using a Jackson son, Jubilation, it made perfect sense to me. The next year, Shirley Benson sold us GCH L. Reed's Farms Barbie Doll and she was the start of our American line.

Barbie was bred the majority of her life to purebred bucks and she crossed well with the "L" line as well as some of the Sodium Oaks lineage. She was extremely genetically potent. Her daughter CH Hoach's Heiress, was the result of breeding Barbie back to her son, and won her class at the 1991 National Show and placed 4th as a 4yr. Old with 2nd udder on another occasion. She also produced a doe that died very young, that was quite stunning-GCH Hoach's Little Innocence. Her two sons Goldengenes, and Encore Performance were outstanding bucks and their genetic reliability as sires is well documented.

Barbie Doll and GoldenLark both National Champions, and both Reserve National Champions are a result of pretty humble beginnings. Both does have contributed well to the breed and will be remembered as National Champions who had the proven ability to reproduce themselves. Both does were National Champions as aged does, and both does had low placings at National Shows as milking yearlings. If they did not teach me anything else, they taught me patience.

Have you always raised Alpines?

My family and I have always had Alpines. Since our first registered purebred doe in 1975, the herd has been exclusively Alpines. In the mid 1980's we added the American line through Barbie Doll. There have been no other significant purchases in does since the purchase of Barbie Doll and GCH Button's Lollipop,

the start of the "L" line that had a significant impact in contributing to herd quality. To this day, the purebreds are only bred to purebred bucks.

Today, my work schedule really doesn't permit me to keep Dairy Goats at home on any large scale. For the last 5 years (after a few years without goats) I have been a partner in Leslie Schaffer's "Brandt's" Alpine herd. Leslie got her start from me several years ago and ended up with the last portion of does from my original lines. Leslie has been so good to keep those old does registered in my name. I have been responsible for the breeding program from pretty much the start. Most of the animals that we keep wear the Brandt's herd name, but are predominantly genetically Hoach breeding, and I have a few myself that wear the Hoach's prefix but our partnership does not put emphasis on which herd name is used, they are all the same breeding and kept as an individual unit.

What lines were people working with then? How have you seen the breed evolve over the years?

When I started in Dairy Goats in the mid 1970's there was no question that on a national level you saw more Sunshine Farms Alpines bucks being advertised, or working in peoples herds. Laurelwood Acres Alpines were very popular and were also used extensively along with Nixon, and Raymar lineage. In the mid 1970's and early 80's you saw the emergence of the competitiveness of the Redwood Hills animals and a little later, the Sodium Oaks Alpines, both of which are popular lines today, and used heavily in quite a few present day herds. From the time I started in Dairy Goats, I can't remember a time when the Redwood Hills Alpines were not competitive and popular. In my opinion this is a stellar accomplishment! A little later the Shahena'ko Alpines became competitive and popular as well. About then, the Serendipity animals were also starting to show extremely well and Tom Koenig was selling a lot of bucks. They were doing excellent jobs in the herds they were in. These bucks really put a lot of breeders' herds on the map.

The Sunshine does had udder quality ahead of their time, the Laurelwood animals were flat boned with generally long bone patterns with exceptional milk production and the correctness in mammary to sustain the additional milk. The Nixon and Raymar animals were similar at that time. They were both very correct and very typey and fancy looking. They were wider and more powerful than their competition and had strong enough udders to compete well. They were a great complete package.

Over the years the Alpine breed has evolved tremendously. When I first started in Alpines there was not much foot and leg quality. You saw a lot of broken pasterns and postiness in the hind legs. There were also a lot of steep rumps and weak chins. The mammary systems back then had a lot to be desired,

especially as a breed. You could find herds as mentioned above that had the desired mammary quality, but you could not always count on that quality to be reproduced as you can with some of the top herds today. The herds that had animals that reproduced themselves were exceptions, not the rule.

The Alpines of today are much more reliable for passing on the good traits that they do have. They are longer and taller. We have improved rear leg angulation and strength to the pasterns and have does with much more correct backs and rumps. We have improved udders probably more than any trait. The Alpine udders of today are shapelier; far more extended in the fore udder, and tremendously higher and wider in the rear udder and are more productive than the Alpines were when I started in the breed. The Alpine breed offers some of the very best teat size and placement, as well as correctness in medial suspensory ligaments and cleft to the floor of the udders than the majority of breeds.

We have sacrificed some things to get where we are now. Ultimately I believe we are still in a much better place in comparison to the Alpines of the 70's and 80's. In my opinion we have lost a lot of quality in our heads. The majority of Alpines of today are narrow in the muzzle, between the eyes and across the poll. We also don't have the power and squareness to the head that we used to, and our ears have gotten longer.

Many have said that we have lost good front ends on our Alpines, and that is definitely true, but I don't see it as a total front-end problem. I think you have to drill down in to the parts of the front end instead of making a general statement that does not fit the breed. Our shoulder assemblies are pretty good as a breed; the two areas that I would point out that belong to the "front end" but are more specific are the lack of tightness in the elbows and lack of straightness to the front legs as the two biggest concerns. With the exception of very few herds, this is something that we need to place emphasis on in our breeding programs. With progress comes change, it is inevitable and we would be pretty arrogant to think that we were not going to make the breed better without losing a little along the way and "fixing" all that we had to work on back then and keeping ALL of the strengths without losing a little here and there. We have to be diligent in going back now and looking at the weaknesses in the breed and improve them, just like we did 30 years ago.

How do/did you select bucks to use in your breeding program?

When looking for a buck to use on my does, the pedigree has to match the qualities that I see. If I see a lot of good traits that I am trying to incorporate, improve or maintain in an animal, I have to be able to see where it came from

and that it is repeatable. If I see something I really like and there is no foundation or pedigree to back it up, I move on.

I prefer to bring in bucks that have some relation in the pedigree to what I am currently using. Usually 25-50% of the first four generations need to be related animals. This has worked very well for bringing in new blood without a total outcross, which I normally will not do.

I want the qualities that I am looking for to run to at least to the third dam in the pedigree and the same with the dams on the sire's side of the pedigree. I have seen a lot of people keep/buy bucks from really gorgeous does, but the grandam was nothing like that beautiful doe that drew them to buy the buck in the first place. With the quality of today's Alpines, and if you are looking in the right herds, this is not a hard thing to do.

I am also looking for an extreme. I want my bucks to come from does that are exceptionally long and tall, but not over bodied, over deep, or mature. It is like comparing a giraffe to an elephant, and I want the giraffe. I want the line to be consistent for high headedness, uphill look, and really long cannon bones, that is where the uphill look starts. I require the line to have proven that the does mature in a natural maturation process, getting better as they get older, even into advanced age. An animal can be long and tall, but not necessarily mature. Naturally, overall correctness with good functional type are key factors in my decision as well.

The dam of the buck, and really throughout the largest contributing percentages to the whole absolutely must have good feet and legs. I would not purchase a buck from a doe or dam line that lacked in strength of feet and legs. I also want the dam line to possess extension to the brisket, and a nice tight shoulder assembly. I don't get caught up in does that are so sharp and prominent in the withers that they are able to "split a raindrop." I think a lot of those kinds of shoulder assemblies come on does that are narrow. I do want the shoulders tight and smooth in the crops but I am not afraid of a line or doe that may have a little more shoulder as long as the assembly is tight and smooth.

As far as choosing a buck whether from my own herd, or someone else's to use as a herd sire based on the mammary system, the doe must have an outstanding mammary system, and I want the whole package, both fore and rear. I am really picky about teat size, and shape, and I want those teats to be on the bottom of the udder and turn ever so slightly, inward toward the medial suspensory ligament. I want to see some cleft to the floor of the udder as well. I personally like shapely udders that tend to be a bit more globular as compared to a "flat" udder.

Then there are those times when I just get a positive feeling about a particular breeding and that it is going to “click” well, and for me, there are no hard rules in this type of breeding. The doe may not be a champion or may not have scored particularly well, but the overall balance of the animal and pedigree just “fits” in. Over the years I have learned that there are certain combinations of lines that just work well together.

I am always on the hunt for my next herdsire. Sure, I keep a number of my own, but I am always looking for herds and animals that provide opportunity to add new blood and improvement. If I see a doe that I really like and on further examination is bred in a way to combine with my herd, I will not be shy about getting out the checkbook for a deposit.

A.I. plays a huge role, as well as the “live” sire. I think once you are good at settling does A.I. the possibilities are endless and it is the fastest way to have access to the best bucks available and rapid genetic improvement.

What were/are your strongest dam lines?

To this day, every doe in the Brandt’s/Hoach’s herd can be traced back to 3 doe lines. We have woven in and out with these three lines for over 25 years to get where we are now. The three most influential dam lines, I have really mentioned earlier; GCH Nixon’s Eraina *M (the “R” line), GCH Button’s Lollipop *M, (The “L” line) and GCH L. Reed’s Farms Barbie Doll *M (The American line).

All 3 of these doe lines have proven to breed extremely true and each of them have produced a number of bucks that have been used to advantage in many herds. There is not much left in direct female descendants from the Eraina line, as this line has been really stingy with doe kids and has almost bred themselves out of female progeny. We do have several bucks in the tank from the Eraina line and actually we are using a buck that I have high hopes for that I used A.I. from this line to incorporate back into the herd. The other two dam lines, the “L” line and the American line through Barbie are still going very strong and have produced animals today that are multiple BIS winners.

What have your animals done on the National Show level, DHIR, and Linear Appraisal?

The herd over the years has been exhibited at several National Shows. I mentioned that the first National show that I attended was in 1976, and we had a few in the 1978 National Show as well.

The herd started becoming competitive Nationally in about 1984 with several high placing animals and again in 1987. In 1989 GCH L. Reeds Farms Barbie

Doll was named National Champion Alpine and Best Udder and was our first National Champion. In 1990, she was Reserve National Champion and Best Udder as an 8 yr. Old. That same year GCH Hoach's QAAG GoldenLark 4*M was the 1st place 2yr. Old. The other milking animals in the remaining classes with the exception of one all placed in the top 5 of their class.

There is no feeling in the world like owning or breeding a National Champion and I am so thankful that I have been blessed and lucky enough to have experienced the high as the drama unfolds in the championship line up and it goes your way! But if I had a choice between having the National Champion or being awarded Premier Breeder, I would take the Premier Breeder award as a higher honor than the National Championship.

At the 1991 National show GoldenLark won her class again as the 1st place 3yr. Old and Barbie's daughter, Heiress won the milking yearling class and Barbie's granddaughter was 2nd place milking yearling. Both does were also out of Barbie's son +*B Hoach's Encore Performance.

In 1992 in Amarillo, we took a full string of Alpines and had many top placing animals, culminating in the Premier Breeder and Exhibitor of the Alpine breed. I remember that Reflection, from the "R" line won the milking yearling class that year, GoldenLark was the 1st Place 4yr. Old, and went on to be named Reserve National Champion. She had now won her class at three National shows.

We did not travel for the National Show in 1993, and that was also the year that I did not get GoldenLark settled and she remained dry. We had a gorgeous milking yearling daughter that we showed at our local fairs as part of the showstring that I thought had tremendous potential, Hoach's SRS Lyric.

The 1994 National show was the last one that I have attended and shown the does at. That year, as a 6yr. Old, GoldenLark was named National Champion Alpine. Her daughter Lyric was the 1st place 2yr. Old that year. I always felt that Lyric had what it took to be a National Champion, but we never got the job done, as, soon after that National Show, the demands of career kept us from attending another National Show.

As far as linear appraisal is concerned, the herd was scored twice. Once in the early 80's and again in the late 80's. We have had several does score Excellent and I guess you could consider the numbers a success, but it was such a long time ago. The herd has not been scored since, and although we have not ruled it out for the future, to be appraised again, I just have not found the need to do so. My two biggest concerns with appraisal are the number of animals scoring excellent, and in my opinion, this learning and profound data tool has become used as primarily by many as a method of advertisement as the importance and

not the statistical data that it should provide to help us learn and breed better Dairy Goats. I know many will disagree with this statement and I see the "other side" or argument as well, but you can't be "on the fence" with everything.

The herd was on Official DHIR test in the late 70's and early 80's, but physically it just became another chore in our busy lives. The records of the animals were very good, even then. It is interesting to note that I have always wanted my does productive, I was not breeding for the next breed leader, but you have to have good production to compete at the top level. I never conscientiously bred the does for extremely high milk production, but it came anyway. GCH Barbie Doll was a tremendous milker and we have 4 lactations of barn records of over 3,800 pounds. Lyric was milking 16 lbs a day as a 6year old, and GoldenLark has three years of barn records of just fewer than 3,000 pounds.

I will make no excuses that this herd was built and is maintained today as a "hobby" show herd. Leslie and I don't sell milk or make any money from the Dairy Goats other than kid sales and premium monies earned at fairs that we exhibit. I have always bred the goats to my personal tastes, and the traits that I find most rewarding, and I have never deviated. If people like them, and judges use them as their Alpine Champion-that's great, and if not they are still a group of animals that I am pleased with personally. It has taken YEARS for me to get to this point.

What lines are you currently working with or would like to use in your breeding program?

As I mentioned before, we have the 3 strong dam lines that we have interwoven for many years as the base of the breeding stock. If you really put the breeding into a nutshell with the purebreds it contains a lot of Serendipity bred animals that cross back and forth with the Nixon lines that were contained in both the Serendipity lines and our original foundation. A great majority of our does trace back 10 or more times to GCH +B Nixon's Tomboy, even the American line. You have to go back into the pedigrees for several generations, but it was the foundation and I just did my best to build on that foundation. We have added a nice balanced thread of the Snowbird line through several different bucks. +*B Qu'appelle Alchemist Goldsmith was the first buck brought into the line that had a good dose of GCH Wa-Shaw-Me Snowbird, as well as several other bucks used A.I. including +*B Qu' appelle Bravo Goshawk from a Snowbird daughter who also happened to be sired by a Snowbird son and +*B Sweet Dreams GF Goldenboy (+*B Chateau De Ville's Wild Thing X +*B Chateau De Ville's Gyrfalcon) both directly and indirectly. Goldenboy is probably the highest concentration of the "Snowbird" line to be found within the pedigree of one animal.

The last GCH Hoach's SRS Lyric 5*M daughter, Lefevre, is sired by +*B Sunshine Seign Sedric and she has been an outstanding doe for passing on good traits. Her brother, CH *B Hoach's Lyric Longevity (now owned by Trisha Duggar of Sand-Dance Alpines) is the sire of GCH Brandt's Van Latte * M, who has had an outstanding year by going Champion Alpine at the California State Fair as well as the Los Angeles County Fair this year where she was also named BUIS and part of our Supreme Best 3 Females. In addition she was 3XBDIS prior to the State and Los Angeles County Fairs. Another Lyric daughter sired by the famed +B Willow Run LA Armand; Hoach's WRA Londia is an outstandingly correct, long and tall aged doe that unfortunately continues to have bucks for us, as a main part of the breeding herd.

In the American line there is not one doe in the herd that does not trace back several times to GCH L. Reed's Farms Barbie Doll, or for that matter, GCH Hoach's QAAG GoldenLark-paternally through the sire (although GoldenLark was purebred). Barbie combined extremely well with both the "R" line bucks and the "L" line bucks and there are many good progeny from those crosses. We have also maintained a small thread of Sodium Oaks lineage through this line, which has been extremely successful.

We have two young Willow Run bucks that are doing very nice jobs. The Willow Run Alpines have much of the same blood running through their veins as our does do. A lot of the quality of the Willow Run stock has to have credit given to Barb Swayne's Maple Glen herd, which in reality is linebred Serendipity. Patti Dean had also used and purchased several bucks from us over the years and did an outstanding job with them. Patti and I have traded bucks back and forth for some time. The Willow Run bucks have proven to cross extremely well back into the lines we maintain today and personally I feel that the Willow Run Alpines will continue to be a major factor in the advancement of the Alpine breed for years to come. We also have two of our own bucks that we are using, a Lefevre son, and a buckling this year out of one of our newest Champions-GCH Brandt's Summer 2*M, who has in addition to finishing her championship this season, gone twice BDIS. Summers buck is stunning and is sired by +*B Clovertop's Fire Starter.

I had long wanted to incorporate the Clovertop Alpines into my breeding program, and when the chance came to own Fire Starter, Leslie and I jumped at it! Fire Starter is co-owned with Dan Drake of Willow Lane Dairy. Fire Starter is sired by +*B Sweet Dreams Wildfire and his dam is an awesome doe-Clovertop's Gene Sashay. I admire the Clovertop animals a great deal and feel that these are some of the finest Alpines in the country! Ray, in my opinion, is a true master at breeding beautiful, correct, and productive Dairy Goats. I admire his skill and talent tremendously. The Clovertop animals are not campaigned

heavily, as Ray and Manuel don't do a lot of showing or advertising. Fire Starter is in advanced aged now and we are not sure how many breeding seasons he has left, but we have a few does bred to him for 2006 kids as well as some really fancy kids born this spring.

I plan to incorporate some more of the well-known Cherry Glen animals into the American breeding program in the near future. Our most correct dry yearling this year is sired by +*B Cherry Glen TRI Mojave, and we have another planned breeding to Mojave this year. Linda Eder Colquitt owns Mojave. We have many lovely Mojave daughters in the Southern California area and Mojave is definitely producing daughters to be reckoned with at our local shows.

I mentioned that I always have my eyes open for the next herdsire, and I feel that I have found a doe to compliment the does that Leslie and I have currently in the herd. An order has been placed and hopefully within a few years we will construct the next layer in our quest to breed the best we possibly can.

What are your future goals for your herd?

I will always consider this herd a work in progress. The perfect Dairy Goat has not been bred, and really I don't think that I can say that any of us have even come close.

My goals for the future are to continue the quest of making the does better and better with each generation, and to get the purebred show string back to the numbers that it was in the mid 90's. The herd is pretty small, about 8 to 10 milkers and 29 animals total, and we are still re-constructing the purebreds. They have not been overly generous with doe kids for about the last 5 years, until last spring, so hopefully we will freshen some nice animals as yearlings in 2006.

I am personally not as excited about the showing part anymore as much as Leslie is. Although it is nice to handle the does and win, I much prefer the "getting them ready" portion. I love to fit them and make sure that they are ready when they walk in the ring. But I could be just as content without showing at all, really. I also appreciate more than ever just seeing a beautiful Alpine walk across the dry lot, looking at her through my eyes and not caring what anyone else may think of her, I will see her beauty and her faults. I am much more critical of the does than anyone else could be. It is exciting for me to drive to the farm where the goats are and see how much they look like the dominant female fore bearers that laid the foundation for Leslie. It is also gratifying to see them do well; there are some outstanding animals in that barn that I am personally very pleased with. I have received more special and positive comments from judges this year on one of the current stars in the

showstring, Van Latte, than any doe I have ever owned including the National Champions and past National Show milking class winners.

It would be nice for Leslie to experience what I have personally on the National level, and travel to a National Show or two. I think breeders can learn a lot from going to the more competitive National Shows. It opens your eyes to how good they really have to be to win at that level.

For now, at least for me, it's pretty simple. Build on the strong foundation that is already here, be relentless in your pursuit of the best possible animals and choices to advance the herd, and continue to improve on any weaknesses doe by doe. I will always breed Alpines that satisfy my standards first with emphasis on what I think is important and the traits that I find preferable. I refuse to become blind to the fact that there are animals out there besides my own that deserve merit and consideration for my goals in my breeding program!

A number of national level breeders as well as hobbyist breeders use your lines. How do you see the influence these lines are making across the nation?

I am not sure that "influence" is the correct term that I would use to describe what I personally see from the perspective of those who have trusted in my Alpines. I first think that those who would state that my breeding has helped them to achieve their goals did not do it with ALL of my breeding, and they deserve the credit for making the combinations that they feel advanced their herds.

Nothing pleases me more than to see others realize their dreams by using something from my herd that has helped them along the way. I think that all of us as breeders owe our very best to those who come to purchase stock and put their trust in a chosen line of animals or even a particular doe or buck that they may purchase to use in their herd. We owe them a very honest and critical assessment of our animals. We owe it to them to ask the questions and discover what it is that they really want to improve in their herd. I always ask, new buyers especially, " Describe your version of a beautiful, correct Alpine-what does she look like?" I don't want to just make a sale or sell somebody something that they we will be unhappy with. I have had to tell potential buyers based on discovery type open-ended questions that I don't have what they are looking for. When it is all said and done, and at the end of the day, I really think it is up to the people that have purchased stock from me over the years to hopefully someday tell their story and ultimately decide what credit I deserve or do not deserve or what influence my animals truly had. I know there will also be the critics and they probably deserve to be heard too!

What advice would you give breeders working with your lines?

The best advice that I can give from my perspective to those who have and are working with my breeding is that they need to realize that the majority of the animals in my barn for years have not always been “instantly and all along the way what they eventually become.” These lines have been bred for years to be slow maturing and if you are one that has to win all those kid classes and even the milking yearling class at the most competitive shows, it is probably not going to happen with my lines.

If you are going to base culling decisions on a buck’s dry stock and not wait for these long, tall and gawky kids to mature out until they are around 3 yrs. Old, then you are not going to be happy. I want my kids to be immature (no, not small-immature) and I want my milking yearlings to look like milking yearlings and mature each year as their age suggests they should. I want them to be long-lived and competitive/productive into advanced age.

I think the majority of the breeders who will say that they have had success with my breeding are those who are able to look at a young animal and have some kind of foresight into what she may look like when she has a few freshenings and years under her belt. Not every breeder has this gift, but knowing what you are dealing with going in sure helps. I think the number one mistake of a lot of people in Dairy Goats make today is impatience.

In addition, realize that there are parts to competition that can be very ugly. As your animals become more and more competitive you will find all of a sudden that you have critics. This has happened to every person that I know in my lifetime of breeding Dairy Goats in one way or another. My advice is to be strong, stay the course and keep doing what you are doing for the love of the breed. I say this in an effort not to be negative, in any way, but to encourage those of you who I know to be struggling with some of these circumstances. I have also witnessed some wonderful actions in competition from those who really have a true heart. There are some really awesome and outstanding people in Dairy Goats that will be supportive, coaching and mentoring for a lifetime, and are just nice people! Learn who they are and keep them close! Surround yourself with the positive people who see that there is some good in everything and everyone.

Today, what do you see as the over all strength and weakness of the alpine breed?

The overall strength in the breed is the stylishness, the levelness and strength of backs, and as a breed, I think overall rear leg angulation and strength of pasterns are very strong. Alpines today have overall more correct mammary systems and area of udder attachment than they ever have, at least since I have been involved with the breed. They also breed much truer and much more consistent.

Alpines today as a breed, and being adverse to general statements, but the question asked begs for it; there are always exceptions, but we have lost the straightness of our forelegs, the quality and correctness, to our heads, the tightness in the elbows, and extension to the brisket and width in the chest floor. I also think that while we have made great improvements in rear leg angulation and strength of pasterns, the width in the rear legs has narrowed considerably, and the openness in the escutcheon has paid the price for the advancement in rear leg angulation.

The Alpines of today are far advanced from what they were when I started in Dairy Goats in the mid 70's. There will always be a "general" breed weakness regardless of what breed it is. I think it just changes over the years as we place emphasis on different traits and as we also work to improve the areas we know need improving. This is why I think it is so important to look at the overall animal. I can do a whole lot more in a breeding program with a doe that may have a fault or general weakness in an area, but is outstanding and extreme in all other areas, than I can with a doe that may not have any glaring faults, but there is nothing particularly outstanding about her.

From the time you started breeding alpines what bucks do you feel made the most impact in the breed?

There are a number of bucks that have impacted the Alpine breed, but let's face it, the ones who impacted the breed most are the ones who were used most and had the opportunity to breed a lot of does and have progeny across the nation. When I started in Alpines, A.I. was not used as it is today, so the great bucks of that time had to "make the short list" by others purchasing sons or daughters. Back then we had bucks that did well regionally, and of course most of these were from the popular herds of the time, which showed and campaigned their animals heavily.

I'm not sure how much value my opinion would be given to describe which bucks I thought impacted Alpines most as a breed. You could ask the same question of

5 other Alpine breeders and get a different list from each one. It would only be my opinion, not to mention I would probably forget an important buck and wish I had included him! I will say which bucks impacted my herd the most.

The buck who without question that did the most to advance the herd was +*B Sand-Dance HLS Rico Suave. Rico was the son of GCH Crystal Creeks Robin 2*M (yes, the "R" line). Another buck that I will list later sired Robin that also had a positive influence in the herd, CH Serendipity's DW Abriham. Robin's dam was an exceptionally correct, beautifully uddered doe, GCH Hoach's Rebel * M. GoldenLarks brother, GCH++B Hoach's QAAG LeSabre sired Rico. At the time, Rico was the longest and tallest buck that I have seen, and he was very genetically potent for passing on these traits. He without question improved mammary systems and rear leg angulation, strength of feet and legs and could be counted on to do so an extremely high percentage of the time. Interestingly, Rico was not used much outside of my herd until he was an aged buck. He is behind many successful Alpine herds and National show top placing animals.

Patti Dean owned Rico for a short time after I sold him to Kim Hull. We just couldn't use him anymore, everything was very related at the time we made the decision to sell him. Anyway, Rico only lived a very short time after Patti had purchased him, but he made a huge positive impact in that herd, and is behind too many animals to even think about listing. One thing that had impressed me most about Rico was his ability to always come through. The last couple of years I owned him he was only getting a few does to breed a year. I can remember having a kid crop one year of about 18 doe kids, only two were Rico daughters, those two daughters were the two milking yearlings I kept for the show string the following year. To keep the herd small that was the number that we kept, regardless of how many freshened well.

There were some outstanding bucks in the early years that laid the foundation for Rico to work his magic. The first significant buck was ++*B Willownook Acres Nickolaus who was primarily Laurelwood breeding. After that it was GCH ++B Serendipity's FDS Jubilation, followed by CH Serendipity's DW Abriham, among many Serendipity bred bucks, Qu' appelle Alchemist Goldsmith and +*B Hoach's Encore Performance. Hoach's SDRS Logic (a Rico son) and +*B Hoach's Classic LeBaron were two bucks who maintained the quality beyond Rico as well as +*B Willow Run LA Armand who found his way to my herd as a buck kid in a trade with Patti. A few years later, Armand found his way back home to Ohio.

Today, bucks who have contributed well are Hoach's HD Aristocrat, and 3 of our top does are sired by 3 different Lyric sons, Hoach's Lyric Lucky, Hoach's Lyric Lojack, (Londia's brother, sired by +*B Willow Run LA Armand) and CH*B Hoach's Lyric Longevity.

What bucks do you feel are NOW making a major impact on the breed?

There are many ways for a buck to impact the breed. The question is what criteria do you use to define "major impact?" One could start with a buck whose daughters are consistently competitive in the show ring or Linear Appraisal and one could also mention bucks that may be real "changers" or "fixers" and are contributing to the breed by consistently improving our Alpines in the traits that as a breed, generally speaking, are in need of the most improvement. Given those two applications, I think that the question is a difficult one to answer. I also believe that at this point it will probably not be any individual buck that can and will make the biggest impact, but herds or groupings of lines that will impact the breed most. For any good buck, this also means enough exposure to herds throughout the country and for him to be bred to enough does. The majority of bucks who will get this opportunity, obviously, will come from herds that people have put enough faith in to purchase their next herd sire. Past history has shown us that the herds/bucks that get this kind of exposure are those that do well at the National level.

It is important for our ADGA National Show judges to realize that their job is not only to pick the best animal there according to the ADGA scorecard, but they are paving the road that many breeders will follow when selecting herds from where their next herd sires may be purchased and where our future generations of Alpines will come. Their decisions need to be fair, ethical and beyond reproach.

I also believe that bucks that are impacting the breed now, we truly are not aware of as individuals. I know that may sound strange, but I think for a buck to get named on this list he should probably be dead by now. In my opinion, we really don't realize the total impact of the majority of bucks during their lifespan. It is usually some years later before we can really make any meaningful judgments. I will go as far to say that I believe the Willow Run, Redwood Hills, Cherry Glen, and breeders who are branches off of these herds, to have continued impact on the breed, as their use is widespread and breeders have confidence in using them as proven herds standing the test of time. This certainly does not take anything away from other outstanding herds that have merit of impacting the breed, but we have to consider use and the use of these lines that I just mentioned are very apparent. The list is not all-inclusive, as any herds that emerge to be competitive, especially at the National level and receive exposure enough to become sought after, the people will follow.

Where do you see the alpine breed headed?

I truly believe that we have a lot of really good animals to work with in the Alpine breed! I think they will continue to get better as one of the most advanced breeds of Dairy Goats! We have many intelligent and talented people

out there who will see to the breeds continued advancement. I know at the age of 39, I am not done yet and see other's working just as hard at it as I do.

My concerns for the breed are the narrowing of the gene pool, as many breeders like myself, still like the purebreds to remain purebred. As breeders we need to see some of things the breed lost to get them to where they are today, and to begin to make real hard judgment calls in our culling decisions and processes to regain the straightness in the forelegs and tightness in the elbows, and width and openness to the rear end. As history does have a way of repeating itself, we will probably lose something else once we have improved the traits I mentioned and we will have to be resilient in repairing whatever those traits may be. It just has to be this way, or the perfect Alpine will be bred, and that is never going to happen. That is what keeps us all going, is the fun and pursuit of something that is elusive!

I am also concerned about the low numbers of young people involved in Dairy Goats as compared to when I started. I am sure that there are many factors driving this, the price of feed, fuel, housing and land and many more. With that said, I feel we are all obligated to sell young people the very best we have. Mentor them and coach them, and be supportive. They are the future of the breed and of the industry. Encourage the love of the animal, not the win, and that it is ok to be a competitor in the true spirit of competition, but people and their feelings and the relationships and friendships that we have with fellow breeders are a gift and most important of all; another thing that took me YEARS to learn!