



## **CATTLE BREEDERS SOCIETY BEESTELERGENOOTSKAP™**

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Tel: (051) 448 7302 / 3 | Fax: (051) 448 7304 | Email: [louisa@studbook.co.za](mailto:louisa@studbook.co.za) / [yolanda@studbook.co.za](mailto:yolanda@studbook.co.za)  
P.O. Box 506 | Bloemfontein | 9300

### **News Brief – March 2007**

This last week saw the first formal council meeting taking place on Wednesday 28 February, preceded by meetings of the technical, training, and finance and administration subcommittees on Monday and Tuesday. Although in its infancy, we believe that the new subcommittee structure is working satisfactorily and will become more effective in future, as committee members become familiar with their roles and responsibilities, and the important distinction between policy and operational issues is clarified. The fact that these committees are now in place permitted the council meeting to focus primarily on strategy and policy matters, and to approve a number of policy issues which had been worked through at committee level.

As to club representation at the council meeting, we were most disturbed to hear of the nasty accident in which our KZN colleagues were involved on their way to Bloemfontein. We are extremely thankful that no serious injuries were sustained, but as a consequence of this they were unable to be at the meeting. Representatives from all other clubs were however present, together with Studbook and ARC delegates.

Important issues dealt with during the week are reported hereunder.

#### **Technical**

##### **Inspection Policy**

A revised policy on inspections was tabled for consideration by Council, and subject to some minor amendments, this was approved. This document will shortly be available on the website for the information of members. Salient features of the revised policy include:

- A new fee structure based on an hourly rate of R 150/hr for annual inspections and R 300/hr for special inspections.
- Excepting in the case of special inspections where the full costs are born by the breeder, the provision that all traveling and subsistence costs incurred by inspectors, and the hourly rate paid to inspectors for traveling purposes, are shared equally by those breeders whose cattle have been inspected, at the end of the inspection period.
- A revised compensation structure for inspectors.

In addition, in order to deal with the shortage of inspectors, a once off fast track training program has been agreed for junior inspectors. This will only be open to suitably identified breeders with proven experience in the farming of Nguni cattle.

We anticipate that close to three hundred inspections will have to be completed by June, and we are extremely grateful that Mike Greyling has agreed to manage this process in conjunction with regional coordinators.

Breeders are again reminded of the importance of being properly prepared for their inspections. Where this is not the case, the privilege of an inspection may be forfeited, thereby requiring the breeder to apply for a costly special inspection. Such special inspections will only be approved where inspectors are available to undertake these.

## **Importation Policy**

A formal policy has been drafted and accepted on the issue of importations. The most important point is that these are primarily governed by the Animal Improvement Act and the main implication is that the Society will only be involved in the importation of registered animals.

## **Training**

Council discussed and approved in principle a training strategy which had been developed by the training subcommittee. This will now be fleshed out as a policy document for ratification by council at the next meeting. In essence, we are looking at a hierarchy of training initiatives ranging from basic information/induction for new members and breeders through to high level technical training for senior inspectors. At the various levels, we intend to plug in supplementary modules dealing with subjects such as animal health and genetics.

The importance of induction training for new, and for that matter, existing breeders, cannot be overstressed. Many of the unnecessary workload problems in our office stem from a lack of knowledge of stud administration procedures, breed standards, and the concept of direct dealing with SA Studbook. Studbook is compiling a generic breeders' manual which we will be able to customise to suit our society's needs. This should be available to us by the end of March, and will form an important resource for the purposes of induction training.

We intend to revise our approach to Junior Inspector training. The new methodology is in line with that employed by other breed societies, and provides for the concept of a "candidate inspector" who accompanies senior and junior inspectors on inspections in order to acquire experience. This process embodies ongoing evaluation of the candidate culminating in a formal theory and practical evaluation, whereupon the successful candidate is appointed as a junior inspector. We hope that this approach will be more appealing to breeders who wish to become inspectors, and will result in improved resources within our inspectorate.

## **Communication**

Council has approved a new communications policy which specifically focuses on modernizing our whole approach to communications. Whilst acknowledging practical constraints for some members (farm phone lines, lack of cellphone reception etc) it is our intention to make use of electronic media as far as possible as this is undoubtedly cheaper, quicker and more efficient. For members whose preference remains the postal system, this will be accommodated as in the past. A questionnaire will shortly be circulated to members, requesting amongst other things, their communication preferences.

Our new website will go live during the coming week and may be accessed at [www.ngunicattle.info](http://www.ngunicattle.info). As previously mentioned, it will have a public domain and a secure members' section. In time, all official documents of the society will be available on the site including policies as these are developed and signed off by Council. The secure section also includes a member database comprising of contact details, stud names, representative persons and herd designation marks. A "blog room" (bulletin board) is also available for the posting of messages and web based communication between members. You are invited to review the website, and we would welcome any criticisms or suggestions on how we can improve the site. These can be referred to Naledi or Barry via Yolanda at the office.

A significant policy shift concerns the use of language. We do not have the resources to translate all documents and communications into the other official languages of the country, which may well be the languages of choice for many of our members. Accordingly, after serious consideration, Council has decided that the official language medium for the compilation of society documents will be English. Of course, members remain at liberty to communicate with Society in their language of choice, and submissions to the journal or club newsletters will be accepted in the language of the contributor. We hope that members who may feel inconvenienced by this decision, will understand the need to take this position.

## **Finance and Administration**

Perhaps the most important issue arising out of discussions on finance and administration is the realisation that we are in need of additional staffing resources in the office if we are to deliver effective services to our members. An analysis of our revenue circumstances reveals that this will probably necessitate an increase in the *per capita* fee. Hopefully this can be held off until the AGM meets in November.

Approval was also given for the remuneration of committee members at the rate of R500 per meeting attended as well as fair reimbursement for expenses incurred. In the case of Council, council members have jointly agreed to waive receipt of the meeting allowance, preferring rather to let the AGM decide on this matter later in the year.

In line with our commitment to member equity, we have adjusted the commission payable to the Society, for sales held under its auspices, to 0.5% across the board.

## **Promotions and Marketing**

Good progress is being made with the journal, which looks set to contain a number of well-researched articles. We hope to post the journal by the second week in April 2007.

With regard to next year's calendar, Naledi and her team have come up with a great idea to make the calendar more interesting and more inclusive in representing a greater number of breeder cattle. Attached please see what's required in order to get your herd photo onto the calendar.

## **Other Issues Discussed**

### **Clubs**

The important roles and functions of clubs was again confirmed, particularly in respect of training and breed promotion, as well as the mentoring of new breeders. Also discussed was the potential role that clubs could play in assisting emerging farmers, and giving support to the projects aimed at reintroducing Nguni cattle into the communal farming herds.

We intend to hold a "bosberaad" in September to work through, with club representatives, what the interface between the society and the clubs should be, with a view to optimizing the interdependence between these two levels of our Nguni community.

Finally we believe that the broader inclusion of studbook representatives in Society's council and subcommittee structures will serve to enhance the interface between the two organizations, and will equally serve to avoid some of the problems experienced in the past.

Well that's the news for now – best wishes to all of you, and hopefully for those of you who need it, you'll get some decent rain before the winter sets in.

**3 March 2007**



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*Call for photos*

*Enter your own photos for the forthcoming calendar of the  
Nguni Breeders' Society*

Members can show their own herds in next year's calendar, in which a photo selected from a range of entries will adorn each month's page.

To compete for the privilege of advertising on one of these pages, you are invited to submit up to five photos featuring animals in your herd.

The twelve winning entries will each appear on the website of the Nguni Breeders' Society on the months that they represent on the calendar. The cost of the advert for successful entries will be R2000.00

The panel which will select the twelve winning photos consists of well-known photographer Pieter Els, senior Nguni inspector Mike Greyling, Amanda Greyling from Classic Printers, and radio personality and writer Albe Grobbelaar.

Submit your photos electronically by email (or by posted CD), to Yolanda Venter before 31 August 2007. The names of the twelve winners will be announced before 30 September, the calendars will be printed by mid November and will be posted in the first week of December.

The decision of the panel will be final. Each entrant may qualify for one month's advertising space only.