



Title: “Twins”

Description: Twin goats huddling together.

Photographer: Tansy Hutton

Where, when: Location, August 2020

Sustainability? Elaine and Stuart were the first twins my pet goats ever had, they were gifted to a close friend of mine.

Goats are such funny animals. They are stubborn, playful, loving, and very naughty all at once. If there is a way to break out of a paddock they will find it, if there is a plant you don't want eaten they will do their best to have a nibble, and these two naughty twins have been known to climb into cars and tractors. Goats can also be a useful and profitable animal. They are used for their wool, milk, meat, and also things like weed control or cross grazing the land to reduce worms and parasites. My goats original purpose was to be milked as I was having gut issues related to cows milk, they have since

become valued members of my pet herd while also providing me with milk for many months at a time. The goats are currently being used to keep the grass down in my chicken and duck paddock, and after that they will move back into the herd with my cow, calves, and arapawa sheep.

When New Zealanders talk about biodiversity and conservation, mostly they focus on the native species. Many farmers share this passion for native plants and animals as well, but they are more likely to also include concern to nurturing the diversity of domestic and production animals. There was a huge controversy in the 1970s about the Arapawa Island goats. The Department of Conservation wanted to cull them to protect forest regeneration, but others thought they were descendents of the original goats brought to New Zealand by Captain Cook. By being isolated and living wild in rugged conditions, they may have retained useful genetic traits. The International Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) has a whole section on 'Agrobiodiversity' that emphasises the importance of some plants and animals for agriculture and human life. Conservation and sustainability needs to take a broad systems approach and include care and wise management of all types of life: native and introduced; domesticated, feral and wild; species in both production and non-production landscapes. In many situations we can juggle multiple goals to keep all the different sustainability balls in the air at the same time.

So I am happy keeping some strains of goats happy and breeding on our land, even though they are not providing income. And passing on the kids to others is sharing the love and building this broader concern for all life.

Photo notes: *Camera:* Samsung SM-G973F *Settings:* f/2.4, 1/100 sec, ISO 100, 4 mm.

Digital specs: 3,024 x 4,032 pixels (12.2 MP).

Key words: Goats, pets, diversification, agrobiodiversity, farming, Tansy Hutton, Ecosystems Photography, Aotearoa, New Zealand, sustainability

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Tansy Hutton
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