

Meet the ABGA Board of Directors

The Board of Directors serves as the governing body of the ABGA, and the 17-member board represents their individual regions, serving as the voice for those regions. Each board member is elected for a three-year term.

REGION 1: Terry Brown • Capriole Boer Goats

Terry Brown began raising goats in 1973. He bought his first Boer crosses in 1995 and his first fullblood Canadian registered Boers the following year. When he began with American-registered Boers, he joined the ABGA.

Today, he runs about 100 fullblood breeding females plus a dozen bucks. He breeds and exhibits goats with his family.

“Goats seem to be in our blood, and both my daughter and granddaughter share this obsession. We enjoy exhibiting our goats, and the challenge of breeding good ones. It is exciting to see this industry grow, and to see goats gaining respect as a livestock enterprise,” he says.

He has been on the board for five years. “My desire is to see that the membership is represented and kept informed,” he says.

REGION 2: Scott Pruett • E-I-E-I-Owe Farms

Scott Pruett got involved in the Boer goat industry and in ABGA after he made the move from sheep to goats. He started with crossbreds does, and eventually worked his way into breeding seedstock animals, as well as market goats for meat. He currently breeds about 40 does a year.

He’s been in the ABGA for 10 years, and is serving on his first term on the board. “My biggest goal is to communicate with our membership, and let them know what is

happening on a current basis. The intent with that is to create an interested membership that is active,” Pruett says. “In particular, I want to focus on the junior association. My region encompasses nine states, and our participation is minimum right now. I want to get them motivated and active.”

Pruett enjoys Boer goats for many reasons.

“I love the goat producers, and the fellowship, camaraderie and knowledge they have. The people are what make the goats worthwhile,” he says.

REGION 3: Jeff Gibbs • Gibbs Farm

Jeff Gibbs first got involved because he had friends that raised goats. Today, he owns about 150. He enjoys raising goats because of what it takes.

“I enjoy the challenges of matching/ breeding genetics, and the friends we have made since becoming members,” he said.

This is Gibbs’ first term.

“I want to help make the association better for the members,” he says.

REGION 4: Currently Vacant

REGION 5: John Edwards • EGGS Boers

John Edwards was also one of the first importers of Boer goats to the United States.

“Our facility, Erath General Genetic Services, was approved as a quarantine unit just prior to the first importations of Boer goats from New Zealand in 1993. From 1993 through 1995, we were the temporary home for more than 200 Boer bucks and does, pending their delivery to the new owners. With the benefit of a lifetime of

ranching experience, this was a remarkable opportunity to appreciate first-hand the possibilities and limitations represented by the breed,” he explains.

They purchased their first goats in 1995, and now produce about 300 kids a year. He has enjoyed seeing the breed develop in the U.S.

“The earliest Boer goats brought to the U.S. were impressive, when compared to the indigenous goat population, but with a few notable exceptions, were not premier examples. Being part of the improvement of the Boer goat, both in terms of conformation and performance, has been a gratifying challenge,” he says. “We make a few shows each year, but our genetic selections are primarily driven by performance factors: feed efficiency, weight per day of age, carcass content at market weight, and thriveability in a pasture environment. It’s both exciting and essential, in our view.”

He has been on the board for 13 years.

“I have watched the ABGA grow into a financially stable, member-friendly organization,” he says. “I am most happy with the growth of our junior membership and want to see that trend continue. Expanding the youth program and education in general are my primary goals.”

REGION 6: Dr. Mark Watkins • Circle Star Boers

Dr. Mark Watkins started with just 10 bred does that he bought to keep the agricultural status on his land, and soon after that, his wife made the decision to begin showing.

“Once we got into the show ring, it was a natural thing to join ABGA. In the early days, we joined all of the associations to get

information, and then decided to stay with ABGA," he says.

He now raises about 30 does, down from 150 several years ago.

"It is going to be enjoyable again and not so much work," he says.

Since he came from a medical background, Dr. Watkins enjoys the breeding and genetics of raising Boer goats.

"I like the genetics, the AI and the embryo transfer parts of it. I enjoy kidding and delivering baby goats, as well. There is nothing more fun than sitting out there in an early morning and watching two week olds kids run and jump and play. It's a good combination. I enjoy that part of it, and she enjoys the ring," he says.

Dr. Watkins is halfway through his first term, is currently serving as treasurer, and is looking forward to bettering the organization for the members.

"We need to increase efficiency of the office to better serve our members. That's important to me," he says. "The juniors are also important. I would like to see more emphasis on the bred-and-owned part of the show. I would like to see them more involved in the while process, and experience that pride of winning with their own animals. Those kids are our future."

REGION 7: Linda West • CBW Boers

Linda West became involved in Boer goats through her grandchildren.

"In 2004, my granddaughter Jordan came to me and said, 'Grandmother, I want a goat.' I asked what kind and she said, 'The white ones with the red head.' Six months later, we owned two young does and we all were hooked," she says. "It has always been my husband's contention that you can feed a registered animal just as cheap as a grade one, so 'registered' it was. We all became members of the ABGA, JABGA that same year."

They own 45 registered does, two bucks and 15-20 recipient does.

"I just love the Boers because of their docile character and individual personality. I have always said they are just people with four legs and a fur coat. We enjoy showing, but are especially happy when our breeding animals are shown by others and do very well. That is satisfaction," she says.

West has been on the board for a year.

"I have enjoyed every minute of representing all the people. I believe my goal is like many others on the board, and that is to take the association to a new level, to acquaint the public with what a great product we all produce, to hopefully one day

see packaged goat meat right along Angus beef in the grocery store, and to do DNA testing and further performance programs. These programs will help everyone in the association. In short, I want the Boer goat to become a force in the agricultural market now and in the future," she says.

REGION 8: Shon Callahan • 4C Boers

Shon Callahan first got involved in raising Boer goats when his daughter wanted goats. They attended a few shows, and decided it would be a good thing for them to do together.

"We have an absolute ball together. Boer goat people are the coolest people in the world, and it's become a big family with everyone that we show with. The goats are cool, but I love the people. My kids have learned some pretty cool lessons from some pretty cool people," he says.

They now raise 35-50 kids a year, with the majority of those coming from embryo flushes. They bred 20-25 does a year.

Coming from an equine background, Callahan enjoys the shorter genetic turnaround that he sees with goats.

"With horses, it's two and a half years before you can see the results of your program. With goats, you can see it after only eight months," he explains.

He is recently elected and serving his first term.

"I just want to better the association for the membership. It seems like at every show someone has a better idea. I want to be a part of a proactive board to relay those ideas. I want to give back as much as I can," he says.

REGION 9: Vicki Stitch • Lazy Raven Ranch

Vicki Stitch first got involved when her doctor suggested she do something to keep active. She had horses, but due to their size, goats were a better fit. She got involved in ABGA when she bought her first goats.

She currently does not raise any goats, because her health has prevented her from having them now. She still has her main herd sire, an old buck that is now 10 years old.

"I enjoyed all of it from the babies to the does. I liked the showing and being around people, and the competitiveness of it, too," she explains.

Stitch is in her fourth year on the board.

"I want to help educate people about the success of the breed as well as the organization. I miss having the goats, but now I have more time to do what I need to do for the board," she says.

REGION 10: Tracy Diefenbach • Amarugia Boer Goats

Tracy Diefenbach got started raising goats in 1999 when her son wanted to raise a few

does for an FFA project. They later joined FFA, and began showing in 2003.

They now run about 40 head, and the operation is a family deal. "Goats have always been a family project. My husband, son and daughter-in-law all show. My son, Ryan, and his wife, Tisha, met while showing," she says. "We also help put on sanctioned shows each year. Coming home at night after a bad day at the office always gets better after a few minutes in the baby lot."

She has been on the board for five years, and is currently serving as secretary.

"I want to continue to work toward improving member services," she says.

REGION 11: Scott Hawthorn • Cedar Grove Farms

Scott Hawthorn got involved in goats through his daughter's 4-H budget.

"We got hooked from there. We began to breed and raise them. We enjoyed it very much," he says.

The family now raises 25 does, and practices live breeding at his facility. "We have gotten a lot out of them over the years. We have a lot of good friends, and have done a lot of traveling with them. We enjoy messing with the livestock and raising them," he explains.

Hawthorn has been on the board for two years.

"I didn't have any set goals. I always thought ABGA was a good organization. We have had some rule changes over the years, and worked on projects that have been beneficial overall. I wanted to help support the organization and do what I could," he says.

REGION 12: Paul Kinslow • Legacy Farms

Paul Kinslow got involved in the industry when his daughter was deciding what project she wanted to do in 4-H, and she settled on goats. They got involved in ABGA that same year.

Currently, he has 10 breeding does that he raises for show.

"I enjoy the camaraderie and the people," he says. "Goats are a fun breed. They have different personalities and sometimes are almost like dogs. The children enjoy them and they are safe when dealing with kids and momma. They are personable animals."

Kinslow has been on the board for six years.

"I want to continue the success of ABGA," he says.

REGION 13: Mark Anderson • F&H Ranch

Mark Anderson got involved in Boer goats in 2009 after retiring from a 27.5-year career in the Air Force. He had promised his wife Debbie after retirement they would settle down and get animals. The chose Boer goats.

He now owns about 120 does.

"We enjoy the embryo part of this industry and love the challenge of trying new genetic combinations," he says.

They also host four sanctioned shows a year, and have established two scholarships for students who raise animals.

"Our hope/prayers is that we can give back to the great industry we have gotten involved with," he explains.

Like others, Anderson enjoys the people side of Boer goats just as much as the goat themselves.

"We truly enjoy the friendships we have made and the willingness to help the new people get involved and improve their herd and show string. Debbie and I had no livestock background and had many people offer to help us and give advice on improvements, fitting, showing and many other things," he says.

Anderson is in his second year on the board.

"My goal is to be a voice for the small breeders who may not have all the acreage to have hundreds of goats or want that many, but enjoy the challenges of raising these beautiful animals and showing them at shows throughout the year. I also want to see if we can get more involved in researching health issues to assist everyone in improving management practices," he says.

REGION 14: John Morrow • Stoney Point Farm

John Morrow got his start when Boer goats first came to the U.S., when they picked up a group of eight half-bloods. They had raised dairy and pygmy goats, and the Boers caught their attention after they read about them in a magazine.

They now raise between 325-375 goats including does, kids and bucks. They raise seedstock, commercial and 4-H wethers.

"If someone would have told me that I would only have goats, I would have said they are nuts, but that's all I have now," he says.

His family enjoys not only raising goats, but also showing them.

"My wife, daughter and two granddaughters eat and breathe Boer goats every day of the year," he says.

He was elected to the board in 2006, and truly believes in doing what is best for the members.

"I want to see us do what is best for all American Boer goat members: what is truly best for the industry, clear across the industry. It takes each and every one of the people across the U.S. to do that, and see everything work well for all Boer goat members," Morrow says.

REGION 15: Sara Davis • Oak Hollow Livestock

Sara Davis began with a few commercial does 15 years ago, and her first registered goat was a fullblood buck.

"I quickly made the decision to transition completely to registered Boers. That first buck was registered with ABGA and was our introduction to the American Boer Goat Association," she says.

She currently has 20 does.

"Our animals are selected for docile temperaments, superior carcass traits, fast growth rates, and hardy animals with excellent maternal characteristics. They have also been quite competitive in ABGA shows," she says.

She likes Boer goes for the many attributes they offer.

"Boer goats are easy to handle, aggressive foragers and a low-maintenance livestock option for us. They are mild mannered enough that our two young children can enjoy spending time with them, as well. We sell registered breeding stock and also provide our family and our customers with a healthy, delicious, locally raised option to the mainstream red meats," Davis says.

She has been on the board for five years.

"I believe there is an amazing potential for growth in our association and with that, strong leadership is pivotal to ensuring ABGA remains the premier meat goat registry and shapes the future of this growing industry," she says. "In my time on the Board, I have found the ABGA members to be an amazing group of individuals. As individuals, we all have different priorities and philosophies. I choose to look at these differences as strengths in our industry. At the Board level, I believe we have the responsibility to weigh input from all members and do our best to ensure the best interest of the breed and the ABGA and its members. My door is always open to members with concerns or questions."

REGION 16: Brad Mackey • B-Mack Farms LLC

Brad Mackey got his first Boer goats when a friend, Frankie Beeman, got him started as a hobby. After moving to North Carolina, Mackey started a commercial hog and turkey operation, and believed the goats were a perfect fit for him to get back into raising purebred show animals. The ABGA was the right organization for him, as he considered it the gold standard for Boer goat registration, and still believes that is the case.

He currently has 35 donor does, and about 100 recipients. He enjoys the genetics of raising goats.

"I enjoy the mixing and matching of genetics that are highly competitive in the show ring, whether it be regionally or nationally. They are the most challenging species of livestock I have ever tried to raise," he says.

He has been on the board for two years, and is serving as President this year.

"I hope to bring the organization together with the focus of adding more emphasis on the junior programs, and to introduce new and improved ways to do business, and grow the ABGA into the future," he says.

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT: Ervin Chavana • Meager Creek Ranch

Ervin Chavana was one of the original importers of Boer goats, and has been with the ABGA since its inception. He didn't get into showing until nearly 10 years after he bought his first goats, and credits that experience to the way he breeds his goats today.

"We wanted to get out and see how we stacked up with our bloodlines and breeding program. It was an eye opener for us. We bred for a long time without seeing what others had, and sometimes that makes you barn blind to what you are doing," he explains. "It changed our breeding program from a genetic standpoint, to really going and getting the specific attributes that we wanted. If there are genetics out there that will enhance my program, I'm going to use it. I'm constantly trying to put animals on the ground that are better each year."

Today, Chavana has about 200 goats, not including recipient does. He truly loves the Boer goat, and the beauty of the animal.

"I think what drew me to them originally is what still draws me to them. When you look at them, they have an ennobled look. There is nothing better than seeing a mature buck that is big, bold, robust and proud standing there. He's a testament to the breed," he says.

Chavana just finished his first term, and is currently serving as the immediate past president for this year, and then he will be off the board.

"My whole intention was not to have an agenda, but to move the association forward, and lend my expertise. We have a dedicated board that will do what they need to do to move association forward right now," he says. "We are elected to represent our constituents and be their voice at the table. We all come from different backgrounds, but at the end, must make decisions to make the association better."

Breeder SPOTLIGHT

by ROBYN SCHERER, M.AGR.

Rambo Ranch

Rambo Ranch, located in Palacios, Tex., is owned by Karen Venglar. They focus on raising quality show goats with the genetics that perform and win in the show ring as well as out in the pasture. They answer a few questions about their operation.

1. HOW DID YOU GET STARTED IN THE BOER GOAT INDUSTRY?

We got started after retiring from the US Army. We started with selling show wethers and then have slowly changed to all full bloods making sure to concentrate on quality over quantity.

2. HOW MANY GOATS DO YOU HAVE, AND WHAT DO YOU USE THEM FOR?

For many years we ran close to 75 grown does and sold them as registered Full bloods as well as champion wethers. We have, in the last few years, been raising mainly full bloods of a herd of 25 head. We are increasing the herd this coming year slowly, making sure each doe meets out strict requirements. We are concentrating on quality, not quantity or pedigree.

3. WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART ABOUT RAISING BOER GOATS?

The Great friends we have made and the smile on a child when they win with one of our goats.

4. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES YOU HAVE FACED, AND WHAT DID YOU DO TO OVERCOME THEM?

The challenge to produce even better kids each year without a lot of feed or additives. We work hard to breed quality show goats, with the genetics that perform and win in the show ring as well as out in the pasture. We are breeding for goats that are naturally

powerful and meaty, that look great and are productive. We never keep or buy a doe just because of what is on the registration paper. We expect our does to work for a living. All does run on pasture, get a small amount of goat feed in the evening and coastal hay. We are trying to breed for does who carry such attributes as hardiness, big correct conformation, good clean utters, good milk production & good mothering abilities.

5. WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR YOUNG PRODUCERS GETTING INTO THE BOER GOAT INDUSTRY?

To look at the goat and not the registration paper first. A doe or buck with correct conformation will always give you a great kid no matter what is on the registration papers. A doe with bad udder, steep hip, or weak pasterns will not give you great kids no matter how good the papers are.

To learn more Rambo Ranch, please visit www.ramboranch.com