



Spring Rose is a Geep from a Babydoll ram and Nigerian Dwarf nanny.

## Rare “Geep” Hybrid Is Real

Catherine Bell has a “Geep” on her farm and the DNA analysis to prove it. The rare hybrid resulted from the union of a Babydoll sheep and a Nigerian Dwarf goat. At 6 mos., Spring Rose was twice the size of doelings born 5 to 6 weeks earlier and larger than ewe and ram lambs born earlier as well.

“When Spring Rose was born, she was completely different from anything we had ever seen before,” says Bell. “Her fur was soft and long. I knew it was a Geep, but I didn’t realize how rare it was.”

The baby Geep had a difficult birth. The nanny had gone into labor, but only delivered a detached umbilical cord. Bell pulled out a baby with a sheep’s tail and long, almost woolly hair with an unusual head. It combined features of both goat and sheep. She had seen a similar birth prior, but it was stillborn. She feared the same this time, but that wasn’t the case.

## Amazing French Anvil Collection

If you’re interested in seeing the world’s biggest anvil that weighs in at 4,057 lbs., you need to travel to France. If you love old anvils, the trip will be worth it because you’ll be able to check out the amazing Lesoutils Demagic anvil collection housed in a 215,000 sq. ft. warehouse near Epinal, France. The collection also features vises and other tools.

“My passion is to bring anvils back to life. I also sell them because it allows me to meet new people and share this passion with them,” says Demagic, who owns the collection.

The most iconic French anvil is called a pig because of its four legs and shape. But collectors are most interested in 16th through early 19th century anvils built by blacksmiths without using molds.

“They were not only trying to make an effective tool, but they were also trying to make a work of art,” Demagic says.

His collection includes French cutler anvils with humps to stretch metal for knife blades. He also has one with four horns in different shapes to shape sheet metal. At 34 lbs., it was likely used by a goldsmith. His smallest anvil, 3 lbs., was used by a jeweler in the 16th or 17th century and has sculptures of faces on it. He found his oldest anvil in a barn. When he removed the green paint that covered it, he saw the date, 1566 or 1568.

It will take several years to clean all the anvils he’s collected, but Demagic has many for sale to collectors and to use in blacksmith

“I swung her to clear her airway and when I laid her down, she shook her head letting us know she was alive,” says Bell. “I ran to the house for some penicillin, but by the time I was back, she was up and nursing.”

Bell recalled having put her smallest Babydoll ram in with a group of nannies after the larger rams had been picking on it. She had not expected anything to happen.

Born April 28, 2021, Spring Rose is a light gold color and has grown into a beautiful animal, says Bell.

“She has a very distinct personality,” she adds. “She is really loving, like a bottle baby, even though she was nursed by her mother.”

If Bell was sure Spring Rose was a Geep, others had reason to doubt. To be a hybrid, the stars and the chromosomes have to line up just right. Sheep have 54 chromosomes, while goats have 60. Later testing would reveal that Spring Rose has 57.



Demagic has many anvils for sale to collectors and to use in blacksmith shops.

shops. He posts often on Instagram and Facebook and sells worldwide. Buyers often buy a pallet of anvils and resell some of them. Shipping to the U.S. runs about \$600/pallet, but Demagic negotiates with buyers for free delivery on orders of more than 3,500 Euros (about \$4,000).

If you are looking for new anvils made in the U.S., check out Anvil Brand ([www.anvilbrand.com](http://www.anvilbrand.com)) which makes a variety of anvils that are poured in a Texas foundry and heat-treated and polished at other U.S. locations. The anvils are used by farriers, blacksmiths, jewelers, competitors and hobbyists with shops. They range from 34 to 260 lbs.

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Bell’s vet tried to contact others claiming to have Geeps with only limited success. University researchers were doubtful as well. Texas A&M professor Terje Raudsepp explained why. She noted that in the past 20 years her department had received 20 blood samples from suspected Geeps. Spring Rose was the first to be confirmed. Texas A&M is now mapping the genomes of Spring Rose and her parents.

“I was afraid she would be a genetic anomaly like a mule, but we are hoping to breed her with a buck,” says Bell. “The researchers think the first birth might go okay, but she may have problems after that.”

Bell would love to keep Spring Rose but has decided to put her up for sale. She is a single parent of two sons with medical needs, and they come first. She is grappling with how to determine a value and how to find buyers.

In the meantime, she is curious to see if her ram can repeat himself and produce another

miracle birth.

“I put three does in with the ram to see if they would become pregnant,” says Bell. “Two of them came back into heat later, but one settled. My vet encouraged me to let the pregnancy continue.”

Bell is doing ultrasounds on the doe and documenting as much of the baby Geep’s development as possible. By mid-February, the doe was in her 14th week, and all appeared well.

Bell wonders if breeders running both sheep and goats together during breeding season end up with a less productive breeding season as a result. “This might be because does conceive by rams easily, but the babies are lost,” says Bell. “Breeding season comes and goes, and the does appear not to have become pregnant or miscarry.”

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The wagon can haul up to five young children when pulled by Voigt’s dad’s 1972 John Deere 110 square fender garden tractor.

## Mini Wagons Perfect For Garden Tractors

After you’ve restored a couple of garden tractors, the best way to justify owning them is to make wagons to go with them. At least that’s what Tony Voigt decided, and the mini wagons he started building have proven popular with young visitors to his Fox Lake, Wis., property.

Instead of building his first wagon’s running gear from scratch, Voigt started with a new wagon-style Gorilla cart rated for 1,500 lbs. He removed the metal sides and sanded off the black paint to repaint the frame in John Deere green and yellow. Using the existing holes on the trailer he bolted on walls he built out of 1 by 6-in. boards. He stained the wood and added chains across the door openings to make it resemble a hay bale wagon.

“I cut railroad ties and covered them with mini-golf carpet to make them look like mini hay bales,” Voigt says. The wagon can haul up to five young children when pulled by his

dad’s 1972 John Deere 110 square fender garden tractor.

For his second wagon, Voigt used steel wheels he had purchased at an auction for \$35.

“The hardest part was building the axle. I experimented with pipe and made my own bushings and bearings,” he says. Scrap wood from a deconstructed farm building was perfect for the walls and wooden tongue to create the look of an old barge wagon.

After cleaning the wheels with a steel brush, he painted the wagon to match Voigt’s 1967 John Deere 110 round fender tractor used to pull it. With bench seats, it’s perfect for giving two or three young children a ride.

When not being used, the wagons double as yard ornaments.

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