



*Wisdom* for Healthy Living

## **SHEEP MILK – Exclusive and better**

In May 2016 we moved from Johannesburg to our small farm in Barrydale in the Klein Karoo to fulfil a lifelong dream..... to produce milk, yoghurt and cheese from a small flock of Awassi dairy sheep.



### ***“The 3 beautiful boys”***

The Awassi is a fat-tailed breed of sheep that is indigenous to the Middle East and South East Asia. It was actually developed as a nomadic sheep breed through centuries of natural and selective breeding for becoming the highest milk producing breed in the Middle East. They are very hardy, have a unique resistance to many diseases and parasites, can tolerate extreme temperatures, walk long distances

in search of pasture and endure adverse feeding conditions. So, all in all, very well suited to the Karoo environment in which we live.

Most people know that we get milk from cows and goats, and are even aware that there is buffalo and camel milk available to those who want it, but very few are aware that we milked sheep long before we milked cows or goats. In fact, the original feta and pecorino cheeses were all made from sheep milk. Roquefort, that deliciously smelly blue cheese, cannot be called Roquefort unless it has been made in Roquefort in France and has been made from sheep milk. Traditionally, Bulgarian yoghurt is made from sheep milk and is said to be directly responsible for the longevity of the Balkan shepherds.

We all know what cows' milk tastes like and a lot of us have tasted goats' milk, but very few people know what sheep milk tastes like. A guide to the taste would be to think of cows' milk as a neutral taste at zero and goats' milk as a much stronger taste at 10; sheep milk would then fall at about 2 in taste, so it is a lot closer in taste to cow milk than to goat milk.

Even though our sheep are not organic, we believe in best practice and only treat and vaccinate if absolutely necessary. Our lambs grow up with their mamas, roaming the Karoo veld during the day and coming home in the evening to sleep under roof to protect them from predators. We only milk once a day, in the morning, so that the ewes have plenty of milk for their babies to grow up on .....



**Sheep milk is superior to cow or goat milk and is in a class of its own for a number of reasons:**



- It is more easily digestible as the fat globules are smaller and therefore naturally homogenised.
  - It contains A2 beta-casein, whereas cow milk usually contains A1 beta-casein
  - It contains 3 x more casein, the protein associated with cheese, which adds to the fact that it digests more easily.
  - It is ideal for cheese production as it contains double the solids of other types of milk
- People who are lactose and dairy intolerant can often tolerate sheep milk but react to cow and goat milk. When yoghurt is made from sheep milk, the lactose in the milk is converted to lactic acid and during the manufacture of hard cheese, the lactose is drained out in the whey.
  - It has the creamiest taste and mouth feel of all other types of milk.
  - It contains a higher level of triglycerides which leads to a more efficient lactose absorption, thereby again aiding those with lactose intolerances.
  - It is much more nutritious
  - It is great for the prevention of osteoporosis because of its high calcium and vitamin C content
  - The ratio of calcium to phosphorous is nearly perfect because one cannot be digested and used without the other.
  - It has much higher levels of protein, calcium, zinc, thiamine, riboflavin, B6, B12, vitamin D, medium amino acids, linoleic acids and all 10 of the essential amino acids.
  - The milk is especially high in folic acid and B12.
  - It contains much higher levels of the fat-soluble vitamins A, D and E.
  - The milk is much better for those with high cholesterol because the high level of triglycerides has a unique metabolic ability to limit or inhibit cholesterol deposits and even dissolve cholesterol gall stones.

In October 2018, we started milking for the first time, and are currently milking about 23 of our ewes. It is very hard work, as sheep do not easily give up their milk and can “hold” onto it if the smallest thing upsets them or is different to the day before! If they are out of sorts or feel stressed in any way, their body produces adrenaline, and this counteracts the “letting down” hormone called oxytocin and the subsequent production and volume of milk. It takes 2 hours a day to coax about 15 litres of this



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precious liquid from our ladies, so it is hard work for a small yield. **Compare that to just one cow that can deliver up to 25 litres a day!**

To our knowledge there are only a handful of farmers like us that are milking sheep regularly. Our product is therefore a very niche product and inevitably it is more expensive than what is out there, and as a result we have hand-picked **Go Natural** in Somerset West as one of our three exclusive outlets that we will deliver our products to.

**Currently we are able to package and deliver the following products to our selected suppliers:**

- Fresh whey – frozen in 1 litre bottles (This is drained off during the making of cheese. Contains a lot of lactose so not recommended for those who are lactose intolerant)
- Fresh raw unpasteurised milk – frozen in 1 litre bottles
- Fresh kefir – fresh in 1 litre bottles
- Greek yoghurt – 1 litre glass jars (re-usable / return and receive a refundable deposit on your next yoghurt purchase)
- Farm-style butter – frozen in 500g blocks (**This is made from A2 cow's milk**)

We plan to deliver Bulgarian yoghurt soon, feta, haloumi, and cheddar within the next 2 months and pecorino, both soft and matured, within the next 6-12 months. We are incredibly proud of what we have achieved in 2 years, and we hope that you will enjoy our products as much as we have enjoyed producing them!



Call **Go Natural** for advice @ 021-8522 744 and / or to place your weekly order.

Prices will be available on our website on our online SHOP @ <https://gonatural.co.za/59-dairy-dairy-substitutes?p=2>