



NIGERIAN DWARF GOAT

ARTIODACTYLA
Family: Bovidae
Genus: Capra
Species: hircus



Range: origins in West Africa

Habitat: rocky terrain, lowland plains, alpine regions, etc.

Niche: terrestrial, diurnal herbivorous

Wild diet: pastured grasses, bark, leaves, twigs, shrubs.

Zoo diet: alfalfa, oats and omelene

Life Span: (Wild) N/A

(Captivity) 22 years

Sexual dimorphism: male slightly larger than female

Location in SF Zoo: Children's Zoo Family Farm

APPEARANCE & PHYSICAL ADAPTATIONS:

Nigerian Dwarf goat is a miniature dairy goat breed of West African ancestry. Their coat is soft with short to medium hair and any color or combination of colors is acceptable as breed standard. Ideal height of Nigerian Dwarf goats is 17" to 19" for does with does up to 21" allowed in the breed standard. Ideal height for bucks is 19" to 21" with bucks up to 23" allowed in the breed standard. Although most are naturally horned, most breeders disbud them at a young age (usually less than 2 weeks of age) for safety to the goat, its herd mates, and human caregivers. Some Nigerian Dwarf goats have blue eyes, which is a dominant trait in goats. Goats have a four-chambered stomach and are ruminators. Normal body temperature is 103.8, giving endurance in extremely arid climates.

Weight: 75 lbs

BH: M 19 -21 in (ideal)
F 17 - 19 in. (ideal)

Goats' lower incisors project more or less forward, and the cheek teeth are low crowned or high crowned with crescentic ridges of enamel on the crowns. They are browsers, feeding on shoots and leaves of shrubs, etc.

Nigerian Dwarfs give a surprising quantity of milk for their size. Their milk has a higher butterfat (6-10%) and protein content than milk from full-sized dairy goats and a sweeter taste, making Nigerian Dwarf goat milk excellent for cheese and soap making.

STATUS & CONSERVATION

Nigerian goats are considered rare by the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy. Organizations exist to help preserve and maintain the standards for this breed.

COMMUNICATION AND OTHER BEHAVIOR

Nigerian Dwarf goats are gentle and easily trainable. This, along with their small size and colorful appearance, makes them popular as pets.

COURTSHIP AND YOUNG

Dwarf goats breed year round. Dwarf does can have several kids at a time, 3 and 4 being common and sometimes even 5.

Estrous: polyestrous	
Gestation:	Sexual Maturity: 7 – 8 months
# of Mammae:	Weaning Age:
# of Young: 3 - 5	Weight at birth: 2 lbs

MISCELLANEOUS

Although they have similar origins, Nigerian Dwarfs and African Pygmies are separate and distinct breeds, with recognized differences. Pygmies are bred to be "cobby" and heavy boned. Dwarfs are bred to have the length of body and more elegant structure that's similar to their larger dairy goat counterparts. Pygmies are also primarily "agouti" patterned, with black, silver and caramel being the most common colors.

Sources:

created: 8/2011

Walker's Mammals of the World Vol II © 1999 R. Nowak, Johns Hopkins Press

<http://www.ndga.org/about.html>

<http://www.goats4h.com/Dwarf.html>

<http://www.andda.org/nigerians.html>