



# US Boer Goat Association

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## Magazine

**Happy  
New Year  
From  
Soaring Spirit  
Ranch**



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# You Can Get There From Here

By Tammy Lodato

I couldn't stop smiling. No matter how hard I tried to maintain my composure, the smile kept reappearing. I was in Orangeburg, SC, and two of my bucks had just become USBGA National Grand Champions. For those of you who have been in that position before, it may seem like a fond memory; for me and the future Champion winners, this is really big. How did I get here? I keep asking myself that same question. Four years ago I didn't know what a champion Boer buck looked like and now I have nine of them.

My husband, Jim, and I sold our marketing company in 1981, and the last thing we ever planned to do was live on a farm. For twenty years, we lived on the water in St. Petersburg, Florida. Our love then was boating, and we did lots of it. We started out with a small sailboat, and eventually bought a sixty foot motor yacht and cruised all over the east coast of the U.S. and the islands. We were very involved with the yacht club—cruises, formal parties, I even became Vice Commodore. Things began to change when we bought motorcycles in 1995. Riding along the beaches soon became boring with all the same scenery. When we found Brooksville 75 miles north, with winding, hilly pleasant country roads, we decided we'd had enough so we sold our boat and moved away from the busy city, trading the waterfront for the peace and quiet of the country.

We bought 15 beautiful acres in the hill country, planning to ride our motorcycles whenever we

wanted and enjoy cool country evenings in the backyard. The problem was we couldn't see our back yard because of all the growth. Our property is wooded and sits on a slope with a creek running through it.

Someone suggested we buy goats to keep the brush down. That seemed like a good idea, so we bought some "brush goats" and put them to work. I quickly learned there's more to a goat than it's eating habits.

I also learned there are many friendly, helpful goat people, like the very patient Larry Krech who taught me how to de-worm and give shots; Mark Masson who taught us basic goat care and how to untangle three legs that do not belong at the head of the birth canal; Judy Long who has helped me countless times to keep my goats healthy and thriving and introduced me to the informative internet chat sites; George & Lynn Burke, who showed us how to trim hooves properly among other things.

We attended a USBGA Boer goat show at the Florida State Fair in Tampa, where I met B.J. Wynn, whose beautiful doe, Athena, had just won Reserve Grand Champion. When I saw those magnificent animals, I told my husband, "This is the kind of goat I want". We sold our brush goats and I've been hooked on Boer goats ever since.

That was the start of the Soaring Spirit Ranch. As we built our herd, one important thing I learned is never to part with your money unless your goat has a registration certificate or application and a tattoo to match. B.J. became a good friend and took me under her wing to show me what to look for in a Boer goat. When she saw my new herd of percentages, she pointed out a few that had show potential.

We didn't buy show goats; in fact, I didn't think I had anything that was ring worthy. My favorite doe, Rebecca, is a Boer-Nubian cross that I purchased from Bob Peak. She is tall and long with great presence.

I put Rebecca in the ring and by the next year she was a Champion who now has eight titles. I like the percentage Boers because they are the best example of the strength of the Boer genetics. Every grade doe I've bred to a fullblood Boer buck has offspring that is unmistakably Boer, no matter what else is in the bloodline.

Our next step was to improve our feed program. We tried just about every product on the market—Nutrena, Purina, Southern States, Golden Blend, unknown blend labeled "goat feed". When we tried ADM Goat Power, our goats began to improve dramatically; the problem was we had to travel 150 miles roundtrip to get it. We became a dealer, thinking that we would be our own best customer. It seems that nothing we do stays small or part-time. We are now the largest Goat Power dealer in the Southeast and the Caribbean, and we have a website [www.soaringspiritranch.com](http://www.soaringspiritranch.com).

The first big improvement to our breeding program was the purchase of an EGGsfile son from Buddy & Shirley Hagler. "Eggsplosive" and his son, "Cupid", were the reasons for my big smile that day in Orangeburg. They won USBGA National Sr. Grand Champion and Jr. Grand Champion. Cupid is the second champion buck sired by Eggsplosive on our farm. We also purchased "Sugar Daddy" last year as a young buckling from Bill & Julie Brown and he now has six titles.

Once bitten by the bug, I soon discovered there were only two Boer goat shows in the state of Florida, which meant a great deal of travel if we wanted to show our goats. With the help of Julie Brown and Ann Winkler, I hosted a show here in Brooksville. We always make it a point not to show our own goats when we are managing a show, so several of our friends were put to work.

Our annual show is the largest in the state of Florida and we always meet a lot of really nice people and have a good time. We produced The Sunshine State Classic in Live Oak, Florida this past spring, with 128 goats. Our buck, "Sugar Daddy", was shown by Bill Brown and won the Champion Challenge the first day and Jr. Grand Champion the second day. Neither of the judges knew who owned that goat. There will be another Sunshine State Classic in Spring 2006, so look for it in the USBGA calendar.

We don't consider ourselves a show breeder and the majority of our goats are sold for breeding stock or go elsewhere. We do this for the fun of it and because we love our goats. I realize many breeders don't show at all and when we bought our first goats, we didn't plan to either. If you've ever considered showing but don't think you have something to show, take a closer look at your herd. You may be surprised at what's in your back yard. The USBGA offers the Illustrated Guide to the Boer Goat as a wonderful tool for evaluating your herd.

Having achieved 36 Grand Champion titles within our herd, we've been blessed to come a long way in a short time. We've received good advice and made good decisions to buy the right goats. We studied the breed standards and strive to constantly improve our own breeding. There are still people from our past life who think we've lost our minds and wonder when we're going to move back to the city.

Even with all the hard work, I no longer see that as a possibility because I could not imagine life without my goats. By the way, that doe, Athena, who first turned my head to the Boer goats now belongs to me.

If you would like more information about our ranch, feel free to call, Tammy Lodato, 352-799-0121.

