



Sandy Van Echo in the show ring with yearling Oberhasli "Bray" at the 2002 National Show.

ested in Alpines, so the family acquired a second doe of that breed.

Four years have passed since the purchase of those original does. Daughter Cassidi is growing up and moving out of the daily "herd" life, leaving Sandy as the main "goat girl" of the household.

"Time has lured me into the complete infatuation with the temperament and the delicious milk of the Oberhasli and I am proud to be a breeder of the wonderful animals," Van Echo said. "I

still have my token Alpine, but I have convinced her that she is an off-colored Oberhasli so that she will behave."

Van Echo became interested in Oberhasli genetics after meeting and visiting Colleen Monahan at the Sacramento Nationals several years ago.

"I was thrilled with her story of her work with the Swiss semen importation," Van Echo said. "I had recently been in Switzerland and seen the Oberhasli there and thought they were striking. Their stature and color were different from what I had seen in my travels around Arizona."

Van Echo's research of Oberhasli genetics led her to believe this country's genetic pool was diluted and it didn't take her long to decide she wanted to be part of the Swiss semen import experiment. She knew there were some problems regarding registration of the semen with the American Dairy Goat Association, but true to her nature, believed that thinking "outside of the box" could only benefit the Oberhasli breed in the long run.

In the Swiss semen adventure, Chris Anderson, Pam Cunningham, and the Stoyanoff family all knowingly supported the experiment by using the Swiss bucklings in spite of the fact that the registration was in the lurch. "Thanks to them we have much more of the Swiss genetics to work with locally than we would have had otherwise", Van Echo said.

"We did our first round of artificial insemination in the fall of 1999, with the help of my friend Pat Zwiers," Van Echo

said. "She not only had the expertise for the AI, but was a tremendous support in my new found passion. The discussions regarding the use of the Swiss semen were not exactly well received with everyone I shared it with, and I was thrilled to have her support."

Sir Echo spring Swiss-bred kids arrived at the local county fair where Dan Laney was the judge. He was impressed with the vigor, color and strength of the Oberhasli kids and listened to Van Echo's concerns over the current registration dilemma.

"He offered his good wishes for the success of the project and those kind words were very comforting at a time when registration seemed improbable," Van Echo said.

After much deliberation and time, ADGA Directors Joan Dean Rowe, Daniel Considine, and Jeff Klein offered their support of the issuance of the registration of the Swiss bucks into the ADGA registry by virtue of a postal ballot, Van Echo said.

"I am still quite grateful to all three of them for their efforts," she said. "This was the support Colleen (Monahan, Red Tail Ridge Oberhasli) needed to complete her efforts after waiting an extended length of time for clarification of the registration procedure."

Van Echo was thrilled with the results of her own breeding efforts as her Swiss offspring performed well at the 2002 Nationals.

"Our vigilance and determination was rewarded with a ninth place position in the one-year-old milker class with a product of the Swiss breedings, as well as a seventh place in the dry yearling class with another product of the Swiss breedings," she said.

Van Echo, supported by her husband Jay of 24 years, plans to continue to use the show ring as well as other ADGA programs like DHIR and Linear Appraisal to evaluate and elevate her breeding program.

"I have always believed that because I am breeding dairy animals, my breeding goals should reflect the animals ability to produce well, as well as the physical strength and endurance over time to meet the demands of that production," she said. "My hopes are that the Swiss genetics will be a beneficial contribution to that production, endurance, and longevity."

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Leta Joan Davis, longtime Oberhasli breeder from Arizona, operates the Mornim herd.