

2nd International Conference on **Animal & Dairy Sciences**

September 15-17, 2014 Hyderabad International Convention Centre, India

Sikkim black goats: A newly explored germplasm of Sikkim state

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The goat population of Sikkim state of India is 110120 (18th livestock census, 2007) spread in all the four districts i.e. East Sikkim (18046), West Sikkim (45232), North Sikkim (15018) and South Sikkim (31824). The male and females are almost in equal proportion (56349 and 53771 respectively). Not much information is available on the traits and management of goats of Sikkim state. Therefore, the study was planned to know the phenotype and biometry of Sikkim goats. The visits were made to North, East and West districts of Sikkim to get information on phenotypic and biometric traits of its native goats. The flocks seen during the survey consisted of black, white, brown and mixture of these colours. The goats with stripes on face extending from base of horn to the muzzle mainly constituted the flocks. These goats are called as Singharey by the local people. Apart from this, goats with jet black uniform colour were also seen in the west district of Sikkim. These goats are distinct from Singharey goats in respect of coat colour, type of horns and their size and from Black Bengal in their body size. The phenotypic traits of these goats were recorded by visual observation. These goats come under medium size category. Head is proportionate to body. Nose is slightly roman. The horns are strong, grey in colour, curving backward. Muzzle is black hooves are grey. Beard is seen in few animals but present in both sexes. The measurements of different body traits viz. height at withers, body length, Chest/heart girth, paunch girth, face length, horn length, ear length and tail length were recorded. The body weights were taken with the help of spring balance. The average measurements for height at withers, body length, Chest/heart girth, paunch girth, face length, horn length, ear length and tail length in adult (>18 months) female goats were 45.47, 54.86, 71.40, 83.33, 17.27, 11.73, 11.93, 10.07cm respectively whereas for males the average measurements were 56.16, 67.33, 81.16, 89.33, 18.17, 18.67, 12.83 and 11.33cm. The overall average measurements irrespective of sex were 48.47, 58.43, 74.19, 85.05, 17.52, 13.71, 12.19, and 10.43cm respectively. The average body weight for adult females was 25.58 kg and males 32.18 kg. The overall body weight was 32.39 kg. The preliminary study shows that Sikkim black goats are comparatively heavier with longer horns than the Singharey goats.

Flock of size upto 25 animals was observed. These goats are kept on semi extensive management system taking them in the morning for pasture grazing and brought back in the evening. At night they are kept in temporary houses made of wooden logs, bamboos and planks. The floor of such houses is made 3-4 ft above the ground. This type of housing helps in maintaining cleanliness and proper ventilation. At home they are fed with local grass, tree leaves and sometimes supplemented with crushed maize. Breeding is through natural mating. Kidding season is March-April and October-November. Since these goats are reared for meat purpose, milk is not drawn but left for suckling of kids. Twining is very common. As informed by the goat keepers, black goats are used for every religious purpose.

Biography

N K Verma is a Principal Scientist at National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources (ICAR), Karnal. He obtained his Master degree from National Dairy Research Institute, Karnal and was awarded PhD. degree on the thesis entitled "Serological and Genetical studies on bovine lymphocyte antigens by Kurukshetra University Kurukshetra in 1990. He worked at Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), Ernakulam (Kerala) from 1987 to 1996 and then goat a shift to NBAGR Karnal. Since then, he is working in the field of characterization and conservation of Animal Genetic Resources. He has published about 80 research papers in national and international journals. He has authored nine breed monographs on Indian goats and several book chapters. He has participated in many national and international conferences and contributed more than 85 research abstracts.

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