

# The Story of Honey Girl

*by Cathie*

It all started one late summer day at a sale in Talpa, Texas. John and I had gone there with the firm intention of buying only yearling Kaptein daughters. We had resolved not even to consider buying a kid. Then we walked past a pen with nanny kids in it on our way to study the yearlings. One little yellow-headed nanny with a black spot on the end of her tail caught our eye, and we watched as she walked quietly up the hillside intent on her own business.

"Who is that nanny kid?" we asked Don Smith. He had to look her up and found that she was selling at place #155 in the sale. The fact he didn't know her and the fact that he had put her so far down in the catalog told us immediately that he didn't consider her important. His opinion of the goat would usually have influenced us to some extent, but not this time. Again and again we found ourselves drifting back over there to study 8B 77. She was a very well-built young goat. You could see that she had muscle on her back end down her hind leg to the hock; her loin was long; she was wide.

Physically she was as perfect as we could find, but that wasn't all. She had that certain *Je ne sais quoi*. Somehow you could just tell that she was entirely self-sufficient, not dependent on any other kid in there for company. Maybe it was her quiet little personality, her serene ability to sail around among all the other goats and make her own decisions that added the extra charm which we found irresistible. At any rate we decided we absolutely had to buy that kid. A little yellow-headed nanny with a black spot on her tail listed at the back of the catalog would sell really cheap.

But it was our secret. We sat down in our chairs with a smug feeling; we knew we were the only ones who recognized the true worth of #155.

Just to be sure that we were holding back enough money we only bought two Kaptein yearlings instead of buying four or five. All through those hours while the other 152 goats sold we sat there waiting. The auctioneer would say "two thousand, two thousand" then drop back finally to \$800 before the bidding would start. The goats were selling for something like \$1200 or less by the time they got down to the 150's.

I insisted on doing the bidding because John might hesitate too long and lose the goat. At last our little yellow-headed nanny strolled out onto the stage. We were amazed to find out that our secret discovery was the favorite goat of a big number of other buyers. That time when the auctioneer started at \$2000 a bid came instantly and the price jumped a thousand dollars at a time to \$6000 before John brought me out of my dumbfounded daze by jabbing me in the ribs with his elbow and muttering, "Buy her!"

It took \$10,000 to get 8B 77, but we took her home with us. When we found out who the numerous other bidders had been and which ones had held out until the very last we were re-assured that our judgment had been good.

So certain were we about the worth of our pale little darling we paid her the ultimate compliment by naming her "Honey Girl" after my precious mother. Through the years Honey Girl's value to our breeding program far exceeded anything we could have ever predicted. And always we enjoyed the bonus of that calm, self-sufficient little personality. No cuddling and no hysterics. Just a quiet co-operative, affectionate partnership that gave us great pleasure. We could always depend on Honey Girl for her special magic.



This picture taken the day after the sale appeared on the cover of a meat goat magazine because Honey Girl was the high-selling goat in that sale.

Honey Girl was a homebody who preferred to stay in her own stamping grounds. She did not like to travel or to be in strange places around people she did not know.



Honey Girl would do whatever we requested because she was basically a very civilized goat. She would go to shows and parade through the ring if we insisted, but she hated it so much it would cause her to break out in a rash when she was young. She hated to leave home and did not want to be in a crowd of strangers. The only time I ever saw Honey Girl lose her temper was at a show after I had misunderstood the announcement of the class and had taken her to stand outside the ring for a miserably long time.

We finally decided she should not be forced to do what made her unhappy so we quit showing her. When it came right down to it she was The Most Important Person in our operation so it only seemed fair that she should cast the decisive vote.



Three times she and her daughters won medallions at the same show. Twice her son Alazan also won a medallion at the same show she did. The only Honey Girl daughter we ever continued to maintain as a show goat was Crystaldew who won Grand or Reserve Grand several times.



The ribbons in this display were won by Honey Girl and her children at the last show she ever entered.



Her descendants won these ribbons on the day Honey Girl died.

Honey Girl was the mother and grandmother of so many goats it would take an entire website to display them. The only daughters we ever let go before we sold most of our goats last fall were three of the first ones. Soon we realized how important they were to us and kept all the rest.



She was very good at producing a large number of embryos that managed to hang on until the recipient mother gave birth which meant that many of her kids never knew she was their mother.

The babies born to her personally were mostly billies so very few nanny kids had the honor of cuddling up to their very own Mama Honey Girl. Snowspark was one of the lucky ones who loved her Mommy even when she was a big old goat herself.



We liked and used several Honey Girl sons, but Alazan was our main sire. Good, faithful, dependable. His disposition was like his mother's with an extra touch of gentlemanly courtesy. He would always pose for one more picture even though it was hot and he was tired because he knew we depended on him to be the leader. To use Alazan guaranteed good kids.



Truly only once in a Blue Moon does a rancher have a chance to work with such a special animal as Honey Girl. Because we realized how valuable she was years ago we had embryos made up from her tissue so that we could attempt to produce a clone if we ever decided to. We have no plans to pursue that possibility, but feel that if ever one of our goats deserved to be duplicated it would be Honey Girl.