

Milkability and Showability equal the Winning Combination of Profitability

By: Kevin W Kinney

Redwood Hill Farm sets the bar for others to follow, not only in the show-ring, but also in the realm of goat dairy products. Their success locally, nationally, and internationally are a positive image for the caprine industry and prove that California is not only home to happy cows but also contented dairy goats. Since 1978 Jennifer Lynn Bice has been the owner of Redwood Hill Farm & Creamery, Inc., she is an ADGA licensed judge, that has judged the ADGA national show seven times, chairperson to a number of ADGA committees, and breeder of numerous national show winners. An American Cheese Society Hall of Fame inductee and recognized artisan cheese pioneer, Jennifer has newly created Green Valley Organics, the first lactose free cow milk dairy products to be available nationwide. Jennifer recently took the time to share some of her insights into the evolution of Redwood Hill Farm and the Alpine breed.

When and how did you start in dairy goats?

Like many people, I got started with dairy goats by a few seemingly random circumstances that shaped my life and career. I was born in Los Angeles, CA in 1954, the oldest of what was to become 10 children of Kenneth and Cynthia Bice. My early childhood was happy and pleasant in southern California, with trips to the beach and vacations to Disneyland. We lived in a typical southern CA housing development with sidewalks, neighbor kids, and walking to school. In the mid 60's, like many of that era (see the "Have More Plan," which is still in print), my parents decided that they would move to the country and raise some of our own food with gardens, orchard, and animals. My Dad had been in 4-H as a kid, raising swine while his sister had goats. My Mom was an animal lover, so it seemed like a great adventure to them.

We moved to Sebastopol, CA about 50 miles north of San Francisco, near the beautiful coast. But to us kids it felt like solitary confinement, as there were no sidewalks to skate on, no neighbor kids to play with, and too far to walk to anything. So, our parents proceeded to get animals of all sorts; the goats quickly became the favorites as they could learn their names, do tricks, and we could dress them up and pretend we were part of the circus. Our first goat, Flopsy, was half Nubian and half Saanen. When we saw the GCH Nubian at the Sonoma County Fair in the local newspaper, my parents called the owner, Mabel O'Dell, and we launched into purebreds. I joined 4-H, and when I was 12, I got my first goats - Nubians. The number of goats continued to grow, as each of us children had our own 4-H projects and my parents had their own herd as well.

Have you always worked with Alpine lines?

We were among the founders and charter members of the Redwood Empire Dairy Goat Association (REDGA) where we met other goat people, including Marion Mendelsohn, who had a Grade A goat dairy in Napa, CA, but wanted to join the Peace Corps. My parents bought her herd of goats, mainly Alpines, and we moved with our herd of Nubians to Napa to run the dairy as a trial. We liked the work and stayed there two years, while my parents built our first goat dairy back in Sebastopol.

Marion's mostly Alpine herd was purebred but not registered. We recorded the animals as "Native on Appearance" with ADGA, and we also were on milk production testing, where some of the herd became Native on Performance. Being into purebred animals, in 1970 we purchased our first Alpine buck, ++*B Laurelwood Acres Class, a son of the great GCH++*B Laurelwood Acres Westward Ho. Class, nicknamed "Classic," sired at least nine permanent

champion offspring and many 3,000 lb. milkers; at one point he was in virtually every Redwood Hill Farm Alpine pedigree. Since 1970 I have raised Alpines continually, although always having a mixed herd of other breeds as well.

How do you feel about French vs. American Alpines?

I never have had a strong passion for French Alpines over American Alpines. To me, what counts is having the best animal, not what is the number after their name. It may also have something to do with being raised in CA, where Laurelwood Acres had prominent, winning American Alpines, plus the fact that I got started with NOA and NOP and graded up to American Alpines. It seems like the French vs. American debate really heated up in the 1980s, when Donald Smith of Sodium Oaks and Mary Keehn of Shahenako Alpines were winning at the National Shows with Americans. We have had some purebreds over the years, but we always breed to the buck we think will be the best for that doe; in many cases that means breeding a purebred to an American, hence more Americans. But, aren't we all proud to be Americans? I see no difference with dairy goats!

What lines were people working with when you started?

When we started with Alpines, the primary lines were Laurelwood Acres and Nixon's Alpines. Starting with such a strong first Alpine buck like "Classic" was an incredible experience. Our first 1st place win at a National Show was in 1978, with one of his daughters, GCH Redwood Hills Frolics Joy 3*M, and where his senior get placed 1st as well. We were ecstatic when in 1979 we were able to lease (for two years) GCH +*B Laurelwood Acres Nobility, sired by Laurelwood Acres John-Boy, a son of GCH Laurelwood Acres Yenda and out of the 1978 ADGA National Champion, GCH Laurelwood Acres Hunky-Dory 5*M. In addition, we were also able to purchase GCH Laurelwood Acres Nostalgia 6*M, a twin sister to Nobility and Laurelwood Acres Daiquari, who was the dam of GCH Redwood Hills Fortune Teller 4*M (full sister to GCH ++*B Redwood Hills Classic Example) and one of our strongest dam lines.

On the Nixon's Alpines side, we were able to purchase Nixon's Marvel, best known for one of our strongest bucks, GCH ++*B Redwood Hills Marvelous Profet. In addition, we used Nixon bloodlines through Qu'Appelle Joi Acclaim, who was from +*B Nixon's Joi Huckster and from 1977 ADGA National Champion, GCH Nixon's Eris *M and the great, GCH +B Nixon's Tomboy. Acclaim's dam was GCH Nixon's Amaranth, also a Tomboy daughter. Later on, Nixon's Ranchman would add superior genetics to the Redwood Hill Farm Alpine herd.

How have you seen the breed evolve over the years?

The biggest change in Alpines is the depth of quality animals within the breed. There have always been some outstanding Alpines since I've been raising them since 1970. Animals and styles change, however; today's Alpines are larger animals, very dairy, and udder shape has improved along with smoother fore udder attachment and better delineated and shaped teats.

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

At Redwood Hill Farm we don't do a lot of close line breeding or inbreeding. Rather, we look at our does to see where they need improvement and select bucks that will provide those better traits. We purchase outside bucks from herds and also use AI. As a commercial dairy, milk production and high components are also very important to us. We use ADGA performance programs to help select the genetics we use, rather than relying only on show

ring performance. Since we feel it is important not to “put all of our eggs in one basket,” each year we use a combination of proven sires along with some young and not yet proven bucks to see what they might do, using both natural and AI breeding.

What were/are your strongest dam lines?

Early on, one of our strongest dam lines was GCH Redwood Hills Fortune Teller 4*M (born in 1973), a daughter of ++*B Laurelwood Acres Class. She had three GCH daughters, among them GCH Redwood Hills Sunshine Profecy 5*M (born in 1978), the dam of GCH Redwood Hills Marevelous Profet (who went on to have at least 28 GCH daughters, including the 1991 ADGA National Champion, GCH Redwood Hills Profet Safari 5*M. Profecy was also the dam of GCH Redwood Hills Acclaim Aura 6*M (born in 1983), who was Reserve GCH at the 1986 ADGA National Show. Aura was the dam to GCH Redwood Hills Oracle Allegra 7*M, who was the dam to SGCH Redwood Hills Ember Amicale 8*M, the 2007 ADGA Reserve GCH and the 2009 ADGA National Show GCH.

Two more recent extremely strong doe lines have been Solace and Jambalya. Solace is from Sanstorm’s Dynamic, a buck that did a lot for our herd. Dynamic goes back to Profecy and Safari and also to Qu’Apelle Joi Acclaim. Solace has Profecy and Safari on her dam’s side, so the Solace dam line is in some ways a continuation of the Fortune Teller dam line. Solace linear appraised at 9-4 EX 90 VEEE. Her top lactation was 305 3841 102 91 with a lifetime of 3444 30,130 901 838. Many of our “S” line of does descend from Solace, primarily through her older son Redwood Hill Ember Sierra and her two daughters, Redwood Hills Kenyatta Santina and Redwood Hills Journey Shalimar. Santina had daughters Redwood Hills Freelance Sass, 5-5 EX 92 EEEE, Salvia, and Savvy; Shalimar had daughters Redwood Hills F. Sebastienne, 4-5 EX 93 EEEE, Shakira, and Shayla. Our newest 2010 ADGA National Champion, SGCH Redwood Hills Fortune Scarlet 7*M, 4-4 EX 92 EEEE is a great grand daughter of Safari! We are thrilled to continue using Solace’s last son, Redwood Hills Lance Sublime, who has been kept in the herd and has four promising young daughters.

Jambalya is from +*B Hoach’s Remembrance, whom we owned for a short time and did not have many daughters. Her dam was also named Jambalya, from +*B Redwood Hills Sequoia and Shining Moon Justine 2*M. An outstanding doe in her own right - with two ADGA National Championships (2005 & 2007), three linear appraisals of EX92, and 4 lactations over 3200 lbs with a high record of 2-9 305 3570 106F 97P and a lifetime record of 2692D 23,960M 786F 675P - Jambalya currently has three daughters in the herd. SG Redwood Hills Lance Jitterbug 5*M appraised 4-3 EX 90 VEEE and was the 2010 Alpine Breed Leader, with her record of 3-9 305 5080 169 141. Jitterbug’s daughter, SGCH Redwood Hills X-rated Tango 6*M, appraised 2-5 EX 92 EEEE with a milk record of 2-0 305 3230 116 95 and was first place at the 2010 ADGA National Show. We are using a junior herdsire from Jamila, Redwood Hills Sequoia Jarvus, who we are excited about. Another Jambalya daughter, SG Redwood Hills Lance Jamila 5*M, appraised 3-3 EX 90 VEVE with a milk record of 2-11 305 3760 150 105 and placed first at the 2010 ADGA National Show. The third Jambalya daughter in our herd is SG Redwood Hills Lance Julip 5*M, who appraised 3-2 EX 91 VEEE and has a milk record of 1-10 305 3000 100 93 and has placed in the top three at the National Show.

From the time you started breeding dairy goats what bucks or lines do you feel have made the most impact on the breed and on your herd?

In a country as large as ours, it is hard to identify exactly which bucks have had the most impact. In earlier times, the breed showed more variation in qualities and characteristics according to the geographic region. Later, as animals were transported to far-away ADGA National Shows and airlines began shipping kids in dog crates, Alpines developed more of a

national presence and more uniformity in quality began to occur. Sasin certainly was a buck that made an incredible impact on the Alpine breed nationwide since in the mid-80s, when his daughters were winning at the National Show. He has been the premier Alpine sire many times.

Bucks that have made a major impact on our herd are:

++*B Laurelwood Acres Class was the first Alpine buck we purchased; he sired at least 9 GCH daughters and many 3,000 lb milkers.

++*B GCH Redwood Hills Marvelous Profet sired at least 18 GCH daughters and improved milk production tremendously. He was the sire to GCH Redwood Hills Profet Safari 5*M, Sodium Oaks Profet Extravagance 6*M, GCH Redwood Hills Profet Zuni 5*M, GCH Redwood Hill Profet Rainbow, GCH Shining Moon Xica, GCH Sweet Dreams Profet Pate, GCH Goose Crossing Profet Linnea, GCH Roeburn Profet Dacey, GCH Le Chevrier Profet Colette, and Top Ten daughter, Redwood Hill Profet Jessica, who was #3 in the 1985 Top Ten with 5,210 lbs of milk as a 4 year old.

++*B GCH Qu'Appelle Joi Acclaim, who was linebred on GCH ++B Nixon's Tomboy. Some of his outstanding daughters - many of which still figure prominently in our pedigrees today - are GCH Redwood Hills Acclaim Satire 4*M, GCH Companeros Acclaim Raisin 4*M, GCH Redwood Hills Acclaim Aura 6*M, and GCH Redwood Hills Acclaim Essencia. His senior get of sire placed first at the 1987 ADGA National Show. The Acclaim daughters show consistent improvement in breed character about the head, fore udder attachment and in milk production.

++*B Sodium Oaks Sasin, was an incredible and prepotent buck for smoothness in fore udder, tremendous size and extreme dairyness; moreover, his daughters excelled in milk production. His daughters also prevailed as champion at the ADGA National Show for three years in a row, 1985-87. We had four particularly outstanding daughters from Sasin, although none enjoyed long lives. Among my favorite Alpines of all times were two Sasin daughters, GCH Redwood Hills Sasin Taffeta 5*M and Redwood Hills Sasin Rainbow 6*M. We lost a Sasin son with potential, *B Redwood Hills Sasin Epic, from GCH Redwood Hill Acclaim Satire 4*M, but we are using him this year through AI.

Sanstorm's Dynamic was born in 1994, the combination of the outstanding Sanstorm and Hoach's bloodlines and the grandson of Redwood Hills Acclaim Mystic. The few daughters we had from him included GCH Redwood Hill Dynamic Savannah 6*M, who is the dam to 2010 ADGA National Champion SGCH Redwood Hills Fortune Scarlet 7*M, SG Redwood Hills Dynamic Allure 2*M, Redwood Hills Dynamic Passion 6*M, and SGCH Redwood Hills Dynamic Solace 9*M. Dynamic was consistent in the traits he passed on to his offspring: improvement in feet and legs, smoothness of blending in the front end, and improvement in mammary systems, especially fore udder.

++*B GCH Redwood Hills Odyssey, a Safari son from GCH ++*B Sweet Dream Cadillac Jack, a Sasin son. Odyssey sired several champions, including GCH Redwood Hill's Odyssey Finesse, the 1999 Reserve National Champion. Odyssey daughters were exceptionally large and dairy, long and level with beautiful udders and great personalities.

+*B Clovertop's Samurai sired at least 5 GCH daughters and many more of outstanding quality. His sire, +*B Sempervirens Bing Cherry produced daughters showing tremendous milk production; he goes back to both Sasin and Profet. His dam was the gorgeous GCH Clovertop's Gene Sashay 2*M, from +*B Hoach's Goldengenes, who had many great daughters and goes back to Sodium Oaks Royal Risk among others.

++*B SG Tempo Aquila Freelance, is probably the strongest and most consistent buck we've ever used. Freelance is a son of two great parents: *B Milar Farm Royal Image and GCH Des Ruigestelle Free Thinker 4*M. Freelance appraised 5-3 EX 91 EEE; and he consistently adds overall length and height, outstanding mammary systems, and improvement in milk production and components. He was Premier Alpine sire at the National Show in 2009, and had first place Sr. Get in 2009 and 2010. He has produced many champion daughters that have been the stars of our show string over the past few years, including SGCH Redwood Hills Lance Bella Donna 11*M, SG Redwood Hills Lance Jitterbug 5*M and Breed Leader, SG Redwood Hills Lance Jamila 5*M, SGCH Redwood Hills Lance Zuri 9*M, SGCH Redwood Hills Lance Busy Bee 2*M, SG Redwood Hills Lance Savvy 11*M, SGCH Redwood Hills Freelance Sass 11*M and SGCH Redwood Hills F Sebastienne 11*M.

What lines are you currently working with or would like to use in your breeding program. How are you using these lines to reach your caprine goals?

We continue using Freelance, one of his sons and a grandson, plus several sons from does mentioned above that come from our strongest doe lines. I feel that using bucks from the strongest doe lines produces more rapid and consistent improvement in the herd. We will continue using our Spotlight Sale buck, +*B Sweet Dreams Nixon's Affirmed, who brings the Nixon and Sweet Dreams bloodlines back into the herd. We will also keep using +*B Shining Moon X-rated, a son of the great GCH Shining Moon Sine Qua Non 4*M and sired by a Willow Run buck, which brings us some of those bloodlines. This year we will bring back some of the "oldies but goodies" via AI, using ++*B Redwood Hills Sasin Epic and +B GCH Clovertop's Snapple.

A number of national level breeders as well as hobbyist breeders have used your lines. What kind of influence are these lines making or have made across the nation?

We have always allowed other breeders to use our bucks for live breeding, AI, and we have sold bucks to other breeders across the country. We encourage 4-H'ers to use our bucks, and there are several local, outstanding Alpine 4-H herds in our area because of this. Over the years we've sold many animals, but among those that made great contributions are:

Marianne Sans (Sanstorm herd) purchased +*B Redwood Hills Acclaim Mystic, the brother of our GCH Aura. Mystic had many GCH offspring for the Sanstorm herd and throughout the country. Mystic's full brother, +*B Redwood Hills Acclaim Pendragon, was purchased by Brad and Terri Wigle of the Hiloc Herd. Pendragon also had many fine daughters, as did his half-brother Redwood Hills Kiwi Psychic, purchased by Phil Ferret of the Anachaco Herd.

Tangleroot Alpines, owned by Jim and Ellen Herman of WA, purchased GCH ++*B Redwood Hills Sunshine Reverie, the full brother to Profecy. He was used by many Northwest herds like Tempo, Hill N Holler, Missdee's, as well as through AI across the US. He has over 20 GCH daughters, including one of my all time favorites, Tangleroot Reverie Sparkle, the 1987 ADGA National Reserve GCH.

Over the years, we have worked cooperatively with other local herds such as the Colfax's Shining Moon herd, even purchasing bucks together. Their great foundation doe, GCH Shining Moon Alaska Raindancer was sired by ++*B Redwood Hills Kane Rainman.

Raindancer was a show contender for many years and many of Shining Moon's outstanding does go back to her.

Another local herd, Sweet Dreams - owned by Kristi and Allison Bozzo - had as one of their foundation does a Profet daughter, GCH Sweet Dreams Profet Pate 2*M. In addition, they purchased a buck, Redwood Hills Lance Shamus, who has several beautiful daughters in their herd, including champions CH Sweet Dreams Shamus Lyra and CH Sweet Dreams LS Mind That Bird.

A California herd owned by Pam Frederic has used several Redwood Hill Farm herd sires. Recently, *B Redwood Hills Lance Jamboree (Freelance x Jambalya) has sired many high quality daughters, including three permanent champions. Pam has also used *B Redwood Hills Windwalker, whose daughters include SGCH Frederics WW Iris.

Hoach's Alpines purchased *B Redwood Hills Revolution Speed, the son of the late SGCH Redwood Hills F Sebastienne 11*M. There are already several outstanding daughters of Speed, including GCH Hoach's RHRS Kriteria, GCH Hoach's RHRS Heredity, and GCH Hoach's RHRS Splendor. Speed now makes his home in the Soldier Mountain Herd.

The Tempo herd, owned by Laurie Acton, has purchased two Redwood Hill bucks, one of which, SG +*B Redwood Hills Vavra, has at least 3 GCH daughters including the beautiful GCH Tempo Aquila Finally Free 5*M. More recently she is using SG +*B Redwood Hills Jaeger, an Ember/Jambalya son. Jaeger has six GCH daughters, many 3,000 lb. milkers, one Top Ten daughter and many that score high in linear appraisal, including SGCH Tempo Aquila Xocati 6*M and SGCH Temp Aquila Ricciolini 5*M.

The Olentangy, herd owned by Mark Baden, has used several Redwood Hill Bucks. First ++*B SG Redwood Hills Journey Fortune, son of GCH Redwood Hills Odyssey Finesse *M, has had many outstanding daughters in Mark's herd as well as in others. *B CH Redwood Hills Lance Armstrong, a son of Freelance and Amicale has some wonderful daughters in the herd. Olentangy's junior herd sire, *B Redwood Hills Tribute Synergy, is a son of Sebastienne.

Other herds using Redwood Hill bucks that we hope will continue in the tradition of excellence are:

Kevin Kinney of Catwalk Farms is using *B Redwood Hills Sequoia Josiah, another son of SG Redwood Hills Lance Jamila 5*M. The Cherry Glen Herd has purchased a Freelance son, *B Redwood Hills Freelance Vista. Ben Rupchis of Bearly Alpines is using *B Redwood Hills Tribute Rhythm, a son of one of our up and coming does, SGCH Redwood Hills X-rated Rima 12*M. The Nodaway Herd of Richard and Rica Waldman used Mystic years ago and now have two Amicale sons in the herd, +*B Redwood Hills Rev. AT Last and *B Redwood Hills Amicale Schack. Harmody Alpines purchased *B Redwood Hills Ember Sebastian, who sired SGCH Harmody ES Con Bria 7M, the 2011 ADGA National Champion. They are now working with *B Redwood Hills Just-N-Time, a son of SG Redwood Hills Lance Julip 5*. The Rancho Snowfall herd of James Haught & Lora Wittenberg first owned +*B GCH Redwood Hills Pepe and later used *B Redwood Hills Tribute Sailor, another son of the great Sebastienne. The Mamm-Key herd owned by Tina Antes purchased *B Redwood Hills Tribute Sailor and most recently B Redwood Hills Jazz Zephyr, a son of SGCH Redwood Hills Lance Zuri 9*M. Noble Springs Dairy is using *B Redwood Hills Tribute Storm, and a son of SGCH Tango and SGCH Milar Farm Royal Image. I apologize for herds I've missed that have used our Redwood Hill Farm Alpine genetics in their breeding program.

What have your animals done on the National Show level, DHIR, and LA or other awards?

We have been extremely fortunate over the years with our Alpine herd and the awards they have garnered. At the National Show we have had many first place and group awards

during those years when we have been able to attend. Some top ADGA National Show wins include:

1986 – GCH Redwood Hills Acclaim Aura 6*M, Reserve GCH

1991 – GCH Redwood Hills Profet Safari 5*M, National GCH

1995 – GCH Redwood Hills Oracle Sonrisa 7*M, Reserve GCH

1999 – GCH Redwood Hills Odyssey Finesse *M, Reserve GCH

2005 – GCH Redwood Hills RememberJambalya 4*M, National GCH and Best Udder

2007 – GCH Redwood Hills RememberJambalya 4*M, National GCH and Best Udder

2007 – GCH Redwood Hills Ember Amicale 8*M, Reserve GCH, Reserve Best Udder

2009 - GCH Redwood Hills Ember Amicale 8*M, National GCH and Best Udder

2010 – GCH Redwood Hills Fortune Scarlet 7*M, National GCH and Best Udder

At ADGA National Shows we've been thrilled to have 1st Place Dairy Herd and Best Three Females in 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1999, 2005, 2007, 2009, and 2010, plus second place in 1992 and 1999.

While we've had does in the top ten for milk production over the years, we earned a new milestone this year with SG Redwood Hills Lance Jitterbug 5*M being named the Breed Leader with her record of 3-9 305 5080 169 141.

Our herd has been Linear Appraised most years, and many of our does have received EX 90 and above. We had our first EX doe, GCH Redwood Hills Classic Éclair *M 7-4 EX 90 the first time we were Classified (the program before LA) in September 1979. Three of our does reached the elite score of 93: SGCH Redwood Hills Freelance Sass 11*M, SGCH Redwood Hills Ember Amicale 8*M and SGCH Redwood Hills F Sebastienne 11*M.

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

This is a difficult question after 42 years of breeding Alpines. I am most proud that we have taken our herd slogan, "Redwood Hill Farm, the winning combination of Milkability and Showability," from dream to reality, as exemplified in our National Show wins and having the Alpine Breed Leader this past year. I am most happy about the consistency of the herd and the beauty of the animals, which I get to enjoy anytime since my house overlooks the field where the goats meander about.

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

I have always tried to excel with my breeding program, saving money to buy that next great buck or incredible semen. A breeding program involves many elements, including good genetics, regular care with good feed, and disease-free health. I am still striving for the "perfect" Alpine and have no regrets in the path I've chosen.

What are your future goals for your herd?

To keep striving for the "perfect" Alpine, which would include more National Champions, more Breed Leaders, and LA Scores even higher! And, I want to maintain the sweet personality and good temperament of our Alpines.

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

I see the overall strength of today's Alpine breed as being extremely dairy: long bone pattern, large size with a lot of capacity, and with some of the most strongly attached and milkiest udders of any dairy goat breed. Weaknesses I see throughout the breed are less-than-ideal feet and legs, plus incorrect front ends from a variety of reasons.

What should breeders be working toward, correcting, or adding to the breed?

Improved feet and legs, and more front end correctness.

Styles have changed over the years, what future do you see for the Alpine and what bloodlines do you feel are most well matched to continue the Alpine's evolution?

The future for Alpines appears very bright, especially as we see the continued development of the goat milk industry. With their ease of keeping and their milk productivity, Alpines are a natural for people going into goat milk production businesses. I don't think anyone can say this or that bloodline is the best or the most well matched to continue the Alpine's evolution because, just as in evolution, breeding is a constant process of selection: keeping the best, culling the rest. We all know of great does and bucks that have great offspring but also some that are not so good; it is selecting and using the great ones that improves the line and the breed. It is also very important to have diversity within our breed. There is no one right bloodline; rather, it is the combinations which produce outstanding animals.

What advice would you give new breeders?

Having a good herd is more than good genetics! Equally important for the animals to reach their genetic potential is the care and health of the herd. Having an Alpine herd means regular milking and other chores 365 days a year, not just during show season. Keep your herd small and manageable unless you can hire (and train!) good help. Purchase animals only from a herd that has a strong herd health program. It is much easier to prevent disease than to start your herd with diseases that you have to eradicate later. Ask for test results to ensure healthy animals; don't just accept someone's claim that "our animals are healthy". Time and again I've found this means the herd owner doesn't test for disease and doesn't know what the herd has!

When starting out, train your eye for correctness by watching and listening to ADGA judges as they give reasons. And, the best vacation any goat breeder can ever take is attending the ADGA National Show to watch the beautiful does and sheer number of animals in one place to see "the best of the best."

Tell me a little about your award winning dairy products?

We feel so fortunate to have a goat dairy business selling goat milk products nationwide. Our product selection includes goat milk, goat milk yogurt, goat milk kefir (similar to a drinkable yogurt or yogurt smoothie), and goat milk cheeses. When my parents, with the help of us kids, started selling raw goat milk in glass bottles in 1968, there was a lot of negativity regarding goat milk. As a teenager doing demos in stores, when you mentioned goat milk either the customer started gagging or backing up in dismay at the very idea! It is so gratifying to see the change in my lifetime. Now at demos and tastings people want to try the products and love them. School tours at the farm want to taste and eat the products. Our primary market is health and natural food stores where we sell the yogurt and kefir in every state of the US. Our cheeses are primarily used by top chefs around the country and are distributed to stores on the west coast. Since the milk has a much shorter shelf life, it is only available in California. Over the years we have won many awards and gold medals for our goat milk products. Most recently, we have won Best in Show at the California State Fair for the last two years with two different cheeses: 3 Pepper Chevre and Camellia. We were thrilled to also win Best in Show at the ADGA Products Competition several years ago with our California Crottin. You can order our cheese online or check out your local natural foods store for the yogurt and kefir. We also send our products each year to both the ADGA National Show and Convention for your tasting pleasure.

Do you have any final thoughts on your years working with dairy goats and Alpines?

When I got my first Nubians at 12 and Alpines at 16, little did I realize that my life would be forever changed! I've had so many great experiences over the years because of dairy

goats. The camaraderie of goat people throughout the US and the world (having visited goats and goat people in Mexico, Canada, France, Italy, Bulgaria, Poland, Latvia, and Lithuania) is something special. Getting my judges license at age 18 enabled me to travel the US seeing places and people I would never have visited on my own. I have been lucky to judge not only the ADGA National Show many times, but also the Canadian Eastern and Western Nationals and even the Latvian National Show. This has helped me tremendously in my breeding program, allowing me to see animals from most everywhere that I might want to bring into our breeding program. Thanks to dairy goats, I have a thriving business producing goat milk products that sell nationwide and are becoming ever more popular as people become aware of the many health benefits of goat milk and goat milk products.

In conclusion, I would like to thank and give enormous credit to those that have helped develop and carry out our Alpine breeding program. First, my late husband, Steven Schack, who was my partner in all and had an incredible eye for breeding dairy goats. From 1978, when he and I started our business together until he died in 1999, we planned and grew our business and our breeding program together. Steve Considine, who was our first employee and is still with us today, has helped tremendously in countless ways over the years. More recently, Trinity Smith as our herd manager and my brother Scott Bice as farm manager have made huge contributions that are taking our Alpines to the next level. Thank you all!