

Milk Production to Showring: PJ Bailey's carries on the Ohio Tradition

Ohio has a long tradition of breeders that have produced numerous outstanding dairy goats whose genetics have influenced herds across the country. Like the scores that came before there is another herd successfully caring on the Ohio tradition; PJ Bailey's of London, OH. Their animals are not only know for their ideal conformation, correct productive udders and superb general appearance, but are also know for their consistent French lines as well as their American. This question and Answer session gives just a hint at the insight that has helped them make their mark on the alpine breed.

When and how did you start in dairy goats?

Well, first and foremost I have always had a love for animals, primarily horses. I had always wanted a horse, even as a young child. I was raised in the city limits of London, Ohio and was never able to acquire a horse, until in my late teens when I met my future husband John, who's first gift to me was a horse! I turned down an engagement ring for that horse, I knew in my heart we'd marry, but not every day does a horse loving' girl get a horse! John and I did marry, and we found a rental home in the country that accommodated my horse. I showed that horse for several years, but I found myself wanting to create a breeding program with livestock and horses were not the answer. Upon checking out our neighbor's meat sheep breeding program, I thought goats are cuter; they give milk, so where could I get some goats? We were into homesteading, had a huge garden and chicken flock at the time, so a goat that could produce milk and meat seemed logical!! My husband grew up near a family who raised goats, so he gave them a call and we went for a visit. That visit was made to the farm of Paul & Leola Herr. Their herd name was Herr Kids' and they raised alpiners. I was enchanted when I stepped into that barn, the pens of babies with their allotment of coat colors and wagging tails just stole my heart!! It was from this herd my first dairy goat purchase was made in 1989, and through Paul and Leola's gentle guidance I learned "Goat 101". Paul's primary focus was on milk production, not showing, so I followed suit and we formed a DHI milk test ring and sold stock to the Taiwan exports with the use of the milk records.

Have you always worked with the Alpine lines?

Primarily yes, however, we have never not had an alpine. We have dabbled in saanens and lamanchas, and we currently have one lamancha that belongs to our oldest daughter.

What lines were people working with when you started?

It was apparent when we became seriously interested in showing dairy goats that our initial purchases were not "cutting the mustard" in the show ring. Although beaming with personality, milking tons and generating plenty of revenue through export with their offspring, they lacked mammary attachment and were all CAEV positive and most had enlarged knees. So to better our conceived notion of standing closer to the top of the showring line, we sold those does and became more specific about the next purchase. We watched what herds were topping the classes at the shows, and those were primarily Goose Crossing, Maple Glen, Lot A Love, and Meadow Morn. All of these herds' genetics trace back to Serendipity's, Sunshine, and Sanstorms. At a show in Delaware Ohio a beautiful buck standing on his pen rail caught my eye. His name was +*B Sanstorms Outlaw and he belonged to Mary Lou Hoelscher of Meadow Morn Alpines. When I looked in her pens I saw beautiful consistent cou blanc alpiners and they impressed upon me the type and style of alpine I wanted to breed.

How have you seen the breed evolve over the years?

I am a lifelong resident of Ohio and one must realize that many national champion alpiners have come out of our state. Since our start in 1989, I can honestly say that alpine competition in the show ring around our state has been fierce. The classes were always huge and the top 10 does in a class- yes I said PER CLASS- were always beautiful and worthy of taking home. In more recent years the quantity of alpiners at a show in our area has definitely declined. Throughout the years I've seen the alpine breed become taller with longer bone patterns, and the mammary systems have improved in all components.

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

In our early years we did not attempt to own bucks and just followed the advice of breeders we took our does to. Today, we choose a buck whose bloodlines correspond with our current herd of does, thus line breeding. The buck needs to come from a strong dam line and characteristics that are strong in traits we feel our does might be lacking. We also try to choose a buck whose dam has proven herself by producing consistent offspring. They do not have to be GCH's, but we do utilize LA scores and DHI records when making a selection.

What were/are your strongest dam lines?

We currently have 2 distinct doe lines. One is Pure French registered, the other is American registered, but of French bloodlines. The Pure French line descends from a doe we purchased from the Meadow Morn herd- CH Meadow Morn's Classic Allure. Allure was a ++*B GCH Abundance Danish Classic daughter, and so her bloodlines are very Serendipity bred. When Allure was Al'ed to ++*B Sugar-Ridge Cheers this breeding produced our GCH PJ-Baileys' Cheers Allie 1*M. Allie has produced many nice daughters for us through her years. Our American registered doe line originates with the purchase of a doe named Allen's A&B Almond 2*M. She was American registered due to a grade alpine in the pedigree, and Almond was linebred on GCH Redwood Hills Sunshine Profecy 5*M. Almond produced GCH PJ-Baileys' Almond's Amber 3*M who in her prime won many BOB and BIS wins. Amber in turn produced our beautiful SGCH PJ-Baileys' Aaron's Ambiance 4*M who also has daughters currently residing in our herd.

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

Our herd is very line bred on Sanstorms bloodlines. I owned GCH Sanstorms Super Dazzle 1*M and her son-*B PJ-Baileys' Awesome Dante was a big influence in the herd. I liked the style and therefore searched for a buck I thought would mesh. Along came +*B GCH IR-Ranch NCS Sulten who is out of a Sanstorms doe and sired by a Hill n Holler buck. Sulten's offspring in our herd have been outstanding. In the past 2 years we have worked with CH Fox-Trot WRC Charango who's pedigree traces back to ++*B Kara Kahl Awesome and Charango's dam has the components of mammary we desire. Our most recent young buck addition is Windrush Farms IRS Charmer. His pedigree combines the same Samstorms genetics found in Dazzle's lines, along with the addition of *B Ch Qu'Appelle Etienne who is full brother to Ember who sired both of the 2009 alpine national GCH and RGCH's. Charmer's dam has produced 3 full genetic sisters to him that are all consistent in mammary and type. We are hoping he will do the same in our herd.

What are your future goals for your herd?

I made a personal "dairy goat goal" to myself many years ago, and it still applies today. I wanted to breed does that milk 3,000 lbs or more out of mammary that scores excellent, and the doe should score 90 or above at maturity. I want to look at the herd and see consistency, and breed goats that can structurally hold up over a long period of time. Becoming a GCH is nice too, but not necessary. The goat has to step into the show ring to obtain that status, and sometimes through the years that wasn't possible. Milk records and LA scores can be obtained at home.

What have your animals done on the national level, DHIR, and linear appraisal or other awards?

At the national level we cannot say much as we have only attended 2 shows. We are national show rookies! In those 2 shows, we did have does place in the top 10. For DHIR, our does have usually earned their stars as yearlings, and many milked up to 3,000 lbs as they matured. Back in 1999 GCH Sanstorms Super Dazzle 1*M was breed leader for fat and ranked #4 in the Top 10. Even though she was not bred by us, we are still honored by her accomplishment. Descendents of her sired by her son Dante that have been on test carry that genetic factor, and give heavy amounts of butterfat. In 2007 we put our herd back on DHI test, and are currently on standard test. Linear Appraisal is an area in which I can say our herd excels. During our 2009 LA session we had 7 alpine milkers appraised and 6 of the 7 scored 90 or above with E mammary. This tells me we are headed in the right direction for consistency and structural correctness. Our herd has also won numerous Alpine All-American awards through the years.

Structurally and genetically speaking how would you recommend the use of your genetics?

Line breed, Use similar genetic lines with strong dam lines. Give them time. Our lines need time to grow and mature, breeders do not see us finishing 2 year olds. What they do see is does 3 yrs and up who can milk and compete well into their years.

What do you feel has been the most significant accomplishment of your breeding program?

I appreciate the improvement and consistency I'm seeing in the does through the generations. They are exceeding my personal dairy goat goal that I spoke about in question #8, and it is very satisfying.

What would you do differently- What would you do the same?

I think overall I wouldn't change a thing. I'm very pleased with what we've worked with and how they've evolved over the years.

What advice would you give new breeders?

Find an honest and reputable breeder to get stock from and one who will mentor you. Also, seek out a good small ruminant vet. I really feel a reliable seasoned breeder and vet to seek advice from is invaluable! There is something new to learn from these beautiful creatures everyday! Remember that dairy goats are a dairy animal, and dairy management- be it goat, sheep or cattle is the most labor extensive of livestock husbandry. Keep herd numbers under control. Do not try to keep more animals than you can physically care for, or financially afford. If you do, everyone suffers in the end. Take about 10 minutes a day to just look them over. Do what we've always called a visual "TPR", temperature/pulse/respiration. You just might notice a goat that's off and you can treat her accordingly before it turns into a disaster. If you buy a nice doe from a breeder and you're not standing in 1st place at the shows, don't be discouraged. Showing is an art in itself, and there are too many variables that can happen at a show even to established breeders. You win some, you lose some!! Exhibit respectable sportsmanship, what really matters is what that doe gives you at home; her delicious milk, that nice doe kid, her beauty as she ambles through the pasture. Last but not least- ENJOY THEM!! In most cases

goat ownership is a hobby. When it becomes a "job or a drag" it's OK to take a "goat break". Those does DO NOT have to be bred every year. It's OK for both goat and owner to take a vacation, we know, we've done it!!

Today, what do you see as the overall strength and weakness of the alpine?

For strength I feel the breed excels in long bone patterns. Alpines are longer and taller than in past years and the mammary systems have become impeccable. Although in the quest for those fabulous udders and tall goats, in some instances front ends and width have taken a back slide. A goat's front legs and shoulders shouldn't be growing straight out of its neck! The side effects of this I've noticed is a narrow animal, no width in the chest floor and front legs that turn left and right. A dairy goat needs depth of brisket and width; she needs a comfortable place to store her heart and lungs, important organs to help sustain many freshenings.

From the time you started breeding dairy goats what bucks or lines do you feel have made the most impact on the breed? I think in my world of choosing to work with pure French lines a notable buck that has made a big impact is SGCH++*B Qu'Appelle Joi Acclaim. He was used extensively in the Redwood Hills herd and one of his outstanding offspring was Redwood Hills Acclaim Mystic. Mystic really impacted the Sanstorms herd. You can trace Acclaim to every goat in my herd. A couple other notable french sires are Abundance Danish Classic and Hoach's SDRS Logic. I think any american alpine breeder would agree Sodium Oaks Sasin has made the greatest impact with those lines.

What bucks or lines do you feel are NOW making a major impact on the alpine line, as well as your lines?

Two notable bucks of today are +*B Qu'Appelle V Ember and his brother Etienne. Ember sired the 2009 GCH & RGCH National Show alpines. Etienne's genetics are seen in many east coast herds as well as my own with the introduction of our current Jr. herd sire: Windrush Farms IRS Charmer. Pleasant Grove Super Saga and Tempo Aquila Freelance and two other bucks that are impacting the alpine breed across the US.

How do you feel about French vs. American Alpines?

For me this is personal preference. Years ago before the purchase of the french bred does that are the basis of my herd, I tried working with American lines that were Sodium Oaks based but it did not appeal to me. In my current herd many of my does are registered AA due to a recorded grade doe in the lines years ago, yet their lines are french based. Overall I think what is really important in whatever style or bloodline you choose is that you breed for a correct, functional goat.

In general what future do you see for the alpine?

I believe this lies in the hands of our youth, and that goes for all breeds. As parents and dairy goat breeders we need to instill in our youth the knowledge of goat husbandry, the basis of a correct functional goat, to be honest and exhibit good sportsmanship. Mentor those that are interested in this wonderful industry with kindness, honesty, encourage a good eye for a correct goat and you've got a recipe for success!