

TESTIMONIALS FROM CAPRINEX CUSTOMERS

The hallmark of a successful livestock breeding program is continuous improvement over time. Kiko goats have been in the United States for 25 years; by now, US breeders should have made significant genetic progress, leaving the original New Zealand imports far behind. Yet demand remains strong for direct descendants of the original Goatex and Caprinex animals. The continued popularity of these "old" genetics may indicate lack of confidence in American breeding and management techniques.

In 2008, after a disappointing experience with two new herdsires, we made a concerted effort to find improved US Kiko genetics. We looked all over the country for a breeding program with clearly defined, production-oriented breeding goals, coupled with the "hands off" management in challenging conditions that made the original Kiko possible. We came up empty handed. Every farm we researched was over-focused on pedigree or conformation traits, lacked adequate environmental and parasite challenges, and/or provided excessive management.

The lack of US options led us to purchase 100 Kikonui embryos from New Zealand. These kids were born in 2010, so we have had ample opportunity to observe their performance in difficult conditions: rugged terrain, cold winters with heavy rains, waterlogged clay soils, feed shortages, and nearly year-round parasite loads. Since we provide no support other than mineral supplementation, our conditions reveal genetic weaknesses that remain hidden under "better" management.

Despite these challenges, the new Kikonui animals and their progeny have consistently displayed the hallmark traits of the original Kiko: slow growing feet that never require trimming, strong maternal instincts, newborn kid vigor, parasite resilience, and fertility. We can recommend these genetics to anyone looking to improve hardiness, maternal ability, and low management traits. In addition, the Kikonui focus on doe efficiency selects for animals that produce higher litter weights in relation to doe body weight. This is an important breeding objective that has not been adequately developed in current US Kiko herds.

LPR Lowell, Oregon USA

'Terawhiti' has 7-8000 Feral goats running around its steep, hard hills. Whenever possible they are mustered and sold which makes a significant financial contribution to the Farm.

As with most ferals, a lack of size and slow growth rate reduces the returns. We run a small stud mob of 50 -100 'KIKONU' does and a Stud Sire to provide young bucks to upgrade the ferals. The KikonuiX are docile, have good growth rates and are hardy enough to compete with ferals and survive the conditions.

Terawhiti Station, Wellington NZ

The goats have done a great job and cleaned up the thistles, variegated and nodding almost immediately, Scotch over a couple of years and Californian farm-wide over eight years, as they do take longer.

When we took over the property of 150 acres there were plenty of thistles and a couple of blocks of gorse. We were trying to minimise the amount of chemicals we used on the place, so bought about 20 Does and a Buck from various sources. The feet were so bad, we spent every Sunday putting them through a zinc foot bath. So then we got some surplus Kikonui-cross does, and CAPRINEX supplied our first Kikonui Buck. The original goats soon went to the works, but we still have some of the first Kikonui-cross does we bought that would be pushing 10-12 years old now and still producing progeny with good feet.

Our place is heavy clay soils, winter wet and summer dry and not good "goat country. But we have been using Kikonui bucks exclusively for seven years and culling progeny as soon as they start limping. Due to the Kikonui influence we have gone from treating feet every week to a two or three times a year activity.

Parasite control is minimal and selective. We cull for this too and follow an extensive grazing regime, so progress on this front will be a combination of farm practice and robust genetics.

We have been kidding our does as yearlings to make genetic progress as rapidly as possible. Kidding has averaged 157% over the years. As the thistles are now under control we expect to maintain 20 to 25 does. We have gradually pushed the kidding back from August when we first started to late October/November now. The kidding % has gone up accordingly to 200+

We had a lot to learn about goats and are still learning, but we would not be doing it without the investment and success of the Kikonui bucks.

Ossie Latham Near Feilding.