

Like many thing in my life, having dairy goats started by accident and 25 years later, so did the grazing business.

In 1979 I bought a 40-acre farm 50 miles north of Manhattan as an investment. I thought I would develop the property, sell it and move back to Manhattan. Then goats came into my world. There was a lot of brush around the buildings and someone suggested I buy a goat to clear it. I bought two auction goats with horns. One as I came to find out weeks later was a Sannan and the other an Alpine. At the time I had no idea. As luck would have it, 3 years later, when I was on DHIA test, they milked 4200 & 3500 pounds respectively. I became so fascinated with these amazing critters I decided not to subdivide the farm but stay and breed great goats, while commuting to NYC every day.

I did a few things that ultimately set my herd, Cihanek Farms, apart from all of others on the east coast:

- *I visited several of the great goat farms across the country to learn all I could.
- *Went to several AGDA conventions and took as many classes as I could fit in.
- *I joined the Holstein Association to learn how they breed and manage Holsteins.
- *Other than the first three or four purebred Nubians does, I never bought another doe. I bought the best bucks I could find from all over the country.
- *And last and probably most important, when I was asked to lecture at the Cornell communications department about the advertising business I agreed to, providing they could arrange for me to meet Dr. Mary Smith. She became my friend and most important mentor.

In 1991, personal circumstances precipitated a herd dispersal, I had a 2650 pound DHIA average – the second highest in the country at the time, and five home grown goats scoring over 90 out of a herd of 25 milkers. I don't even remember how many Permanent Grand Champions and the dam of a National Grand Champion.

In 2006, I retired to Rhinebeck, NY, thinking I would again raise goats and sell milk and goat cheese in this food and health oriented town. Once again I had a goat accident. An e-mail arrived sent by the Cornell Cooperative Extension at the request of the National Park Service at Fort Wadsworth, Staten Island, NY. It said "Seeking NYC goat herder". Hundreds of e-mails went out, eight people responded - the other seven said it couldn't be done. I've been at Fort Wadsworth for six years and at the moment there are 40 goats there. We have been able to use our goats in several other National Parks, Historic Sites and Town Parks.

The grazing business has enabled me to have lots of the critters I love, and still have five or six days a week off during the summer instead of milking twice a day. The business is currently growing fast enough that I have not *yet* been able to get back to making milk, which in spite of the twice a day 365 schedule, is still my personal form of masochism.

At this point I actually don't consider myself a "goat breeder". I am a business man, making a living bringing the goats I love to interesting places and letting them do what they do best, eat everything. As it says on my business card and on my website green-goats.com. We are in the "invasive species management business" and "We use what nature provided to remove what nature provided too much of".

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