

The History of Amberwood Dairy Goats

Written by Joan C. Coolidge, at the request of the International Nubian Breeders Association, and appeared as the featured article in their April-May-June, 2001 (2nd quarter) publication.

I am honored to have been asked to write a history on Amberwood Dairy Goats. Before I get started I wish to thank three people who had the greatest impact on me as an owner/breeder of dairy goats: Barbara Thrasher of Pepperwood Farms, Marianne Sans of Sanstorm's Alpines, and Dr. Eric Davis, DVM. I wish to extend my admiration and congratulations to Alice Hall, of the Hallcienda Herd, for her breeding of the great GCH ++*B Hallcienda Frosty Marvin. I would also like to thank all those breeders who purchased, promoted and successfully used my animals in their herds.

Well, I did not start out to breed goats; in fact I was given one as a pet. Because I fell in love with this little black and white Alpine doe named Pride, my friend decided I should have her. Sound familiar? I love animals, so I was a prime candidate for dairy goats. And, I did not start out with Nubians. In fact, when I saw my first Nubian I did not like them. I loved their long ears, but hated their convex noses. The LaManchas I really did not like at all, goodness no ears! I actually fell in love with Toggs because of their beautiful dish faces, color and markings. So, when I had an opportunity to get this adorable baby Alpine doe, I was thrilled.

Jackie, my friend who started it all, and I use to pour over Dairy Goat Journals and look at various pictures of all breeds. She proceeded to tell me just what we were supposed to do with Dairy Goats besides having them as pets. She was on milk test and did a small amount of showing. She and I attended shows, (not to show, but just to observe).

When my husband, children and I went on a vacation, I think they were a little perplexed as I brought along Dairy Goat Journals, books and pictures. I spent the whole vacation reading and studying. When I returned, I decided to purchase a milker (never milked before). I purchased an Alderwood doe from Oregon named Alderwood' Star Fantastik (Fanny). She was a big, powerful, milking fool.

Yes, I went through the whole bit, joined the American Dairy Goat Association, obtained a herd name, tattoo letters, etc. I loved the color "amber" and liked the Pepperwood Farm and Laurelwood Acres herd names, so hence, Amberwood Dairy Goats.

After a couple of years I purchased better animals and started breeding animals for greater show potential. In fact, I attended the Boonville Fair where Donald Smith and Grant Colfax (then a very young man) were also showing their animals. Donald and I stayed up until after midnight discussing Alpines, pedigrees, and lines. Grant and I discussed the possibility of him purchasing Redwood Hills Classic Example and how he could convince his parents to purchase him. I told Grant I would, buy him if I had the money. He was a fabulous buck! Well, needless to say, after much discussion the Colfaxes did purchase Classic Example.

I then proceeded to purchase a doe, Double "M" Minette Maid, who was GCH material and was in the top 10, milking 5020 lb. in 305 days. This was a gorgeous doe, with a fabulous udder that milked.

I later contacted Marianne Sans, of Sanstorm's French Alpines, to purchase an Alpine buck kid, as I admired her herd tremendously. They were very large, milky with great udders. A huge, very beautiful buck kid was born out of a GCH doe and I ordered him. One day I got a letter from Marianne that devastated me and hurt my feelings tremendously (brought tears to my eyes). Marianne stated that she should not send me this buck, as I did not know what I was doing. I had too many different lines going and I would NEVER attain CONSISTENCY. To become a good breeder I must line breed and inbreed or I would never attain quality animals that were consistent. She said you want to look out your window and see all your animals look alike, not necessarily in color, but in structure and type. She went on to say, you should line breed and inbreed on good lines and if it doesn't work, scrap those lines and start again, but always line breed and inbreed. After I got over my devastation, regarding the letter, I understood what Marianne was trying to tell me. I bought her buck and he went on to become a GCH. Marianne and that letter changed my whole outlook concerning my breeding program.

While living in Perris, California, I had opportunities to visit many herds in Southern California and one day I went with a friend to visit a Nubian herd. They had a doe for sale named Goldan's Dandy Tulip. She had a Hallcienda background, which meant nothing to me at that time. She was a black Nubian doe, with white facial stripes. I fell in love with the doeling and this purchase started the Amberwood Nubians. I visited several Nubian herds and became good friends with Helen of the Morejoy herd. Tulip was then bred to Morejoy Zorro and the result was my first permanent champion doe GCH Amberwood's Dandy Summer Frost 1*M (dam of ++*B Amberwood's Frosty Chancellor). Summer was blue roan, with white accents, very deep, wide and level. Summer was shown 4 times, had 4 firsts and 3 GCH's.

One day, while reading my Dairy Goat Journals, I came across a picture of what I perceived to be a gorgeous Nubian buck. At that time I was not sure what a good Nubian was as I did not know if they were supposed to be very different from the Swiss breeds or not. Besides just the difference in breed characteristics, they were large, deep, elegant and very noisy. I felt that they were a demanding breed and that you had to be a special type of person to breed Nubians. Since I was a willing participant, I fell in love with the breed. And, they demanded a lot of my time and ATTENTION!

Well, the buck I was looking at was a beautiful frosted red roan animal, who was exceptionally smooth and well blended. By the way, at that time I did not know what well blended meant, however, I knew what I liked and I liked what I saw. Luckily the herd was in Chino, California. I went to visit the Pepperwood Farm Herd, owned by Ron and Barbara Thrasher who were the owners of GCH ++*B Hallcienda Frosty Marvin. I was in awe of what I saw, as all the animals were like "peas in a pod". Pepperwood Farm had already practiced what Sanstorm preached and their entire herd did look alike. Marvin was large, and I was apprehensive at first. However, Barbara assured me Marvin

was very gentle. In fact, at the height of breeding season you would see Marvin laying down while the babies jumped all over him!

Needless to say, Barbara thought I was an absolute nut! I stood there "ooing and aahing" over her animals and picked up every baby goat she had. In fact, she really thought I was nuts when I went running around the pasture with the goats and slipped and fell in a cow patty. I had on bright pink pants. The wet color and aroma did not look or smell very well (never did get the stain out)! If I had been faster on the uptake I would have noticed the looks that transpired between Barbara and her husband Ron. She eventually told me that both of them talked later and thought I was a complete nut case! I later went back and purchased a gorgeous little buckling named ++*B Pepperwood Farm Frosty Pepper (litter brother to GCH Pepperwood Farm Frosty Emily).

Well, Barbara was having second thoughts, not quite sure if she should have sold Pepper to a NUT, so she came over to my house to check up on me, my facilities, and Pepper. She found Pepper in a large pen in the backyard and at night he came in the kitchen and washroom (slept by the hot water heater). She decided that I would take care of HER animals. That started a lifelong friendship. Barbara is my best friend and teacher. I say teacher, because that is just what she was and is. I drove her nuts with questions, questions, and more questions. She had to MAKE me do my own dehorning and pulling of the kids who could not come into this world on their own. She taught me how to do pedigrees, to use them as a tool to evaluate animals and future breedings. Barbara Thrasher was the most patient person I knew with all animals and the most knowledgeable with dairy goats I have ever seen. She could accomplish medical wonders even a vet would not attempt. She was and is a very gentle and caring person, especially when it comes to animals.

Because of my husband's job, we were transferred to Covelo, California (out in the "boonies"). Not too long after my move, Barbara, Ron and family also moved to Covelo. It was then (and after I received the letter from Sanstorms) that I started to really concentrate on my breeding program. We purchased GCH Pepperwood Farm Shenandoah from Barbara in 1979. Shenandoah, Summer Frost and, of course, Marvin became the cornerstone of my Nubian herd.

In 1977, we purchased ++B Pepperwood Farm Frosty Pepper, a gorgeous blond buckling who looked just like his sire. Pepper's littler sister, Pepperwood Farm Frosty Emily, became a permanent GCH. Pepper is the sire of ++B Amberwood Pepper's Foxxfire. Briarwood Farms and Winterberry purchased Foxxfire. He went on to produce several champion offspring. Among Foxxfire's progeny are: GCH Briarwood Farm Foxxi Finesse 3*M, GCH Hilton's Cinnamon's Spice 1*M (1988 Reserve National Champion), CH *B Briarwood Farm F. Red Zinger, GCH Winterberry Foxxi Ninotchka 2*M, GCH +*B Briarwood Farm Downtown Brown, GCH +*B Briarwood Farm Foxx's Jeremiah, GCH ++*B Briarwood Farm YZF Legacy, GCH Chalfort Fair of Face 1*M and GCH Kismet Foxy Lady 3*M.

In 1979 I purchased a doe from Pepperwood Farm that "had it all together" from day one. GCH Pepperwood Farm Shenandoah, shown as a milking yearling, was Reserve GCH behind GCH Amberwood's Dandy Summer Frost 1*M. As a 2-year-old, Shendy went on to become a permanent champion. Shendy was the dam of GCH Amberwood's Frosty Valentine 1*M and ++B Amberwood Pepper's Foxxfire. Unfortunately, Foxxfire was the only buck GCH Pepperwood Farm Shenandoah ever produced. This is one of the few times we felt confident about keeping and selling a buck out of a first freshener and always wished we had retained this buck in our herd.

Even though we moved to the Santa Cruz area in 1979, we continued to bring many does to Marvin to be bred. One of those does was GCH Amberwood's Dandy Summer Frost 1*M. In 1981, ++*B Amberwood's Frosty Chancellor was born and purchased by Margaret Moore of Mystery Creek. Chancellor was used by many herds, live and A.I.. Chancellor produced National and State Champions as well as many other Champion and Grand Champion offspring. Chancellor was successfully incorporated into many herds such as Rio Del Oro, Soncare, Eleven Oaks, Crown Point, Lotus Ladies, Pennylane, Nickels, Kismet, Mystery Creek (as well as several others). Some of Chancellor's offspring are: GCH Rio Del Oro's Mountain Mama (Ruda) 3*M (1987 and 1990 Reserve National Champion), GCH Mystery Creek Silver Serenade 2*M, +*B Rio Del Oro's Second Chance, GCH ++*B Rio Del Oro's Dandy-Lion, GCH Soncare Gabriel 3*M (3 times National Champion, 1989,1990,1991), CH +B Mystery Creek Jedi (nicknamed "The Little Buffalo" by Norman Austin), GCH Eleven Oaks Candy Wrapper 1*M, GCH Kismet Silver Satin 3*M, and GCH Kismet CXC Chantelle 7*M.

In 1980 Shenandoah (Shendy) was bred to GCH ++*B Hallcienda Frosty Marvin and in 1981 the result was a beautiful coppery, red-brown doe born on Valentines Day, hence GCH Amberwood's Frosty Valentine 1*M. Val was the dam of: ++B Amberwood's Ancient Mariner, ++B Amberwood Viking's Hero, +*B Amberwood Jack Frost Northwind, and Amberwood Viking's King Kanute (littermate to Hero).

Unfortunately, Val only lived until 5 years of age. However, her lineage continues through her bucks.

In 1982, Barbara Muszalski, of the Jibarski herd, purchased a buckling, ++*B Amberwood Frosty Supreme. Even though Supreme was not long lived, he produced several champion animals. Many herds used him, but most of those herds did not show. Two of Supreme's nicest does were GCH Robin Supreme's Barbara 1*M and GCH De Novo Supreme Secret 1*M.

Also in 1982, ++B Amberwood's Ancient Mariner was purchased by Alison & Bob Gamage of Trillium Trails. Mariner was one of the wonderful bucks out of GCH Amberwood's Frosty Valentine 1*M. Some of Mariner's offspring are GCH Trillium Trails Maritime Pinta, GCH Trillium Trails Rita 9*M and GCH Trillium Trails Rosa 9*M.

In 1983, another of Valentines bucklings was purchased jointly by the Kismet and Springbok herds. ++B Amberwood Viking's Hero. He really stamped his mark on his offspring by producing does with LONG dairy necks and high rear udders. This was especially evident in GCH Kismet Sequel 2*M. Jean Lucas, of the Kismet herd, has informed me that these long, dairy necks will come through several succeeding generations. Some of Hero's progeny are: GCH Kismet Hero's Nutmeg 2*M, GCH Kismet Hero's Frosty Allspice 1*M, GCH Kismet Hero's Diamond Lil 2*M, GCH Khimaira Hero's Kismet 2*M, GCH Stonewall Farm Victoria 2*M, GCH Khimaira Hero's Cashmere 5*M, CH Kismet Hero's Hope, GCH Kismet Sequel 2*M (fabulously long, dairy neck), GCH Seven-Springs Sapphie's Sequel 4*M, Little Bic's Cinn-A-Bar and Little Bic's Cinn-A-Bonn.

While going through my Dairy Goat Journal, 1983, I saw a picture of a fabulous doe with an udder that was to die for. She was a Canadian National Champion and her name was GCH Fez Desert Blazenay. I contacted Chataqua Farms to inquire about purchasing a buck from this fabulous doe. In 1985 four of us purchased a buck from Blazenay. His name is ++*B C/F Blaise. We were not disappointed, as Blaise not only blended well with Marvin's lines, but many, many different lines. Some of Blaise's sons, daughters, grandsons and granddaughters are still doing very well in several herds. Among Blaise's many wonderful offspring are: GCH ++*B E-B Brown's XJB Trailblaiser, GCH E-B Brown's Razberi Blaise-X 2*M, GCH Meadow Oak Farm's Butterscotch, E-B Brown's Straberi Blaise-X 2*M, GCH Rojan Farms Sherry Amber 1*M, GCH ++B Wingwood Farm Blazin Tamerlane, GCH Meadow Oak Farm's May Flower, GCH Little Bic's Elle-Gear 5*M (1994 California State Champion), GCH Meadow Oak Farm's Bon Ami 5*M, CH B Faith Farm E B Shilow, CH Faith Farm Blaze of Glory, and GCH Kismet Sequel's Blazon 3M.

In 1984, Virginia and Everett Lee Baker, of Copper Hill, purchased a buckling out of GCH Amberwood Frosty Valentine 1*M, by Caravelle's Jack Frost. His name was +*B Amberwood Jack Frost Northwind.

Northwind was also used by many different herds. Some of his offspring are: GCH Little-O-Acres Lacy Lass 2*M, GCH Copper Hill Northwind's Melody 3*M, and GCH Little-O-Acres LadyBug 3*M.

In 1984, Wee 3 R dairy goats sold their whole herd and fortunately we were able to purchase a few, as many were of Marvin's lineage. Among those few was a doe called Wee 3R January's Frosted Song (2 GCH legs). In 1985, I had to reduce the herd drastically and reluctantly sold January, (who was then bred to Blaise), to the E-B Brown herd. The results of that breeding was a litter of 3 kids: GCH ++*B E-B Brown's XJB Trailblaiser, GCH E-B Brown's Rasberi Blaise-X and E-B Brown's Strawberi Blaise-X. Trailblaiser has gone on to do very well in many herds.

In 1985/86, we had the good fortune to see a fabulous doe, GCH Velvet Acres Fennel, (owned by Redwood Hills). Fennel was National Champion in 1986. Even though her sire, Velvet Acres Belvedere, was 9 years old, we had the opportunity to purchase him. Unfortunately, he only lived one more year and we only got a few kids and a limited

amount of semen from him. He had two beautiful Champion daughters: CH Gretel's Velvet Sage, and GCH Gretel's Velvet Fennel 2*M (1986 National Champion).

In 1988, I fell in love with a beautiful doeling owned by Jibarskis. Right there on the spot I purchased Jibarski's Bo's Secret Whisper. Whisper matured into a gorgeous doe with a beautiful udder and earned her first GCH leg very easily. Like so many of my animals, I was forced to sell Whisper and at that time she had 2 GCH legs. Unfortunately, her new owner never showed her. Whisper and CH Mystery Creek Jedi produced +*B Amberwood's Winter Frost, owned by Copper Hill. Whisper and Marvin produced +*B Amberwood's Frosty Baron owned by Noah Goddard of Goddard Farms.

+*B Amberwood Frosty Baron currently has sired CH Goddard Farm Hallo and Goddard Farm Dominique, who is on her way to becoming a permanent Champion.

+*B Amberwood Jedi's Winter Frost's progeny includes: CH *B Copper Hill Winter Glacier, GCH Copper Hill Winter Galaxy 6M, CH B Copper Hill W. F. Papa Bear, and GCH Copper Hill Winter Beauty 11*M, dam of GCH +B Copper Hill Lord Alginon (sire of the 2000 National Champion and Reserve National Champion)

I know this is a Nubian Association Newsletter, but I would like to share my introduction to LaManchas. During a show in Placerville, California, I was showing a LaMancha buckling for Donald Smith. He went Junior Champion. Even though he was gorgeous, he also was the sweetest little buck I had ever encountered.

At that very show a lady, who bred LaManchas, had a very small white doeling for sale for only \$100.00. Needless to say I fell in love with her and purchased this earless wonder. However, I did not know how to explain to my family about this new addition, so I told everyone I won her at the raffle. Sound Familiar?

Another experience I would like to share with you was a real eye opener and a big lesson for me. Upon my many visits to herds in Southern California, I just happened to visit one very lovely herd. When I asked what lines they were using, they said "My Lines". Confused, I asked the same questions in another way. "You have very lovely animals. What lines have you incorporated into your herd?" Obviously very irritated with me, the answer was once again, "My Lines". Once again, I learned a very important lesson: Everyone starts from someone else's lines. We mix and match until they become our lines. We have all started with someone else's herd lineage. After all, they worked hard to mix and match to develop their lines. One should always acknowledge breeders and animals that are in the background of their herds. I believe in giving credit where credit is due!

I obtained the greatest words of wisdom I have ever heard concerning dairy goats (and livestock in general) from Dr. Eric Davis, DVM. Barbara Thrasher and I had to take an animal to the vet. As we drove through his gate, we saw many, many dairy goats, some in a truck and some being examined by Dr. Davis. We could not figure out what was wrong with ALL these animals. They looked awful as they were extremely skinny,

emaciated looking, their fur was dull and brittle, they were down on their pasterns, and all were standing with their head hanging limply. We were there watching for quite awhile as Dr. Davis examined each one, took blood and fecal samples, etc. Finally they left. We walked over to his examining room and Dr. Davis was checking samples under his microscope.

Meanwhile, Barbara and I kept looking at one another trying to figure out what those poor animals had. We had no clue so we gave up and asked Dr. Davis what was wrong with the herd he just examined. Simply and quietly he replied, "PPHM". Both of us looked surprised as we backed out of his office to confer. After all, we didn't want to appear stupid, but what was this mysterious disease that Dr. Davis was referring to? Well, we couldn't stand it any longer (stupid or not) we had to know. "Doctor, "What's PPHM?" Without so much as looking up from his microscope he said, "PPHM means Piss Poor Herd Management!" Obviously irritated, he started ranting and raving about the care people gave their animals. His words really "hit home"! He said, "You goat breeders worry more about pedigrees, what lines you are using, how many GCH animals you have and how much you can (or do) spend on buying these great, expensive animals rather than their care! When will you learn that 80% to 90% of your success as a breeder is in Herd Management: Feed, Nutrition, Housing, General Care and Common Sense!"

Through out my many years in this business, I have come to realize that he was exactly right!

Before I close, I would like to interject some humor into this article and that concerns something all breeders do, "shop talk"! Every place I have ever worked my co-workers got used to me talking about my goats, in fact many were really interested and we had several layman "shop talk" conversations. Well, it was coffee break time and it was spring. Everyone had a pad and pencil to help me think of names for my kids. We all had our head down writing. A middle aged lady, who was a temporary employee, came in and sat along side of me. Everyone was so quiet she finally asked, "What is everyone doing?" One of my co-workers said, "We are trying to think up names for Joan's kids. Looking very perplexed, the poor lady asked me, "How many kids do you have?" I looked up and had to really concentrate and finally said, "Fifteen, I think". She practically yelled out, "You have fifteen kids and they don't have names?" Well, everyone roared with laughter, which added to the poor ladies confusion. I finally said, "I have dairy goats and these are baby goats (kids) that we are trying to name." Well, you would have thought that she had been shot! She moved her chair away from me, looked me up and down (with her nose wrinkled, as if I smelled) and said, "You have goats? Oh, my God, goats!" and she jumped up and left. Back then, I was dressed in office attire, so I guess I didn't fit her description of a 'goat owner"! The whole time the lady worked at our office she avoided me, and never spoke to me again!

One day I had to ship some kids out of the San Francisco Airport. So, Betty Zemaitis (Caravelles) and I decided to make a day of it. After shipping out the kids, we went to a restaurant for dinner. When we sat down I noticed a gentleman finishing up his dinner and getting his check. Betty and I sat down and immediately started talking shop. Betty

started talking about top lines and straight backs. We discussed the weaknesses and strengths of the animals we had just seen at a show. Betty commented, "Did you see the nose and ears on that one? What an ugly head!" Now, you never know what the general public hears or interprets especially when we say things like "teats", or "different objects hanging", etc. I am sure to most of the public it seems perverted and in this case the conversation was carried on by two dirty old women. Anyway, Betty said, "Have you seen Late June's udder? It isn't as high and tight as it once was. It is hanging slightly. Her teats turn out a little and she doesn't have as much milk as she used to". We then proceeded to talk about semen collection, scrotums, etc. Out of the corner of my eye I saw this man asking for more coffee and leaning closer to the wall. Betty and I ate and the man was still there drinking coffee. I wouldn't want to have had his bladder problems later that night. After dinner we started again about the strengths and weaknesses of different animals and started talking about artificial insemination. This man could not get any closer if he was sitting in our laps. Finally Bette said, "You know, I notice a lot of rears (meaning rear udders) dropping before their time. They not only have dropped, but really sag". She then said. "Did you see Emily, her rear is so wide you could drive a truck though her hind legs!" I finally noticed this man was really leaning toward Betty and I tried to kick her under the table to get her attention, but to no avail. When we were finished and Betty stood up to go, the man sat up very straight and leaned toward us to look at Betty's rear end and just shook his head. I laughed and giggled the rest of the night, especially when I explained to Betty what was going on and that she had been oblivious to the man next to us. Think of all the terms we use and what they must sound like to the general public!

Years ago, I owned a small Datsun truck with a camper shell that did not lock. I had to fill my semen tank with liquid nitrogen, so I put it on the front seat of the truck with a seat belt around it so it would not tip over. My girlfriend had no car that day and wanted to go out to lunch. I had to put the tank in the back of the truck and when we got to the restaurant, I put it on the front seat so I could lock it in the truck. We had our lunch and came out and had not paid any attention to the low slung convertible sports car with two young ladies dressed to the hilt. I removed the tank from the cab and put it on the ground. One lady asked, "Is that a milk can?" Not thinking, I just replied, "No, it is a semen tank." I then noticed the look on their faces and the one girl, with the widest eyes I have ever seen, said, "Who do you get to fill that, Paul Bunyan?" Needless to say, my girlfriend and I doubled over in laughter. I know we were embarrassing these two, so I showed them the canes, goblets, straws, etc. and explained what they were, how they were stored, collected, etc. It is hard to remember that the majority of people do not have any clue as to animal husbandry or even consider the prospects of artificial insemination in people, so this must have "blown there minds!"

Many animals in this article were not bred by Amberwood, but incorporated into the herd, which had a direct bearing on developing the Amberwood lines. Thank you to all who allowed me to share their lines and animals for the betterment of Amberwood Dairy Goats.

During most of the time, while raising dairy goats, I had to work outside, full time. I could never keep more than 10 does (maximum) of each breed, so I was forced to sell many lovely animals that I would otherwise have kept. I almost gave up raising dairy goats at one point, due to lack of time, money and being ill. During the last 7 years, my employment required me to work almost 24/7. However, I am finally retired and even though I cannot afford to keep but just a few show animals of each of my two breeds, I am now in the process, through A.I. and line breeding, to try and resurrect some of my old lines.

July 4th, 2001 starts my 26th year in dairy goats and I hope to be able to continue for years to come. Thanks to all that have purchased, bred to and promoted the Amberwood animals, whether it is directly or through line breeding. Throughout the years I have seen style and udder preference changes. I have always liked a certain type of dairy goat, but most of all a certain type of Nubian. I feel that they were originally meant to be a dual-purpose animal. I especially feel that they were designed to be large, deep, tall, upstanding, and regal. At times my animals were slightly heavy, but they were the types I like to breed and look at. These especially included the Marvin animals I so loved throughout the years. Through all the changes that have occurred, I have bred the type of Nubian I liked. So, to all you Nubian breeders, young and old alike, "Breed what you like and like what you breed!"

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