

CHANGES IN THE BREED STRUCTURE AND NUMBER OF GOATS UNDER PERFORMANCE TESTING IN POLAND IN THE YEARS 1983–2024

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Abstract

The aim of the study was to analyse changes in the breed structure and number of goats under performance testing in Poland in the years 1983–2024. The study was based on data published by the Central Animal Breeding Station and the Polish Sheep Breeders Association. The analysis showed that both the total number of goats in Poland and the active population subject to performance testing fluctuated considerably during the study period, reflecting changing economic and organisational conditions of goat breeding in Poland. Interest in performance testing peaked in the first half of the 1990s, while sharp declines in the number of tested animals occurred after 1995 and after 2007, when subsidies from the Biological Progress Fund were abolished. The analysed period was characterised by substantial changes in the breed structure of the tested population – from the dominance of White Improved and Fawn Improved goats in the 1990s to a marked increase in the share of the Carpathian breed during the last decade. At present, performance testing is conducted mainly in Carpathian goats included in the Genetic Resources Conservation Programme, indicating the growing importance of biodiversity conservation and financial support in shaping goat breeding in Poland.

Keywords: breeding, goats, performance testing, breed structure, native breeds

Introduction

Goat breeding in Poland has never been a major branch of animal production; the predominantly lowland character of the country favoured cattle and sheep farming. In addition, numerous negative associations with goats effectively discouraged their widespread keeping. Benedykt Chmielowski, in *Nowe Ateny*, one of the first Polish general encyclopaedias, described the goat as a “stinking kind of animal” and associated it in Scripture with sinners and the condemned. Newspapers from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, while attempting to improve the goat’s social image, quoted various expressions used for these animals, including “the poor man’s cow”, “the Jewish cow”, and even “Jewish cattle” (Siedlecka, 1899). The limited prevalence of goat keeping in the Polish lands is illustrated by data from 1900: among the 17 countries represented in the Austrian Imperial Council, there were 37.3 goats per 1,000 inhabitants in Silesia

and only 2.5 in Galicia, compared with 65.1 in neighbouring Moravia and as many as 322.8 in Dalmatia (Bojanowski, 1909).

Goat breeding was largely associated with particular regions of the country (Silesia and foothill areas) and with specific demographic and social groups (industrial workers and Jewish communities). Globally and in Europe, dairy production is the dominant use of goats. According to FAOSTAT data, in 2018 Europe kept 17 million goats, including 9 million dairy goats, and produced 2.54 million tonnes of goat milk, accounting for 16.6% of world production (Pulina et al., 2018). In Poland, this sector is marginal in overall milk production: Eurostat data for 2021 indicate that goat and sheep milk together accounted for only 0.1% of total domestic milk production (Zuba-Ciszewska et al., 2023). Among goat products, processed dairy products are particularly popular with consumers, as indirectly indicated by the 21 goat-milk cheeses included on the List of Traditional Products (Kawęcka and Sikora, 2019). Poland has not developed a tradition of goat-meat consumption; consequently, intake remains very low. At the end of the first decade of the 21st century, the average Pole consumed only 0.04 kg of small-ruminant meat (goat and sheep meat combined) per year (Niedziółka, 2009).

The first attempts to conduct milk performance recording of goats in Poland date back to the interwar period. According to the report of the Silesian Chamber of Agriculture in Katowice for 1930/1931, performance-recording circles had 60 members and 100 animals were entered for testing, of which 58 animals in four circles – Rydułtowy, Giszowiec, Załęże and Ruda Śląska – were ultimately included in the calculations (Report of the Silesian Chamber of Agriculture in Katowice for 1930/1931).

Unlike other types of large livestock, the goat population was not devastated to the same extent during the Second World War. In 1939, the goat population was 420,000 (within the pre-war borders), whereas in 1946 it reached 610,000, including 426,000 in the former territories and 184,000 in the Recovered Territories. The relatively small losses were attributed to the low slaughter value of goats and the ease with which they could be hidden (Krf, 1947).

During the period of the Polish People's Republic, the authorities' attitude towards goats changed considerably: breeding was promoted in the 1950s, the goat was removed from the list of farm animal species in the 1970s, and interest was revived in the 1980s as goats came to be viewed as a source of healthy, high-quality products. In 1983, after a long interruption, reproductive and milk performance testing resumed, initially in the Opole region, where the largest goat population in the country had survived, and from 1987 also in the then Poznań Province (Dakowy Mokre Agricultural Production Cooperative). After the fashion for goat breeding observed in the final decade of the 20th century, interest in this branch of animal production slowed somewhat. In recent years, however, conservation breeds of general-purpose type – Carpathian, Sandomierska and Kazimierzowska goats – have become increasingly popular. Breeders participating in the Genetic Resources Conservation Programme are eligible for a payment under the 2023–2027 Strategic Plan for the Common Agricultural Policy, Intervention 6: Conservation of endangered animal genetic resources in agriculture, amounting to PLN 953 per animal. The milk or meat performance of these breeds is lower than that of specialised breeds such as Saanen or Boer goats, but this is compensated for by the high adaptability and good health of native goats. These breeds are particularly recommended for small and agritourism farms: their distinctive phenotype may increase the attractiveness of the farmstead, while their value to the breeding culture of the region is an additional asset.

One agricultural niche in which goat keeping is particularly popular is agritourism. According to the Report on Rural Tourism Supply after COVID-19 (Czerniec, 2023), animals kept as tourist attractions were present on fewer than half (45.7%) of the surveyed farms. Goats ranked fifth among the species indicated and were kept on almost one quarter (24.6%) of the agritourism farms participating in the study. Keeping goats also creates opportunities to use their milk and meat to produce foods that enrich the farm's catering offer.

One reason for the growing popularity of goat breeding in the 1990s was increased interest in so-called healthy and organic food. Today, however, the number of goats kept on organic farms and farms undergoing conversion is relatively small. In 2015, goats kept on organic farms accounted for 5.85% of the total national goat population (Łukiewska and Chrobocińska, 2023). Moreover, the number of goats on organic farms decreased between 2013 and 2018: the number of does fell from 2,971 to 2,433, i.e. to 81.9% of the initial value (Nachtman, 2021).

The aim of this study is to analyse changes in the breed structure and number of goats under performance testing in Poland in 1983–2024. These data illustrate changes occurring in only a small fraction of the population, since most goats in Poland were not performance tested. The study uses data on the number of animals covered by performance testing published during this period by the Central Animal Breeding Station and the Polish Sheep Breeders Association.

Changes in the number of goats in Poland and under performance testing

The goat population in Poland has been declining steadily, although recent years have brought a slight increase in the number of animals kept. According to Statistics Poland (GUS), there were 57.3 thousand goats in Poland in 2023, 54.1 thousand in 2020, 107.2 thousand in 2010, 193.3 thousand in 2002, and 107.8 thousand in 1996 (Fig. 1).

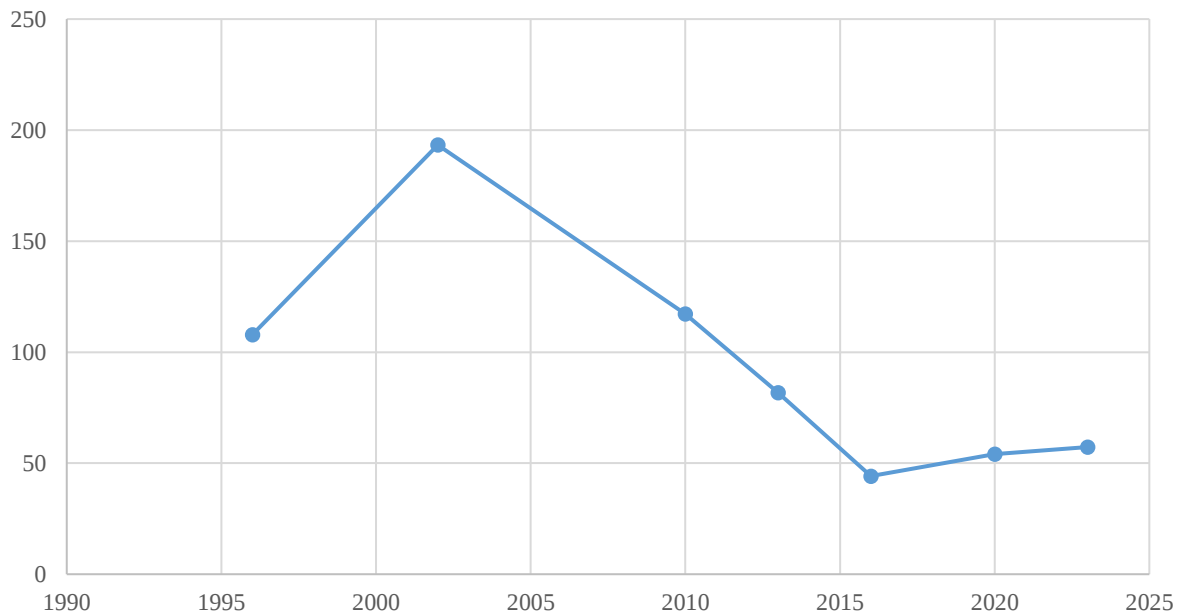


Fig. 1. Number of goats in Poland (in thousands) in selected years

The active population, i.e. animals subject to performance testing, represents only a very small fraction of the total population. Interest in goat performance testing peaked in the 1990s and the first decade of the 21st century. In the peak year, 1995, 5,068 animals were tested. The largest decline in the tested population occurred in the mid-2000s: between 2006 and 2007 the tested population decreased by 73%. The smallest number of animals was tested in 2015 – 145 goats (Fig. 2).

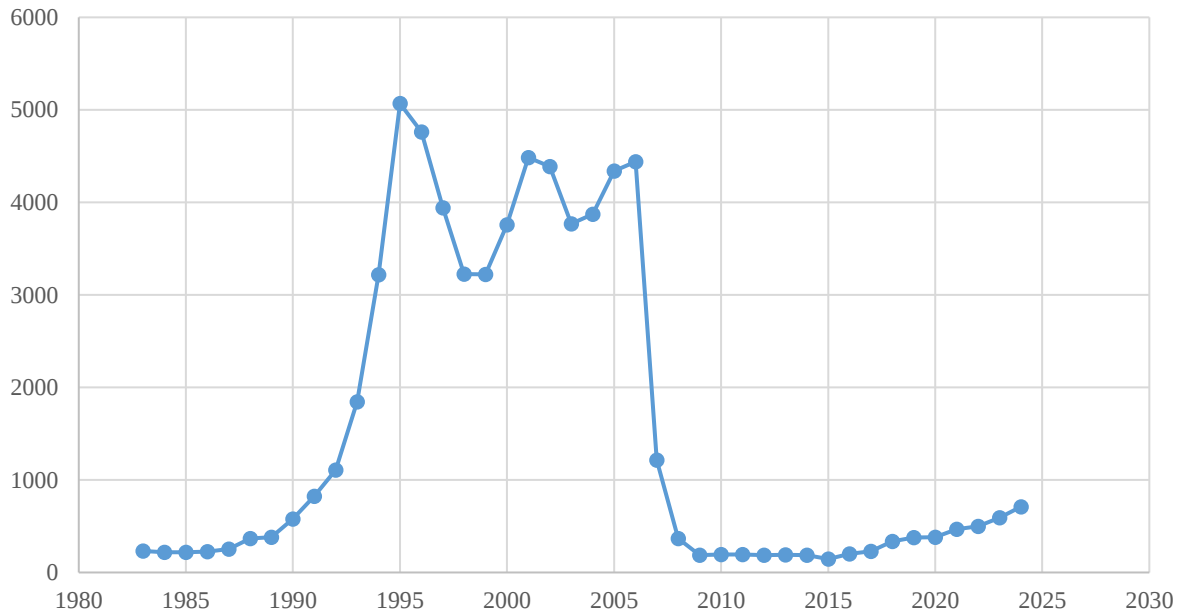


Fig. 2. Number of goats under performance testing

The number of goats covered by performance testing increased steadily until 1995, after which the first major declines occurred. One cause was undoubtedly the milk-borne tick-borne encephalitis outbreak in Busko-Zdrój at the turn of May and June 1995. A total of 48 people were included in the epidemiological investigation and 15 developed symptoms of neuroinfection (Matuszczyk et al., 1997). The event was reported in the main news programme of a nationwide television station, which discouraged consumers from drinking goat milk and led to a substantial decline in breeding profitability, herd closures and the disappearance of milk collection points. Contemporary press accounts by farmers show the dramatic impact of the event on goat breeding in Poland and the mood among people involved in the sector. Reports stated that the “tick scandal” had devastated goat breeding and that goat-milk processing and larger herds in the Żywiec region had declined (“Wieści z Gmin Żywiecczyzny”, no. 2, 1997). Another report quoted veterinarian Daniel Wierzbinka as considering the milk controversy exaggerated and suggesting that excessive attention to ticks might serve the marketing interests of Western companies selling protective products (Leszek Obuchowski, “Kronika Beskidzka”, no. 28, 1995).

Despite reassuring and sometimes even dismissive media messages concerning the risks associated with raw milk consumption, goat breeding in Poland never returned to its pre-1995 level. Milk-borne tick-borne encephalitis outbreaks, although on a smaller scale than the Busko-Zdrój event, still occur in Poland and remain associated primarily with goat-milk consumption. Of the five milk-borne outbreaks described in the medical literature in Poland, only the first, in 1974, involved cow milk; the remaining outbreaks, in 1995 (Kielce Province), 1996 (Wrocław Province), 2017 (Podlaskie Province) and 2022 (Lubelskie Province), were linked to goat-milk consumption (Król et al., 2019; Nagańska et al., 2023). Apart from the Busko-Zdrój outbreak, subsequent events attracted much less media attention and their impact on goat breeding can be regarded as marginal.

A further, even more dramatic decline in the number of animals under performance testing occurred after 2007. In this case, the cause was economic: direct animal subsidies from the Biological Progress Fund were abolished (Bagnicka et al., 2017).

Since 2015, a slow increase in the active population has been noticeable; however, this increase is partly driven by the requirement to conduct performance testing in Carpathian goat herds included in the Genetic Resources Conservation Programme.

Breed structure

In 1983–1989, animals under testing were classified by phenotype as white or coloured goats. This division applied only to animals undergoing milk performance testing (reproductive performance data include more animals but do not specify phenotype), and therefore these data were used in preparing the charts below. White goats clearly predominated throughout this period: their share exceeded 70% in every year and surpassed 90% in 1988. A clear upward trend can be seen for white goats (with a slight decline in 1989), whereas the number of coloured goats under testing exceeded 50 animals only twice – in 1985 (51 goats) and 1989 (52 goats) (Figs. 3 and 4).

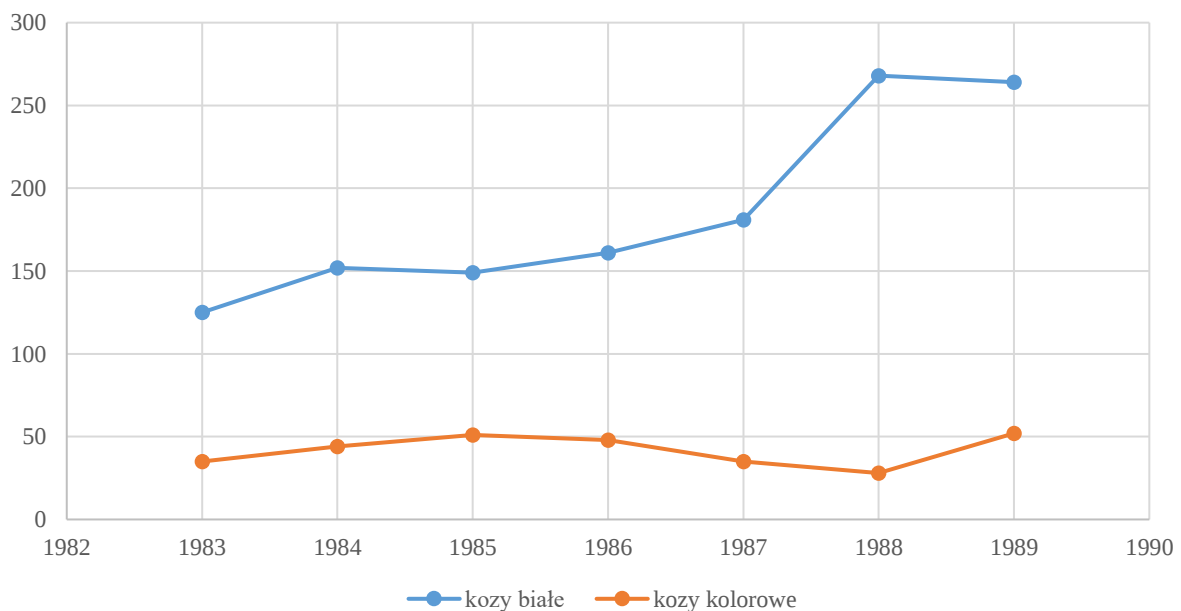


Fig. 3. Number of goats under milk performance testing in 1983–1989

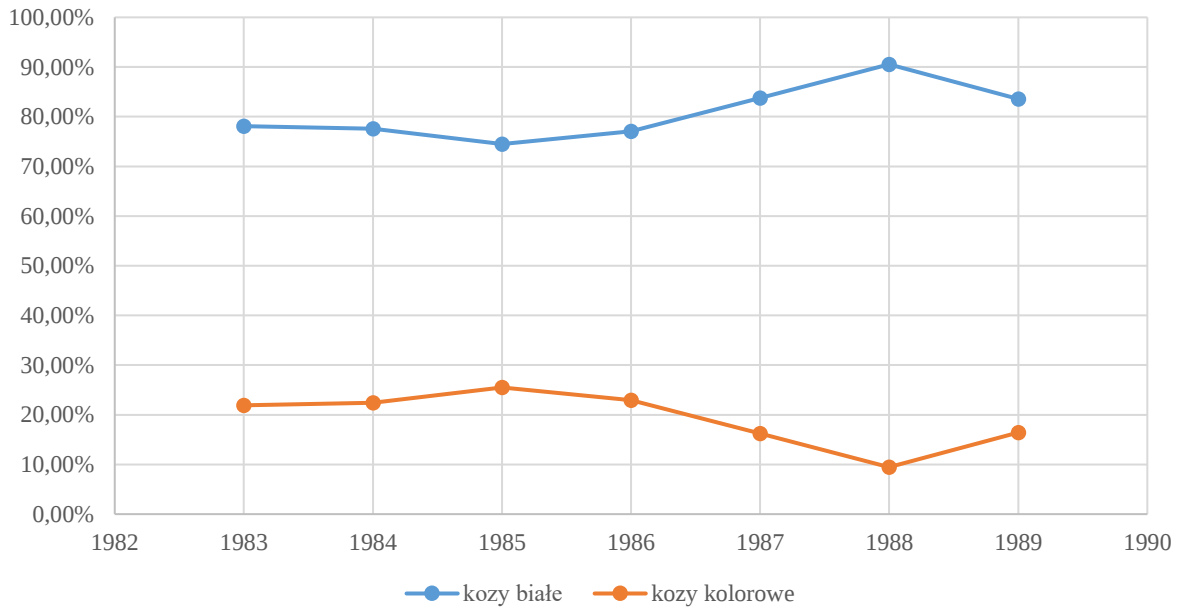


Fig. 4. Percentage of varieties in the population tested in 1983–1989

In 1990–1993, classification by colour variety was discontinued, while from 1994 tested animals began to be classified by breed. From that point onwards, reproductive, milk or meat performance testing was conducted in representatives of 15 goat breeds and varieties, including four types of crossbred goats and two types of non-pedigree goats classified by coat colour. The largest number of breeds/varieties was tested in 2006 – 11, including three crossbred types and two non-pedigree varieties – whereas from 2018 the number of breeds participating in testing declined. Since 2022, testing has been conducted for only three breeds: two under milk performance testing (Anglo-Nubian and Carpathian) and one under meat performance testing (Boer) (Fig. 5).

For milk and reproductive performance testing in 1994–2022, breeds were grouped by coat colour:

White breeds: White Improved, Saanen, Carpathian, non-pedigree white, and crosses: White Improved $\times$ Boer and White Improved $\times$ Anglo-Nubian.

Coloured breeds: Fawn Improved, Alpine, Toggenburg, Sandomierska, non-pedigree coloured, Anglo-Nubian, Boer, and crosses: Anglo-Nubian $\times$ Alpine and Anglo-Nubian $\times$ Saanen.

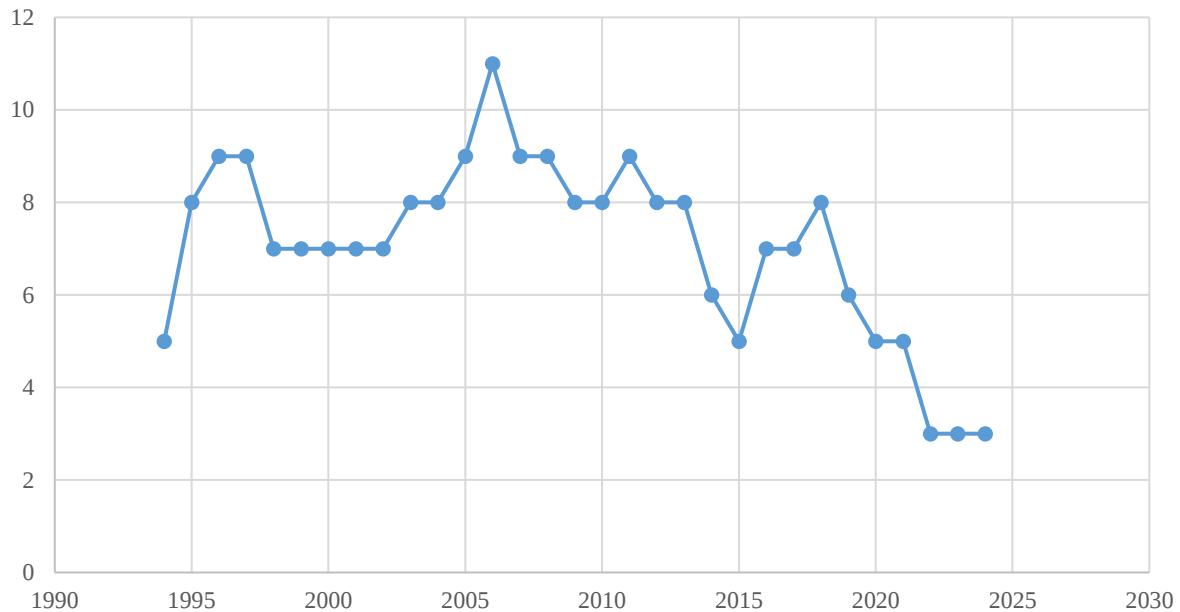


Fig. 5. Number of goat breeds/varieties tested in 1994–2024

During the first 13 years (1994–2007) of breed-specific performance testing, the White Improved goat was the dominant breed; in 2008, the Fawn Improved goat was dominant. In 2009–2016, Boer goats ranked first in the number of tested animals, and since 2017 this position has been continuously held by Carpathian goats. None of the breeds was tested in every year of the programme. White Improved and Fawn Improved goats were tested for the longest period – 24 years (1994–2018).

Breeds of Swiss and French origin

The Saanen goat is widely regarded as one of the breeds best suited to milk production. As its name suggests, it was developed in the valley of the Sarine River (German: Saanen) in the Swiss canton of Bern. It has a uniformly white coat; occasional coloured kids born in litters formed the basis for the Sable Saanen variety, recognised, among others, by the New Zealand Dairy Goat Breeders Association. Both horned and polled animals occur within the breed (Porter et al., 2016). Performance testing of this breed was conducted in 1994–2022. Reproductive and milk performance results for 2022 were published, but according to the Polish Sheep Breeders Association no animals of this breed were under testing that year; therefore, the charts include data only for 1994–2021. The largest number was tested in 2005, when 758 Saanen goats were recorded. The breed's largest share of the tested population occurred in 2003, when it accounted for 19.0% (716 animals). A sharp decline followed 2005, after which the number tested never exceeded 50 animals (33 in 2016). Owing to the small overall tested population, however, the breed's percentage share could still be relatively high – 16.5% in 2016 (Figs. 6 and 7).

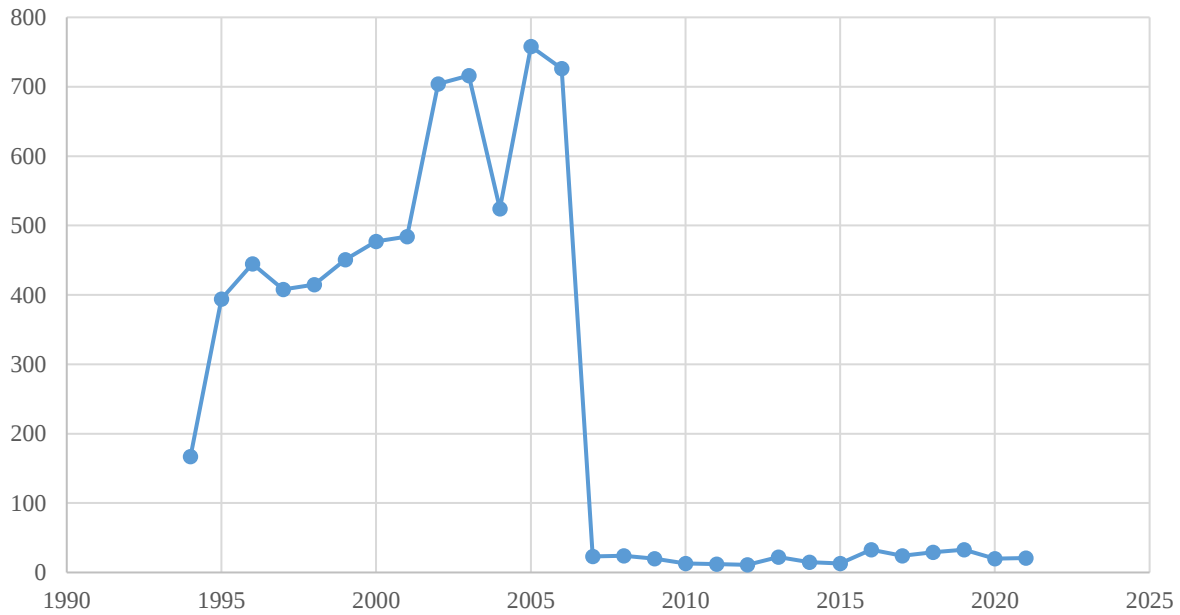


Fig. 6. Number of Saanen goats under performance testing

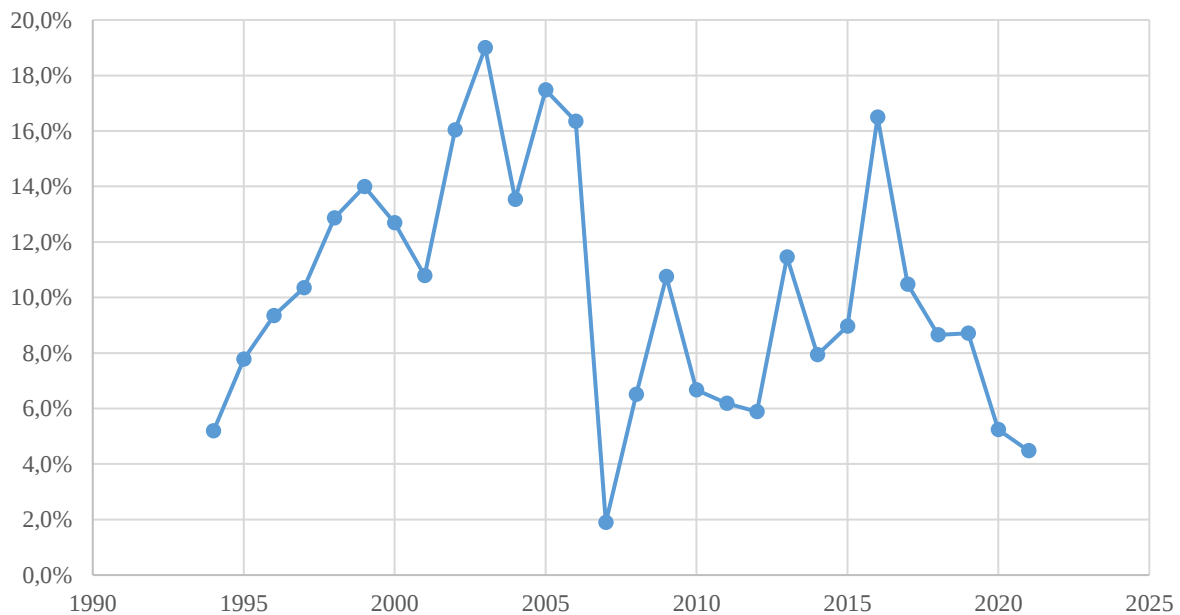


Fig. 7. Percentage of Saanen goats in the tested population

The Toggenburg goat is a Swiss dairy breed and is regarded as one of the best dairy breeds. The Swiss standard specifies milk production of at least 740 kg, with 3.56% fat and 2.90% protein, during a 220-day lactation (Schweizerischer Ziegenzuchtverband, 2022). Toggenburg goats were classified among coloured breeds because of their characteristic coat in various shades of brown with white markings on the head, ears, limbs and tail (Porter, 2016). Performance testing was conducted in 1995–1997; in 1994, 40 Toggenburg goats imported from the Netherlands were tested together with Fawn Improved goats. The breed's share of the total tested population never exceeded 2%. In the peak year, 1995, 91 animals were tested, representing 1.8% of the entire tested population (Fig. 8).

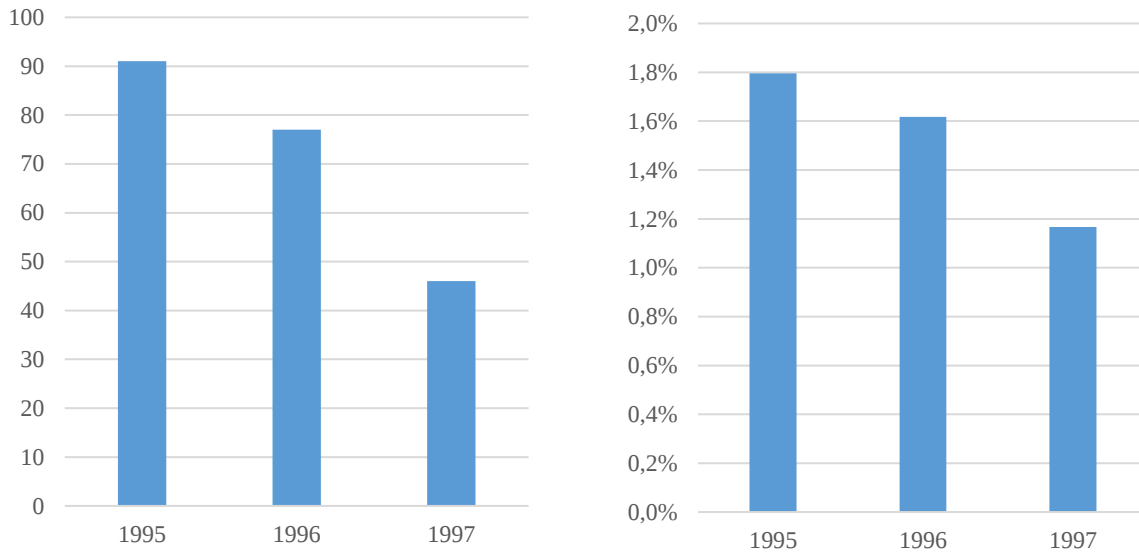


Fig. 8. Number of Toggenburg goats under performance testing and percentage of Toggenburg goats in the tested population

The native area of Alpine goats is the French Alps, although breeds of similar phenotype, such as the Swiss Gämsharbig Gebirgsziege, also occur in other parts of the region. The most typical coat is chamoisée: a background in various shades of brown with black markings, the most characteristic being a dorsal stripe. Their high milk yield and high milk fat and protein content make them popular among breeders focused on cheese and other dairy products (Simon and Buchenauer, 1993; Porter et al., 2016). Alpine goats were performance tested in 1994–2022, although after 2006 there were several years in which no animals of this breed were tested (2009, 2014–2015 and 2019). As with the Saanen breed, reproductive and milk performance results were published for 2022 even though the data indicated that no herd or animal was under performance testing; the charts therefore cover 1994–2021. The largest number of Alpine goats was tested in 2001 – 314 animals, representing 7% of the total tested population – while the highest percentage share occurred in 1999, when Alpine goats accounted for 8.1% (261 animals) (Figs. 9 and 10).

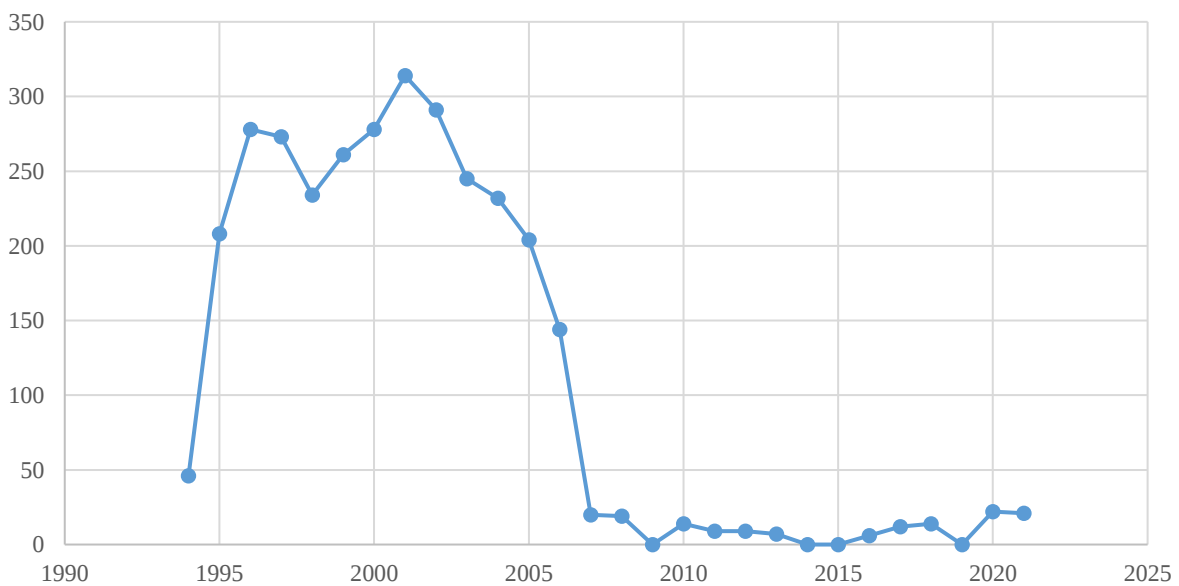


Fig. 9. Number of Alpine goats under performance testing

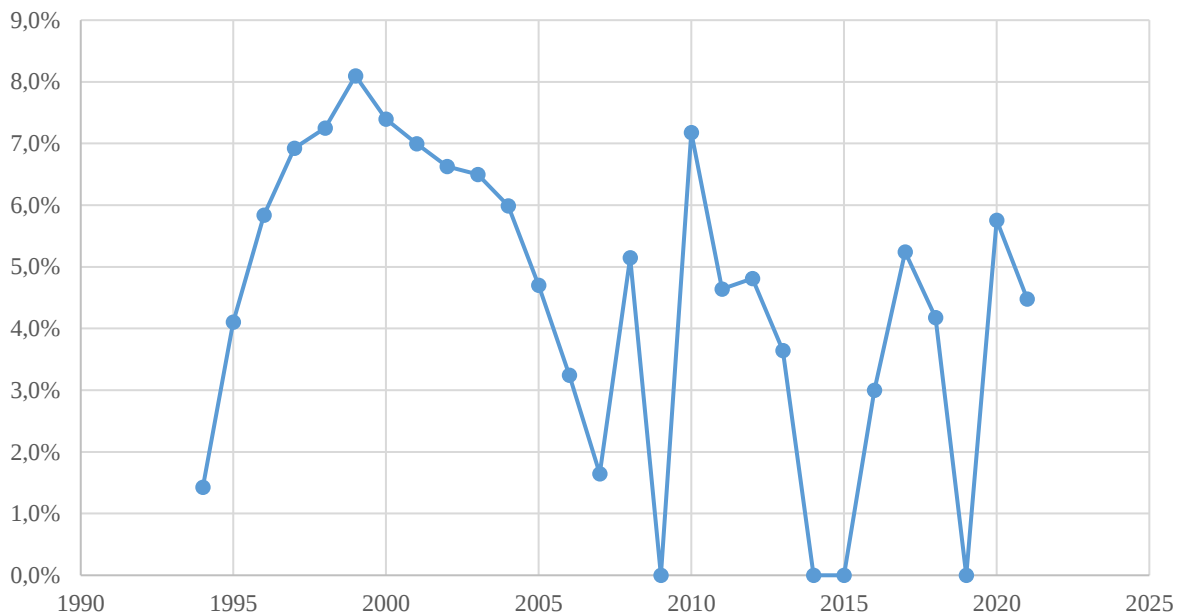


Fig. 10. Percentage of Alpine goats in the tested population

Other dairy breeds

Among the breeds kept in Poland, Anglo-Nubian goats are distinguished above all by the shape of the head: a Roman nose and long pendulous ears give the breed its characteristic appearance. The Anglo-Nubian was developed in the 19th century from native British goats and imported goats of Indian and North African origin, particularly Egyptian Zaraibi and Indian Jamnapari goats (Stemmer et al., 2009). The breed displays exceptionally diverse coat colours; striking patterns include moon spots (round spots differing in colour from the base coat) and frequent white roaning on the ears and around the muzzle. Anglo-Nubian goats have been performance tested since 2003, although no representatives were tested in 2005 or 2015. Alongside the Carpathian goat, this was the only breed whose tested population grew steadily over the last decade; however, in 2023–2024 the population declined relative to the breed's peak year of 2022, when 124 goats were tested, accounting for 24.8% of the total tested population. Since 2018, Anglo-Nubian goats have continuously represented more than 10% of the tested population (Figs. 11 and 12).

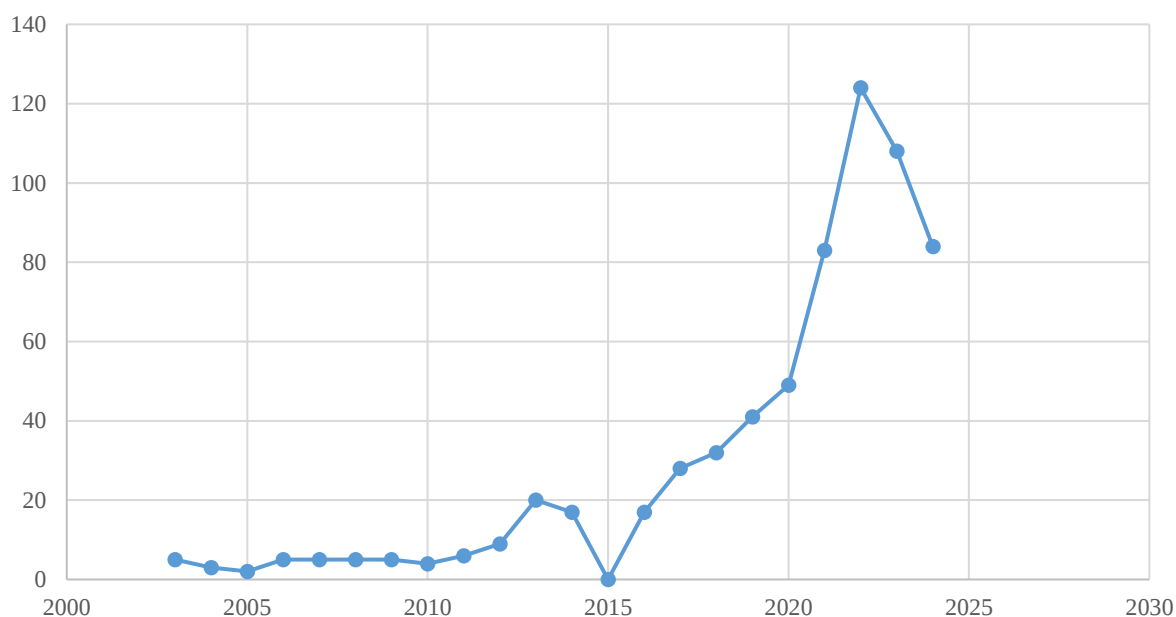


Fig. 11. Number of Anglo-Nubian goats under performance testing

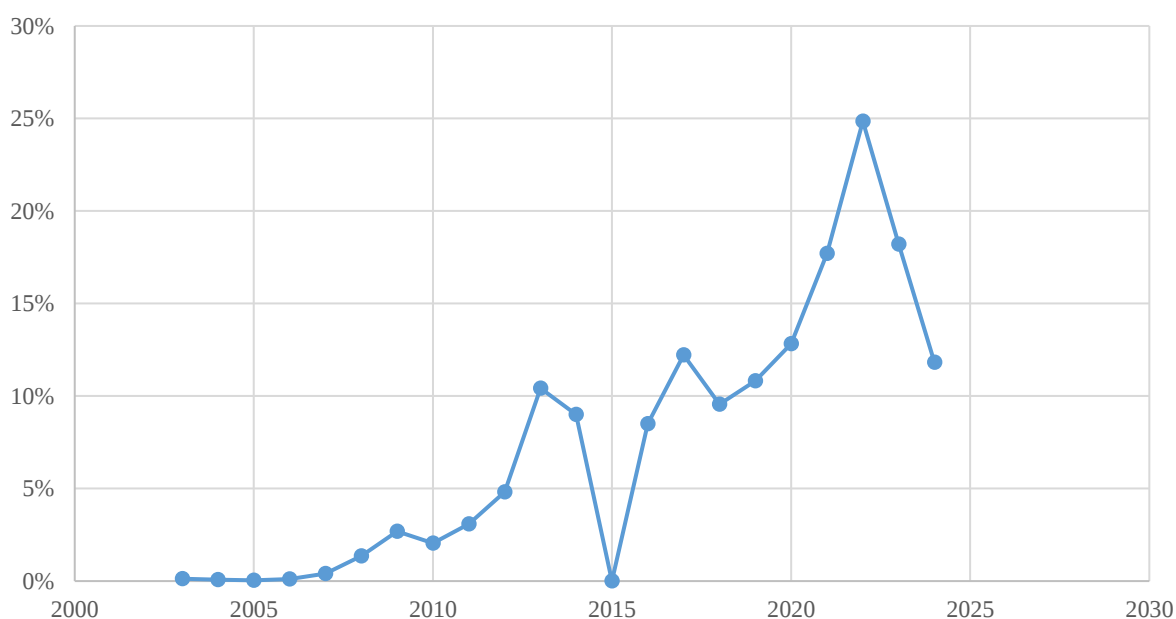


Fig. 12. Percentage of Anglo-Nubian goats in the tested population

Breeds of Polish origin

The White Improved goat is regarded as the most widespread goat breed in Poland. It was developed from local goats, Saanen goats and White German Improved goats from Germany and Czechoslovakia. It is the highest-yielding dairy breed developed in Poland and was kept mainly in Silesia and the Opole region (Tyszka, 1994). According to the Polish Sheep Breeders Association website, herdbook recording for this breed was discontinued in 2020.

White Improved goats were tested in 1994–2018 and were the most numerous breed under testing in 1994–2007. Moreover, in 1994–2002 they accounted for more than 50% of the tested population. In 1994, 58 Dutch White goats were also included among White Improved goats. The largest number was tested in 1995 – 3,671 females. The breed's percentage share of the population declined systematically from 1994 onwards: in that year it represented 82.9% of

the tested population (2,667 animals), whereas in the final year of testing, 2018, it accounted for only 0.6% (2 goats) (Figs. 13 and 14).

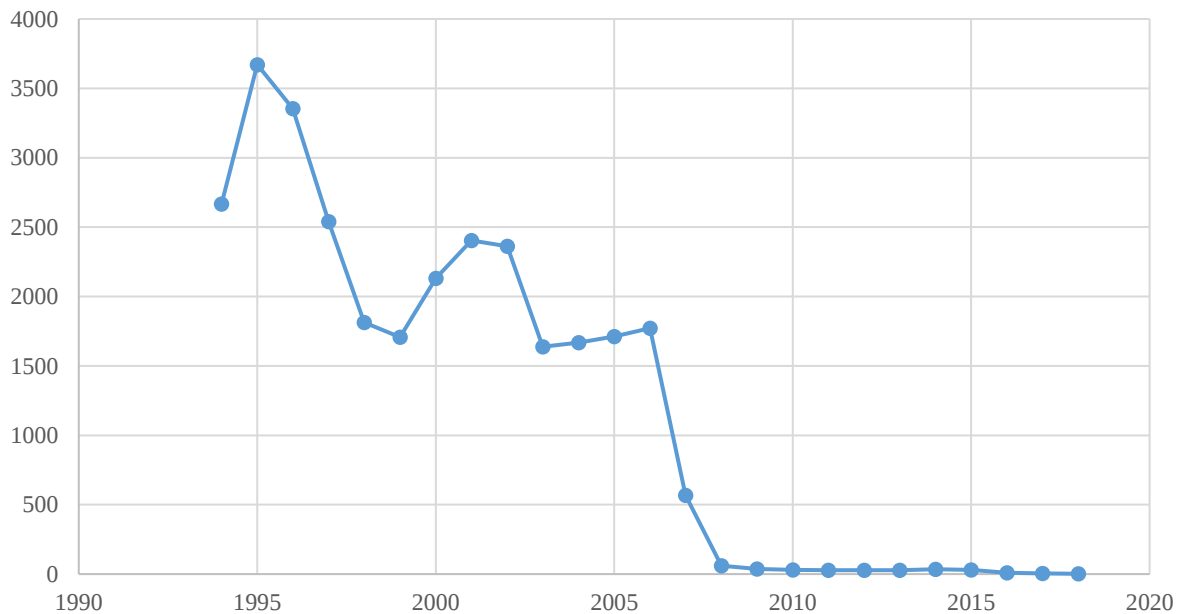


Fig. 13. Number of White Improved goats under performance testing

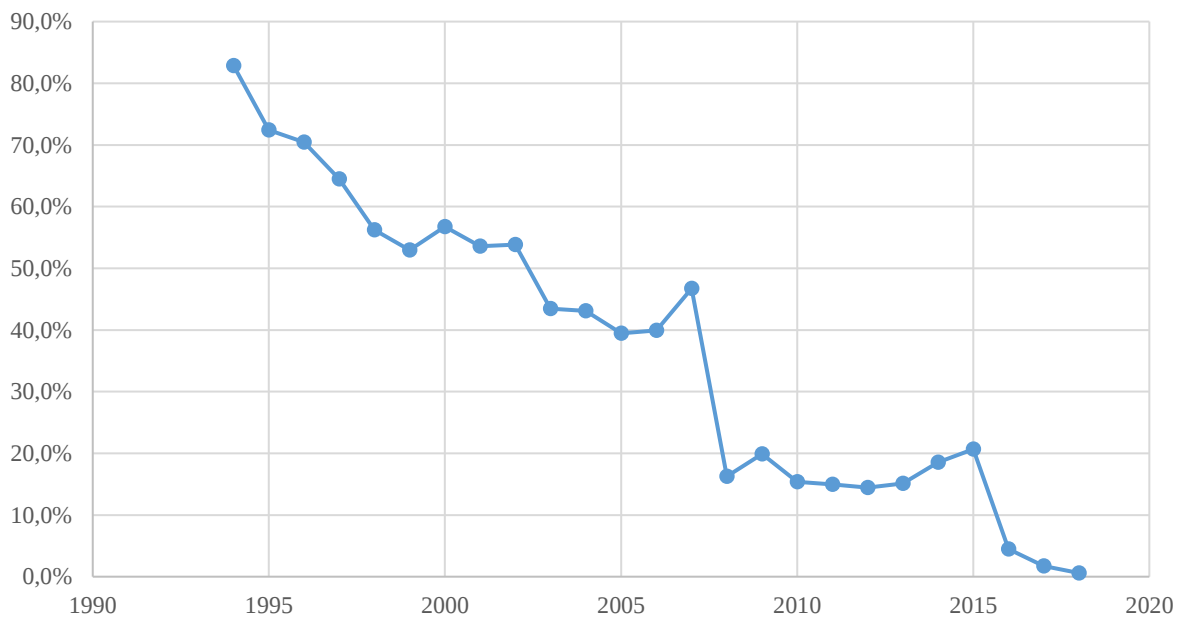


Fig. 14. Percentage of White Improved goats in the tested population

Fawn Improved goats originate from the German Fawn Improved breed (Bunte Deutsche Edelziege) and occurred mainly in the Opole Province. This is a typical dairy breed, although it produces less milk than its white counterpart. Its coat most often resembles the chamoisée pattern – brown with black markings (Kopański, 1985). As in the White Improved breed, herdbook recording was discontinued in 2020. Milk performance testing of Fawn Improved goats was conducted in 1994–2018. In 2008 it was the most numerous breed under testing, representing 36.3% of the tested population (134 animals). The largest number of females was tested in 2001 – 1,060 goats. The number under testing increased rapidly in 1994–2001, remained relatively stable for the next five years, and then fell dramatically after 2006 (Figs. 15 and 16).

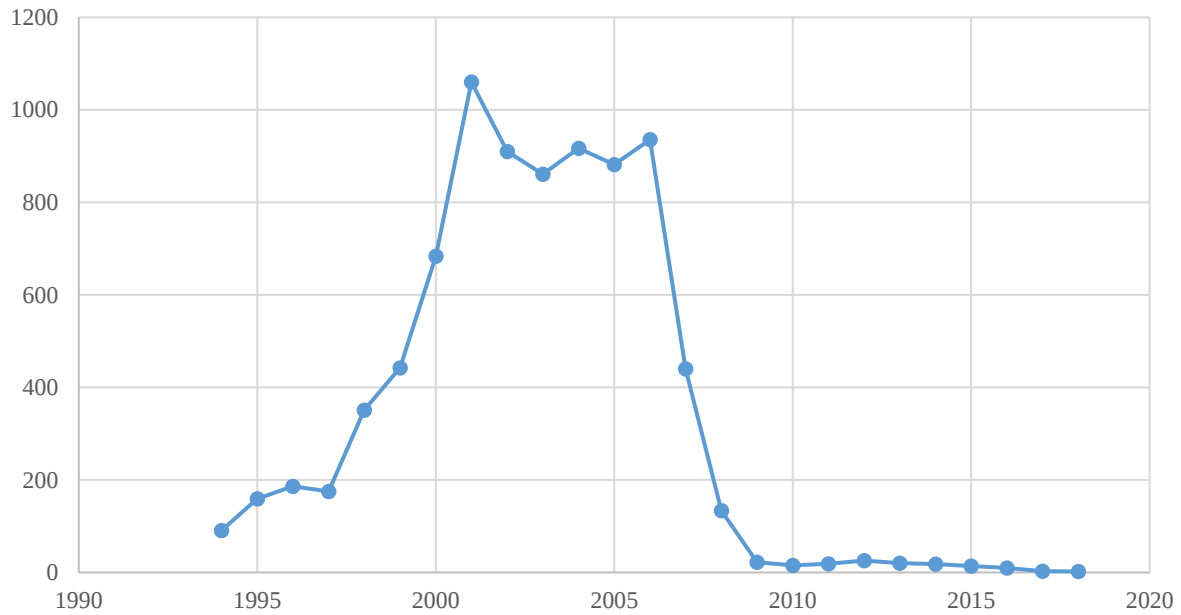


Fig. 15. Number of Fawn Improved goats under performance testing

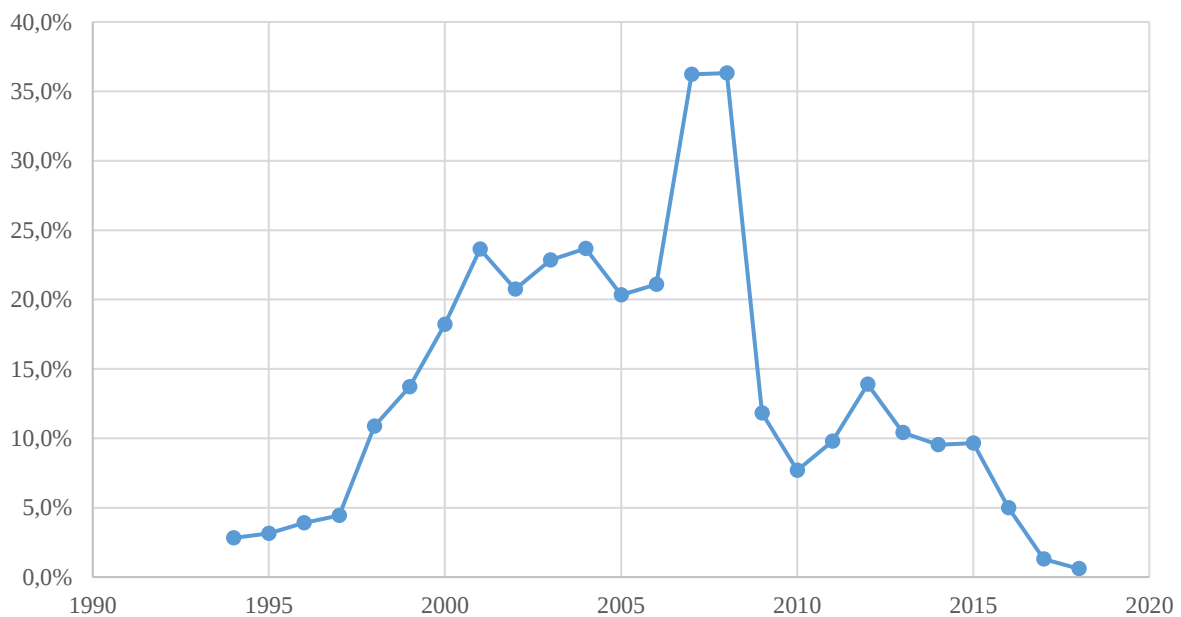


Fig. 16. Percentage of Fawn Improved goats in the tested population

Meat breeds

Boer goats were developed in the Republic of South Africa and are among the world's most popular meat breeds. In addition to typical meat-breed characteristics – strong muscling, a stocky build and a compact body on relatively short legs – they are distinguished by a convex-profiled head and characteristic colouring: the head is red, while the rest of the body and the often-present blaze on the forehead are white (Kawęcka and Pasternak, 2020). Performance testing has been conducted since 2007, when meat performance results were first published. In the breed's peak year, 2007, 137 goats were under testing, representing 11.28% of the tested population. In 2009–2016, Boer goats were the most numerous breed under testing; in 2010

they accounted for 50.3% of the entire tested population, corresponding to 98 animals (Figs. 17 and 18).

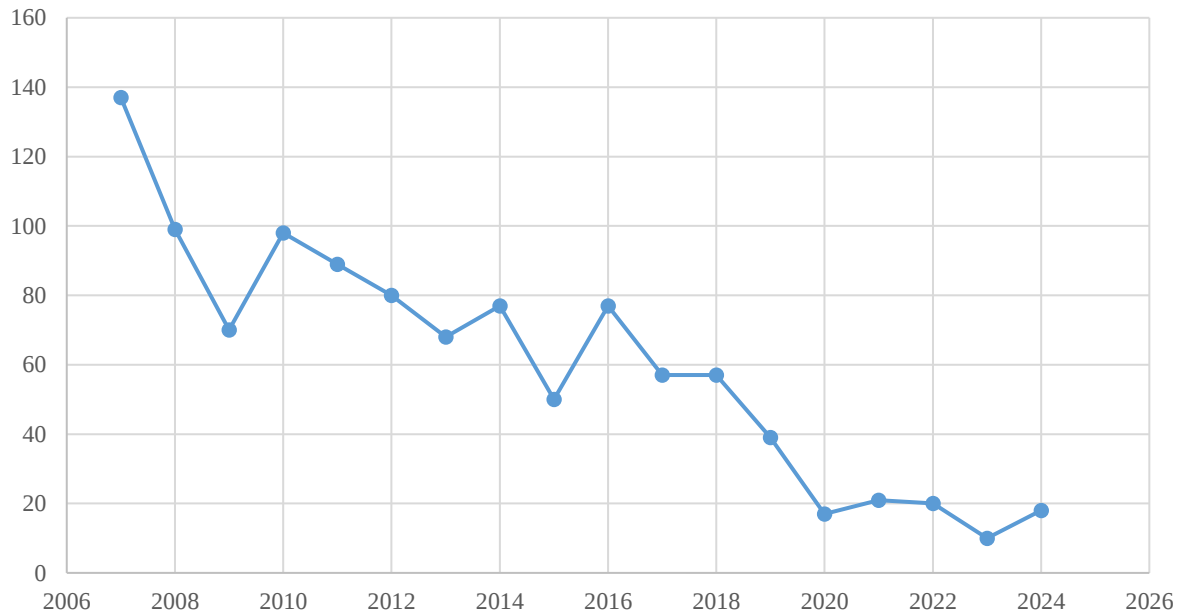


Fig. 17. Number of Boer goats under performance testing

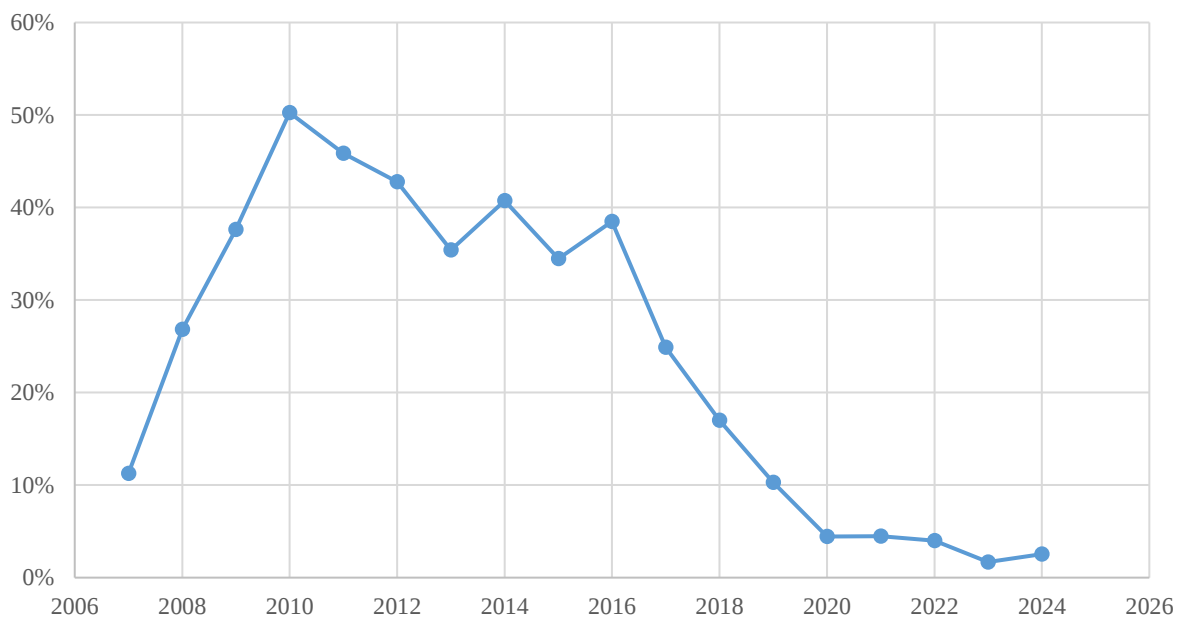


Fig. 18. Percentage of Boer goats in the tested population

Crossbreds and goats of mixed origin

Non-pedigree goats were classified phenotypically as white or coloured. Both their number and their share of the tested population fluctuated considerably. They were first tested in 1994 and last tested in 2013. The largest number of non-pedigree animals was recorded in 2006, when 841 goats were tested, representing 18.9% of the total population; 423 were white and 418 coloured (Figs. 19 and 20).

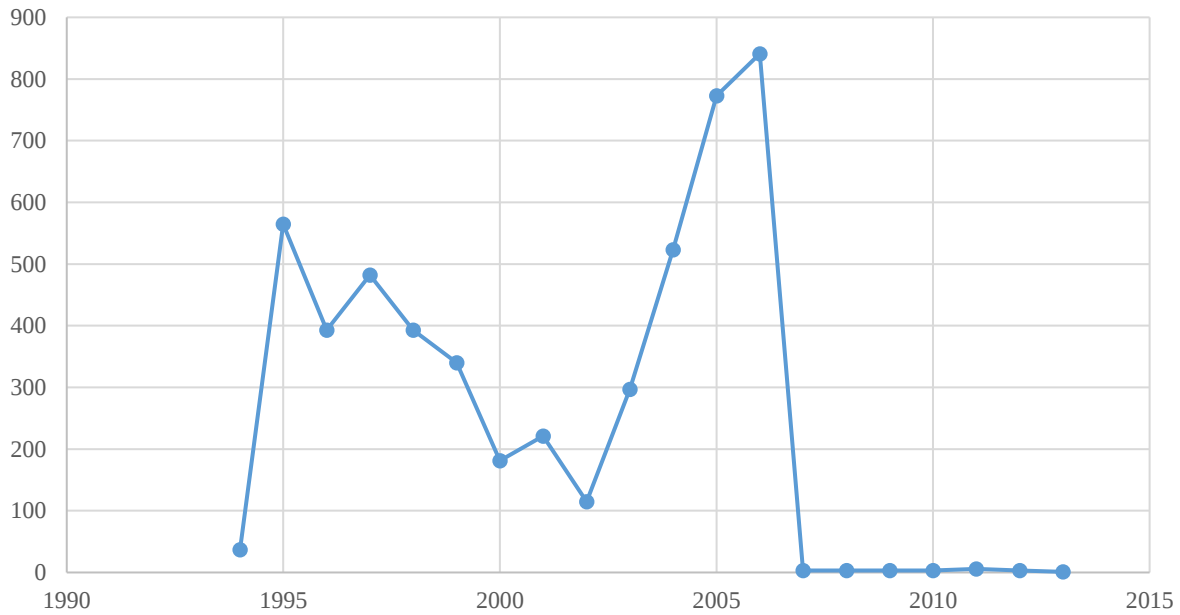


Fig. 19. Number of scrub goats (both varieties – white and fawn) under performance testing

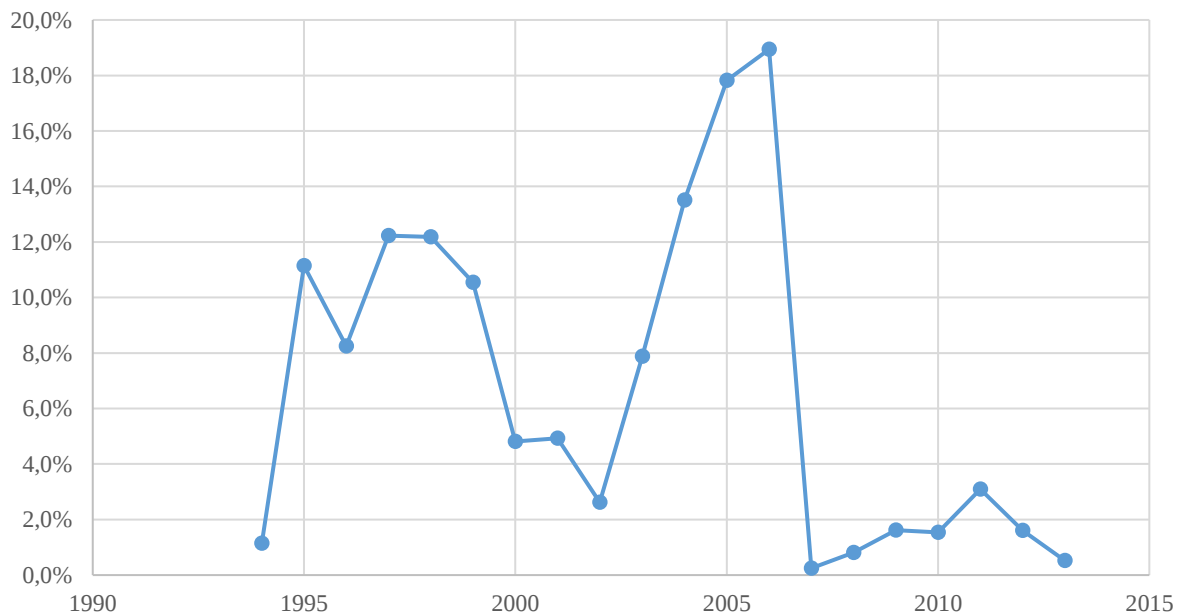


Fig. 20. Percentage of scrub goats (both varieties – white and fawn) in the tested population

Animals of mixed origin belonging to four groups were performance tested in 1996–2008:

- • White Improved × Anglo-Nubian goats – in 1996–1997;
- • White Improved × Boer goats – in 1996–2008;
- • Anglo-Nubian × Saanen goats – in 1995 and 2005–2006;
- • Anglo-Nubian × Alpine goats – in 2006.

Interestingly, Boer crossbreds were tested more than a decade before purebred Boer goats. A similar situation occurred with Anglo-Nubian goats: their crossbreds were already tested in 1995, eight years before purebred Anglo-Nubians. White Improved × Boer crosses remained under testing for the longest period – a total of 12 years.

The largest number of goats of mixed origin was tested in 1995 – 30 Anglo-Nubian × Saanen crossbreds. The share of this group never exceeded 3.5% of the total tested population. At its peak in 2008, crossbred goats accounted for 3.3% of the tested population (12 White Improved × Boer crossbreds) (Figs. 21 and 22).

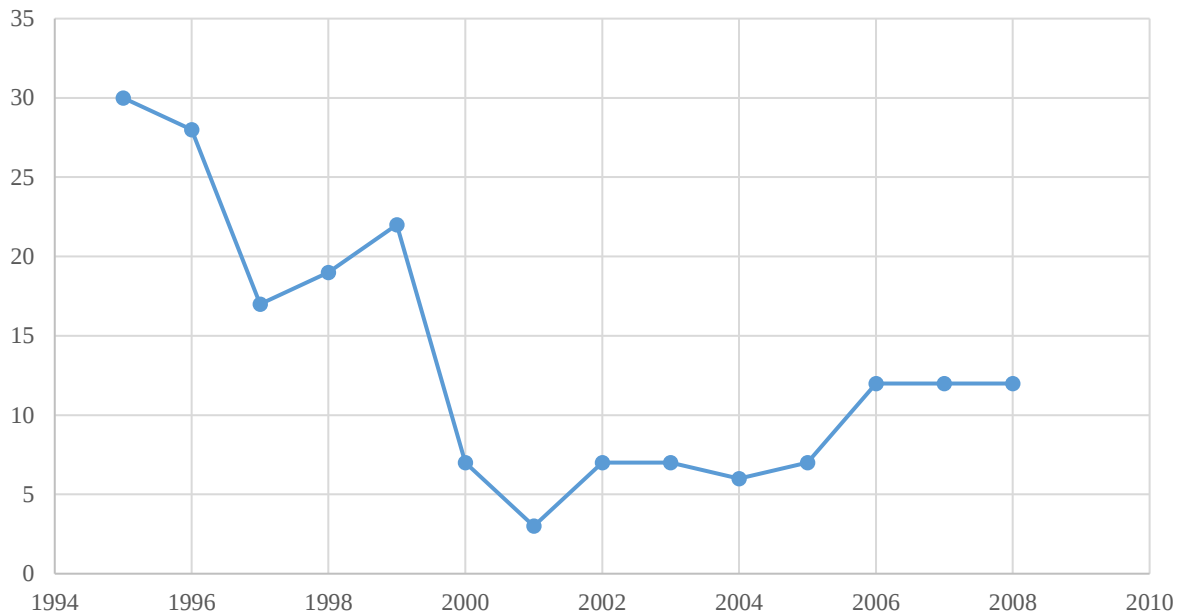


Fig. 21. Number of goats of mixed origin (all crossbreds included) under performance testing

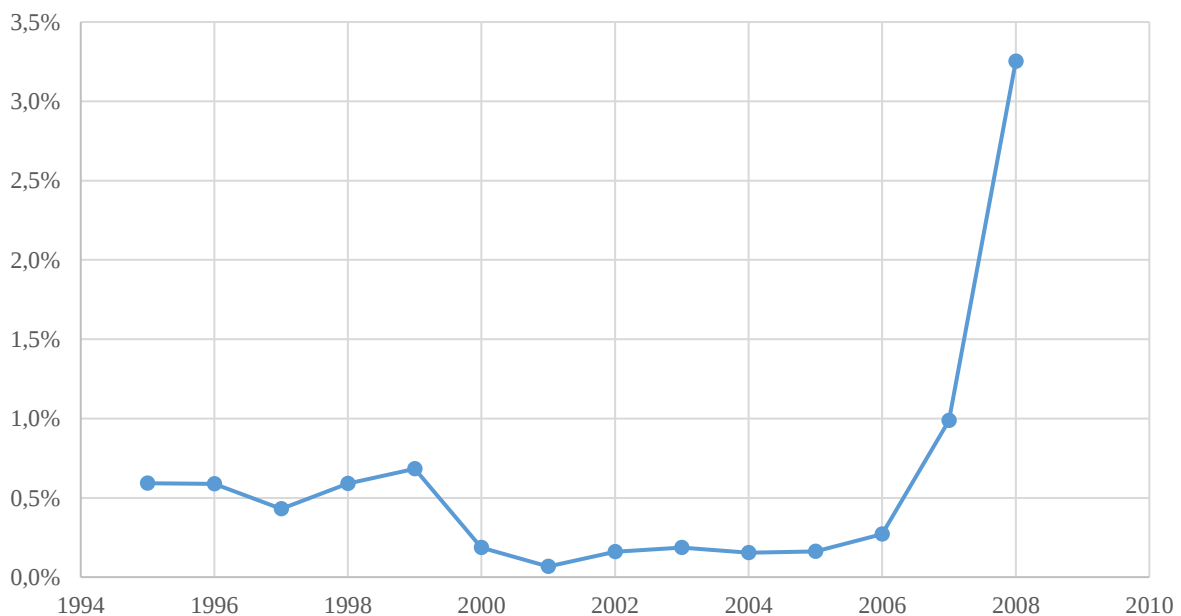


Fig. 22. Percentage of goats of mixed origin (all crossbreds included) in the tested population

Native breeds included in the Genetic Resources Conservation Programme

The Carpathian goat was the first native breed for which a restoration programme was undertaken. The process began in 2005 and culminated in 2015 with the reconstructed breed being included in the Genetic Resources Conservation Programme. It is a primitive mountain breed characterised by a uniformly white coat, long hair and horns in both sexes (Kawęcka, 2023).

A breeder wishing to join the Genetic Resources Conservation Programme is required to conduct performance recording in the herd. Some discrepancies between the number of goats participating in the programme and the number under performance testing can be explained by a procedural inconsistency: until 2025, participation in the Conservation Programme required at least three does, whereas some regional sheep and goat breeders' associations began performance recording only in herds with at least five goats. Since 2025, this has changed and breeders wishing to participate in the Programme must keep at least five does (Fig. 25). Milk performance testing of this breed has been conducted in Poland since 2006, and since 2017 it has continuously been the most numerous breed under testing. In 2024, 609 Carpathian goats were tested, representing 85.7% of the tested population. Since 2018, Carpathian goats have continuously accounted for more than 50% of all goats under testing (Figs. 23 and 24).

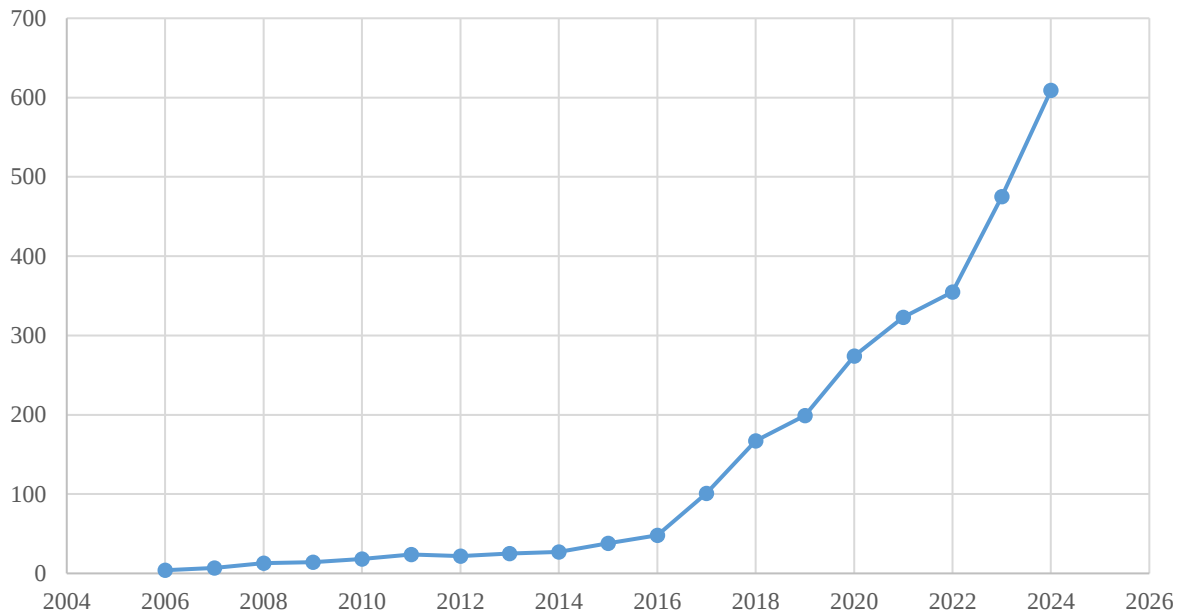


Fig. 23. Number of Carpathian goats under performance testing

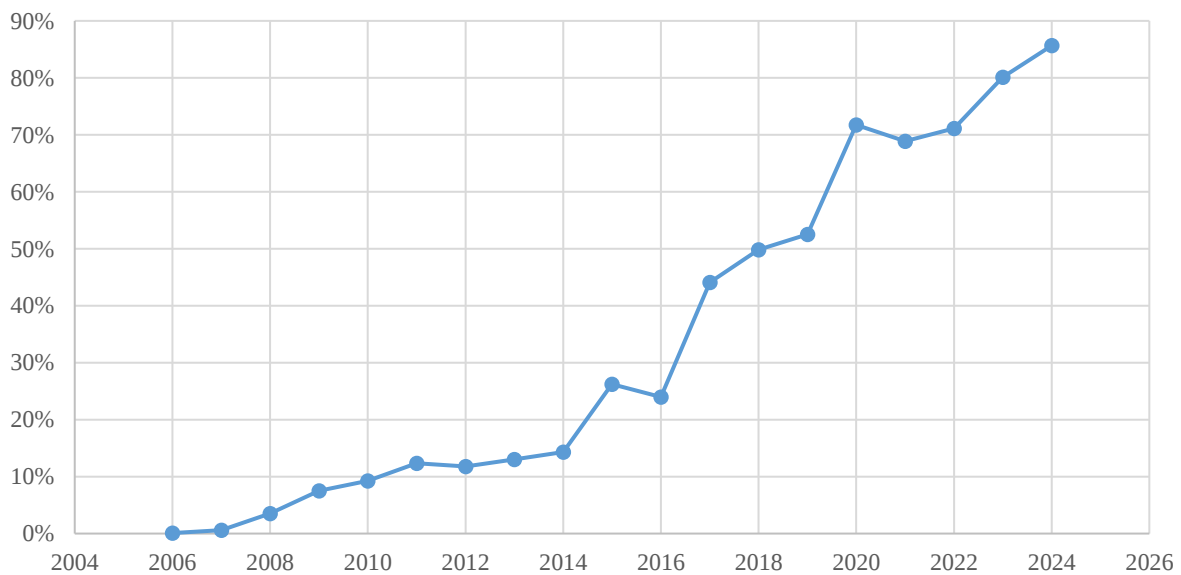


Fig. 24. Percentage of Carpathian goats in the tested population

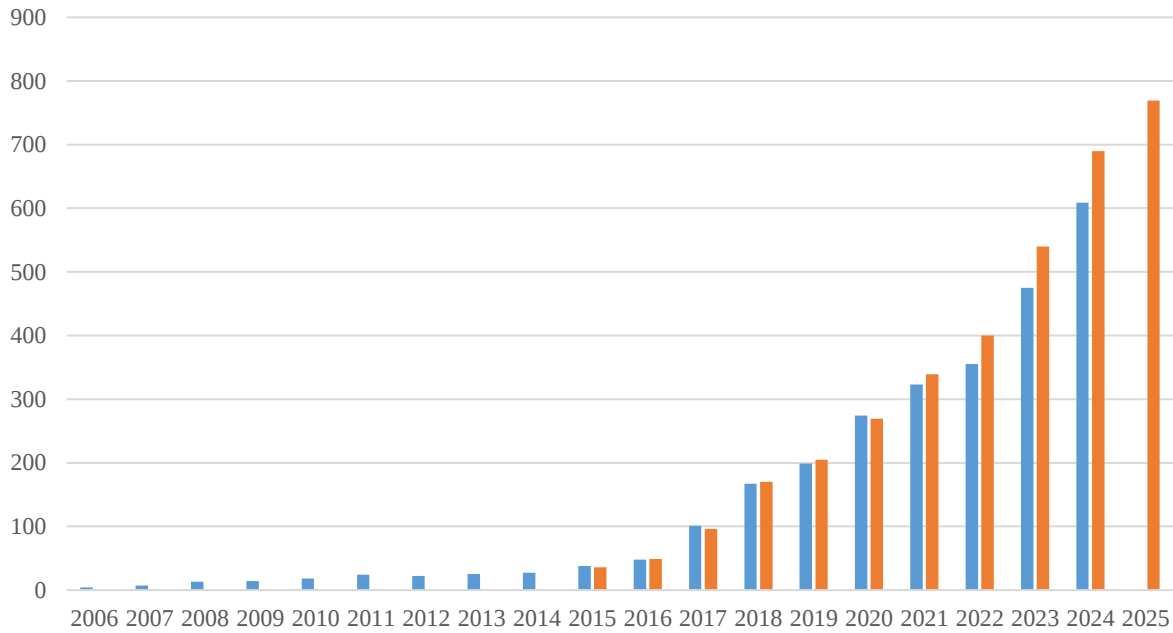


Fig. 25. Comparison of the number of Carpathian goats subjected to milk performance testing and participating in the Genetic Resources Conservation Programme

Sandomierska goats are one of the three restored native goat breeds in Poland. They are characterised by a piebald, two- or three-coloured coat and were therefore included among coloured breeds (Szymanowska et al., 2017). The breed has been included in the Genetic Resources Conservation Programme since 2022, and the University of Life Sciences in Lublin is responsible for its herdbook and reproductive performance recording. Milk performance testing under the auspices of the Polish Sheep Breeders Association was conducted in 2018–2019. In 2019, 45 goats were tested, accounting for 11.9% of the total tested population; in the previous year, 32 goats were tested, representing 9.55% (Fig. 26).

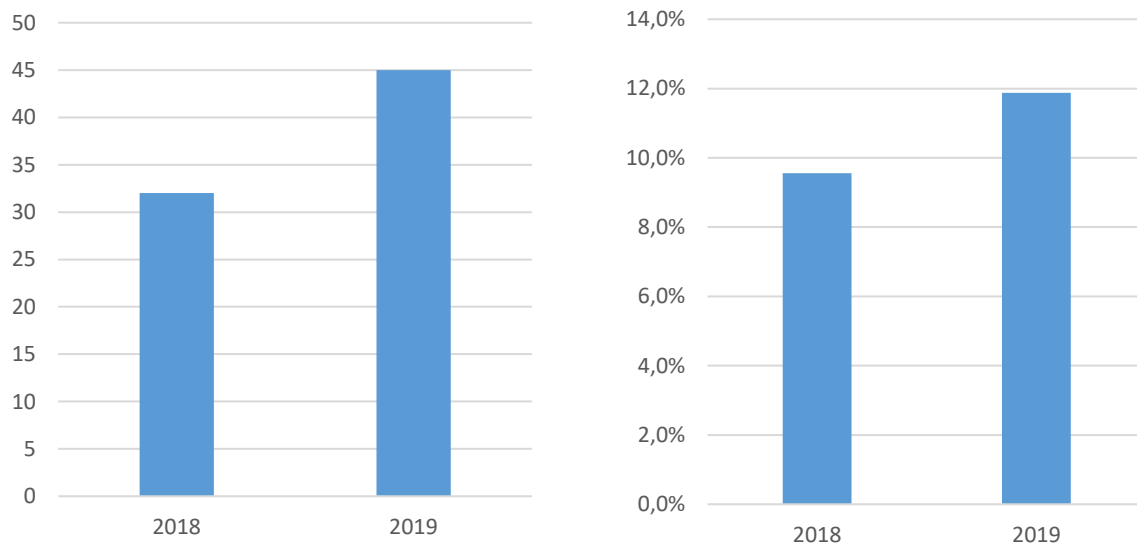


Fig. 26. Number of Sandomierska goats under performance testing and percentage of Sandomierska goats in the tested population

The third restored breed, the Kazimierzowska goat, characterised by its black coat and yellow eyes, is subject to reproductive and meat performance testing. In this case, testing is conducted by the body responsible for the breed's herdbook, namely the Warsaw University of Life Sciences.

Summary

Changes in the breed structure of goats under performance testing, and above all changes in the number of tested animals, reflect the trends and problems affecting goat breeding in Poland. The first marked collapse in the number of tested animals, followed by gradual growth, illustrates renewed interest in goat milk and its products after the temporary crisis associated with the milk-borne outbreak; nevertheless, neither animal numbers nor the rate of growth ever returned to pre-1995 levels. The dramatic decline in the tested population following the withdrawal of subsidies demonstrates breeders' need for financial incentives, while the current increase may likewise be motivated by financial support associated with keeping an endangered autochthonous breed. The lack of a tradition of goat-meat consumption means that meat breeds represent only a small share of the national population, and the fact that Boer goats were numerically dominant in performance testing for several years does not necessarily indicate strong interest in goat-meat production; rather, it reflects the dramatically low overall number of animals being tested. Particularly concerning is the complete cessation of performance testing of native dairy breeds, namely White Improved and Fawn Improved goats, which dominated the tested population for many years, as well as the discontinuation of their herdbooks by the Polish Sheep Breeders Association. The disappearance of herds of foreign dairy breeds, such as Saanen and Alpine goats, which could have been successfully used to improve the national goat population, is also a cause for concern.

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CHANGES IN THE BREED STRUCTURE AND NUMBER OF GOATS UNDER PERFORMANCE TESTING IN POLAND IN THE YEARS 1983–2024

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SUMMARY

The aim of the study was to analyse changes in the breed structure and number of goats under performance testing in Poland in the years 1983–2024. The study was based on data published by the Central Animal Breeding Station and the Polish Sheep Breeders Association. The analysis showed that the number of goats in Poland, as well as the active population subject to

performance testing, fluctuated significantly during the study period, reflecting the changing economic and organizational conditions of breeding in Poland. Interest in conducting assessments peaked in the first half of the 1990s, and sharp declines in the number of animals tested occurred after 1995 and after 2007, with the abolition of subsidies from the Biological Progress Fund. During the period analysed, there was significant variability in the breed structure of the evaluated population, from the dominance of white and fawn improved goats in the 1990s to a marked increase in the share of the Carpathian breed in the last decade. Currently, performance testing is carried out primarily on Carpathian goats covered by the Genetic Resources Conservation Programme, which testifies to the growing importance of biodiversity conservation and financial support in shaping the breeding of this species in Poland.

Keywords: breeding, goats, performance testing, breed structure, native breeds