



## **CATTLE BREEDERS SOCIETY BEESTELERGENOOTSKAP™**

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### **News Brief – May 2007**

As per our annual schedule of meetings, Council again met on 16 May, with the subcommittee meetings being held the previous day. Apart from the KZN club for whom apologies had been submitted, all other club representatives were present at the council meeting. From our perspective, this club involvement and participation in council meetings is a valuable and necessary component of society business. It keeps Council in touch with breeder sentiments, and the input offered on policy and strategic matters is well appreciated.

The day set aside for subcommittee meetings was almost entirely dedicated to the important business of the Technical Subcommittee. Accordingly, we combined discussions on training, promotions, and finance matters, and developed some useful plans on the way ahead for these portfolios.

Before going into detail, it is necessary to reflect upon where we stand as a breed society. In terms of cattle numbers, we are now the second largest in the country. As per member numbers, we are the largest. An interesting observation was made during the course of our meetings which basically goes like this (apologies to the person concerned for a possible misquote): “We are now playing in the first league with third league resources”.

The logic, of course, is that we need to sophisticate our support systems to meet the new challenges facing our society, which is increasingly becoming a dominant player in South Africa’s cattle industry.

#### **Promotions**

Firstly, we congratulate Naledi Roberts on producing a top quality journal under difficult circumstances associated with many sideline problems. We are proud of this publication, and we are especially grateful to her for the many hours of personal time which she has put into this.

Secondly, we were at NAMPO, but by all accounts, displaying from a “third league” position. Given that this is the pre-eminent agricultural show in the country, we intend to budget next year for a stand, and a promotion event equal to and better than that of other breed societies. We believe we owe this to our cattle, and our members.

#### **Training**

Our annual inspections have been well planned and are proceeding. We aim to deal with the ongoing issue of inspector training in the latter part of the year. In the meantime, we have had a number of potential junior inspectors participating in the process. Once signed off, these candidates will be a valuable addition to our cadre of inspectors nationally. Formative plans are in place to hold an inspectors’ conference later in the year, which will deal further with the issue of inspector training, but also the issue of ensuring a consistent approach to judging breed standards. This is expected to take the place of the senior inspectors’ meeting which to date has coincided with the AGM.

Member, and particularly new member training is our current priority, given the ongoing growth in society membership. Many of our new members are new to cattle farming, many are not full time farmers, and many are not familiar with stud administration and society policies and procedures. Dr Piet Prinsloo has kindly agreed to co-ordinate a project aimed at producing a member training manual which it is planned, will be available for use by the end of July. He will, where necessary, network with breeders, inspectors, and associated expertise in pursuing this initiative. This project will promote a consistent approach to member training at society and club level.

## **Clubs**

Whilst constitutional changes to recognize the existence of clubs were signed off at the AGM in November last year, there remains no coherent logic to the organization of clubs, their geographic representivity, their roles, or their interface with the society. The club system is critical to the interface with members regionally, to the promotion of the breed, and to inspection and training initiatives. We therefore need to make some sense of this structure, and to this end, we propose to hold a “bosberaad” involving club and society representatives in the latter part of the year. We will confirm dates and venues in due course.

On a related subject, we are pleased to advise the formation of the Kalahari Nguni Telers as of 3 April 2007. To quote their objective:

“ Ons doel is om die Nguni as ras te bevorder – stoet en veral kommersieel – onder ekstensiewe toestande. Alles wat ons beoog sal in samewerking en binne die grondwet van die Nguni Beestelersgenootskap wees”.

They plan their first sale on 12 March 2008. Marguerite Fyfer is the contact person (082 935 0216). We welcome this as an initiative that creates yet another Nguni footprint on the map of South Africa.

## **Communications**

We are continuing to refine the society website. It is not perfect yet, but we are getting there. Of note here, is the fact that office resources and workload do not permit timeous interaction with the web administrator on the updating of ongoing events (sales and sales results, for example). We will be working on this with Giel and the Finance and Admin Subcommittee.

A new component to the website will be a “classified” section where members can post adverts, either buying or selling. The charge per advert will be R100-00 for one month’s posting on the site.

We are reviewing the function of the quarterly newsletter in relation to the news brief updates. We think that this should be more about regional and club news, and other matters of interest, rather than society business. And perhaps, this should be put together and go out when there is sufficient material of interest, and not just as a matter of course.

We would welcome feedback from members on our communication approach, since it is only with this feedback that we can meet our service to member’s objectives.

## **Finance and Administration**

As per the budget which Giel put to our AGM in November, our finances are in good order. However, our breed and membership profile is changing all the time, and we need to factor this into our planning for the future. We need to spend more money on office resources, and more money on breed promotion. This is necessary, we believe, if we are to promote the sustainability of Nguni cattle prices, and the development of a viable Nguni beef market.

Our *per capita* fee (which remains amongst the lowest) will need to be reviewed, and will be put to the next AGM.

## Some Other Issues

### **Member Profile**

We need to get a better understanding of our membership profile, their circumstances, and their geographic localities. Accordingly, we have compiled a questionnaire which we would request that you complete and return to the office. This will be attached to this news brief. For those of you who communicate via email with the society, this can be done by return email. Alternatively, please post your return to us as soon as possible.

### **Sales and Transfers**

It is important to remind members that the buying and selling of registered cattle takes on different connotations, depending on how the sale transacts. A sale under the auspices of the Nguni Cattle Breeders' Society ensures the fact that the animals are registered, meet the breed standards, and that the associated documentation will be forthcoming.

If you choose to buy cattle "off the farm", please be aware of the consequences. The society can not be held responsible, nor take remedial action where disputes might occur under these circumstances, particularly with regard to the status of animals.

### **Branding**

Council has confirmed that branding remains the official means of permanent identification of registered animals. Arising out of the technical subcommittee meeting is the issue of standardization of branding procedure. To date, it has been acceptable to brand either side of the rump with the sequence (top to bottom), HDM, year, sequence number, or HDM, sequence number, year.

To achieve consensus on this matter, we will decide by referendum via the member profile questionnaire as to how this will be standardized for the future. So please take your survey questionnaire seriously.

### **Technical**

Here we deal with some crunchy stuff.

Primarily, it is important to note that the by-laws are being reviewed and re-written. Accordingly, decisions taken in the Technical Subcommittee were reviewed by Council and approved in principle subject to the final approval by council of the completed submission of the amended by-laws. So this is still work in progress, but it is important for members to be advised of developments. These are proposed to be as follows:

- On inspection, a Lid Kat sample will be taken from bulls. Given the availability of storage logistics, this will be a phased approach, beginning in the northern region.
- Criteria for transfer of a first registration (FR) animal:
  - Bulls: 48 months and 20 progeny of whom 50% pass inspection
  - Females: One ICP of no more than 550 days
- Inspection minimum ages:
  - Bulls: 730 days
  - Female: 365 days
- Birth notification rules are such that:
  - Maximum period allowed is now increased to 210 days (weaning time)
  - Current penalty applies after 90 days
  - No late notifications post 210 days will be permitted
- Reinstatement of bulls: Further to the decision of the AGM in November last year, it is confirmed that the cost of bull reinstatement is R500-00

Dr Hans van der Pyperkamp has compiled some quality (user friendly) documents on bio-security and cattle health management. These were discussed at the subcommittee meeting, and with his permission, we intend to communicate these to members.

### **Council – Strategic Business**

Of strategic importance to the breed, the society, and marketing opportunities, concerns public sector, NGO and institutional initiatives to reintroduce Nguni cattle into communal and emerging farmer herds. It is in our long term interests that such projects be strongly supported at society and club level. This issue was extensively discussed in the council meeting, and included a briefing by Mr Mzeleni of Fort Hare, and Vernon Sparks of the East Cape Club on developments with the Norway Project. Other club representatives also reported on progress in other provinces.

Important elements of society and club driven support programmes would include:

- Facilitating the procurement of cattle on a basis fair to breeders and to project and farmer financial circumstances
- Facilitating the transfer of expertise and experience to such farmers through training, open day and induction initiatives.
- Offering mentorship assistance to recipients of these cattle.
- Preparedness to act as an advisory resource to the management of state herds.
- Mobilizing where possible the involvement of private sector resources in these initiatives.

The importance of this matter is such that it will be included as a standard agenda item for future council meetings.

The growing interest in Nguni cattle elsewhere in Africa, and off this continent is also an issue which requires strategic attention. The question of structuring cooperation between breeders and their organizations elsewhere was also discussed, and this for the foreseeable future will be work in progress. We note from recent sales, that the demand for our cattle remains as strong as ever, and that prices remain buoyant. And each month, we see yet more breeders joining our society. So, inasmuch as these are positive signs, as council we realize that the challenges of growth and increased complexity of society business continue to face us. We believe that as the year unfolds, we are making progress in bedding down our agreed strategy, but these things take time and patience. We will continue to report on progress, and would equally encourage members to offer feedback where appropriate.

### **Council**

4 June 2007