

part one

A dairy goat paradise

by Ann Morgan

Amanda and Lindsey Goodman live on their 300 hectare rolling to flat family farm that is home to their beef, sheep and herd of dairy goats.



They have three children, Emily, Sam, and Phoebe. Amanda's parents David and Wendy Fairbrother also live on the property which they originally purchased some 40 years ago.

"When I was 9-10 years old mum and dad were primarily sheep and beef farmers and in the 1980s during the mohair boom, they embarked on having Angora goats that they imported from

Australia. Sheds were built and the necessary equipment was brought in to farm them.

"They acquired a lot of goat husbandry skills but when the mohair industry declined they got out of having goats, but the infrastructure was still here." It was her passion for goats and childhood memories that got Amanda interested in farming her own goats in recent years.



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The Goodman family are continuing Amanda's childhood passion for goats with their dairy herd

Amanda married Lindsey and he worked the family farm. Eventually David and Wendy built a retirement home on the property and the Goodman's moved into the family home.

"There was a long period of time of no goats — we had three children and I thought I might get a couple of goats. I went through the process because the children are intolerant to cow's milk and got eczema and other issues. Goats were an obvious choice as they could drink the milk and a tin of goat milk formula was costing around \$50.

"We had a few goats but no one else was breeding in the Wairarapa so we were winging it in our own way but mum and dad's knowledge was a huge help. I joined the NZ Dairy Goats Association and we went up to Waikato and brought back a bunch of four-day-old kids and reared them. This increased the herd quite a bit."

The herd are free range but have access to big sheds. They are like a weather forecast — they head to their shed when the rain is coming. "You have to ensure fencing is up to scratch.



Every goat has its own a unique personality

Initially the fencing around our house wasn't good enough and they got in and ate the garden before we learnt the lesson of keeping them securely contained," says Amanda.

"They have open pasture of clovers, wild plantain and grasses. The goat paddocks are kept as natural as possible."

The couple use Agrisea concentrates on the grazing and feed production paddocks on the farm. The company produces soil, foliar, turf, pasture and animal health concentrates for agriculture and horticulture.

"We use seaweed and lime on our goat pasture. Lindsey has been excited to watch the trials we have done and it has been interesting watching the worm activity."

"We put in grasses for baleage and fresh hay specifically for the goats. They have baleage twice a day and constant access to the hay feeders. Whilst they are being milked, they have a special goat mix made up with seeds, grains, cereal and molasses."

"They have a daily dose of a special cider vinegar and seaweed and that has proven to be very beneficial. They have



Goats are known to be very social and are often seen playing together

lick blocks and we add epsom salts to their water."

The couple primarily have Saanen goats due to the quantity of milk they produce.

"We have added Nubians now as their milk is higher in fat content which is fantastic for making cheese and we have a few Toggenburg and British Alpine."

"Goats have lots of personality. A couple were premature, Gracie and Willow, and we had to bring them. They are just as intelligent as having a pet dog. They are loving animals and absolute characters. One night at 3am, Gracie got out of her pen, out of the garden, through the cat door — found our bed and jumped all over us."

"The herds have a 'queen bee' — herd leader and they come into the

shed in the same order each day. We now have 150 goats all up. One of the challenges is the little boy kids, we rear them as we can't bear to get rid of them. This is not very financial but we pass them on."

They were originally going to sell the goat herd, but when they were ready to milk, the family had become completely attached to the animals.

"To keep them we needed to find something to do with the milk to justify it. Living in Martinborough, the land of great wine, we decided to bring goat cheese to the region."

Amanda says it took a lot of research and paperwork for MPI to legally be able to sell the cheese.

Read part two of the story in next month's Wairarapa Farming Lifestyles.

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