



CATTLE BREEDERS SOCIETY BEESTELERGENOOTSKAP™

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News Brief – September 2007

A formal council meeting was convened on 12 September, preceded, the previous day by a strategic planning workshop concerning the desired interface between the clubs and society. In addition, the strategic position of the society and our breed has again been subject to scrutiny in the light of developments since the “bosberaad” of July 2006. We will deal firstly with this issue.

Perhaps the most critical strategic objective arising out of last year’s workshop is the need to develop and sustain an Nguni based beef industry into which the superior genetics of the stud system can be streamed. We are concerned that little progress has been made toward achieving this goal, but more alarming, is the fact that high stud prices have induced many commercial Nguni farmers to register their cattle, thereby shifting commercial herds into the stud system. In addition, the perceived investment value of these cattle continues to promote a proliferation of new members and new stud herds, to the extent that the system is fast becoming saturated. This will inevitably lead to a softening of prices. It is a fact that more than half the herds registered with the society hold only 14% of registered cattle. And of this group, nearly half comprise herds of less than 25 animals.

Perhaps, inadvertently, the circumstances of the recent past have sent out the wrong message; ie “buy our cattle for the top investment returns you will get on their progeny” (Carte Blanche report for example) rather than “ buy our cattle because you will generate more profitable kilograms of beef per hectare with a lot less management effort”.

Deon Richter has compiled a very competent report on this issue and it is attached for your attention.

In summary, however, we need to devote urgent and greater effort to the Nguni as a top beef animal if we are to maintain the credibility of our breed in the face of these complex and fragile market circumstances. This is an overriding theme upon which we need to base the management of the society’s business into the immediate future.

STRATEGY WORKSHOP – INTERFACE BETWEEN CLUBS AND SOCIETY

A full day’s workshop was held on 11 September concerning the relationships between the clubs and society. Apart from the KZN club, which regrettably could not be represented, all clubs fielded representatives including the newly formed Kalahari Club. We believe that this workshop delivered some useful outcomes. A summary of the process is as follows:

- The big picture issue is that society needs input into the diverse geography of Southern Africa in order to meet certain objectives, particularly the promotion of the Nguni beef industry; we cannot run these things from Bloemfontein.
- A regional structure of the society is neither affordable, nor desirable (it would create a new bureaucracy and a “head office” syndrome).

- Therefore, it seems logical to accord responsibilities, functions and accountability to clubs for managing society business at a regional level.
- Until November 2006, clubs were not formally recognized constitutionally. This changed with the approval of the revised constitution, but yet with no reference to functions or the relationship with the society.
- Beyond sale organization, clubs, to a greater or lesser degree have played an important and positive role in breed promotion, training, and emergent and communal farmer programs.
- It is accordingly agreed that clubs should exercise “agency” functions on behalf of society and for this, they will be appropriately funded. These functions include:
 - Training
 - Breed and beef promotion
 - Emergent and communal farmer program support
 - Assimilation and support for commercial Nguni farmers
- In order to fulfill this role, a club needs to be formally recognized by society in respect of the following criteria:
 - The club constitution meets the guidelines laid down by the society.
 - The club is deemed to be representative of the society members it serves in a given area.
 - The club is willing to carry out agency functions on behalf of the society.
 - The chairperson’s report is submitted annually to the council of the society.
- Accordingly the club enjoys representative status at formal society council meetings.
- It was agreed as a matter of policy that club and society membership should be synonymous, and that all members of society with registered herds would be required to be primarily a member of that club closest to where their cattle run.
- Secondary membership of clubs in other regions would be at the discretion of the club concerned.
- In order to facilitate the implementation of this policy, it was further agreed that club membership fees be standardized at R300 per annum, and that these fees be deducted by the society concurrently with society membership fees, and paid directly over to the club concerned.

We believe that this approach is sustainable and will further the objectives of the society, whilst remaining non-prescriptive to the extent that clubs remain flexible and voluntary organizations of society members with their own identities.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

Firstly, we are pleased to report that Ephraim Matjuda, Cedric Stoch and Piet Prinsloo have accepted co-option to the council to advise and help us on the important strategy of developing an Nguni based beef industry. We look forward to their input as we pursue this objective.

Giel, our finance minister, presented us with a well reasoned budget plan for 2008 which takes account of better office resources, portfolio activities, and the need to allocate moneys to regional initiatives. We have seen a revenue increase in this financial year with the growth in membership and cattle numbers, but it will be necessary, nevertheless, to increase membership and per capita fees for the year ahead. We are now the largest breed society member wise, and the second largest cattle wise. Yet our fees remain well below the breed society average. Council has accordingly approved this budget which provides that the membership fee will be increased to R1500.00 per annum, and the per capita fee to R28.00 per registered animal. Details of this budget will be reported to the AGM in November.

Portfolio activities were discussed. The following issues are worth noting:

- At a technical level, revised standards for export/import of genetic material have been agreed in principle, as well as the requirements for AI bulls and embryo flushing. We realize that the policing and control is no longer workable and we therefore prefer the approach where some practical standards are applied, but where the buyer makes his or her own decision on the basis of quality information available from the society. These provisions have been added to the by-law schedules, and are attached for you information.
- Naledi is currently working on the 2008 calendar, and has had some good submissions so far. She is also planning our presence at NAMPO next year, which is important if we want to be first league

players. The idea is that clubs will represent our exhibit on the successive days of the show. We need to gear up to support this initiative.

- On the training front, we intend to launch the proposed program early in the new year. Club training representatives are invited to this, and is essentially a critique of the package that will be a society standard, and will be made available to clubs for regional training needs.
- Although our website is much better, we are not entirely satisfied that it meets our needs. We recognize that farm phone lines are not able to process the graphics on this system, and we will be reviewing this to make the design more user efficient. In the meantime, our news briefs are intended to keep members updated on society matters.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM of the society is planned for 22nd November 2007, in Bloemfontein. We hope for a good turnout at this important event, at which we will review developments within the society over the year to date, and present our plans for next year.

We will be presenting changes to the constitution primarily arising out of the club workshop, but also some amendments which are required to clarify certain points which were missed when the constitution was revised last year.

We undertook, at the AGM in 2006 to plan the rotation of council members. We have sought special advice on this matter, and are advised that the latest version of the constitution applies to member terms of office (three years). Accordingly, Deon and Giel will retire at the end of 2008, and of the other four members, two will retire in 2009 and two in 2010. This allows for continuity, and also gives us a further year to bed down the strategic plan as a cohesive council team. You will be aware that council continues to operate with only five of the six positions filled. In terms of the constitution and the process laid out therein, a new council member needs to be elected at the AGM.

The annual general meeting is really a formal meeting governed by the constitution. In order to better inform society members on what is happening within our society and in the broader external environment, we plan to convene a half day symposium the day before the AGM. Details of speakers and topics will be advised in due course. This event replaces the traditional inspectors' meeting which will be convened early in the new year.

INSPECTORS' CONFERENCE

The important role that our inspectors play in improving our breed, and as society ambassadors, is such that we believe that a special gathering of inspectors is needed, undistracted from AGM issues. Early in the new year, before the annual round of inspections, we plan to hold an inspectors' conference dedicated to technical breed matters and other issues involving the inspection process. A venue and date will be decided to encourage maximum participation in this important event.

COUNCIL

24 September 2007

Schedule X

Requirements for donors of semen destined for transfer, sale or export

Herd book section	Must be registered as SP
Ownership	Must be registered in the name of an active member or belong to a recognised A.I. station
Data verification	The society shall reasonably ensure the accuracy and completeness of all the bulls' pedigree, progeny and production data, but does not restrict itself to the accreditation of bulls with official BLUP figures, as it does not have a policy of compulsory "performance testing".
Inspection	(a) Bull must have been approved by at least two inspectors specifically appointed by the society (at least one of which should always be a senior) and score an average of ≥ 5 with not more than one score of ≤ 4 on the official score sheet at a special inspection held for this purpose. (b) Must display no signs of genetic or chromosomal defects
DNA profiling	The DNA profile must indicate purity and the LidCat number must be registered
Legal	All other relevant legal requirements, as prescribed by the Act, must be adhered to, including all veterinary requirements such as the submission of "Schedule O" forms

Schedule Y

Requirements for donors of embryos destined for transfer, sale or export

Herd book section	Donor must be registered as Appendix B or SP
Ownership	Donor must be registered in the name of an active member
Data Verification	The society shall reasonably ensure the accuracy and completeness of all the donor's pedigree, progeny and production data, but does not restrict itself to the accreditation of donors with official BLUP figures, as it does not have a policy of compulsory "performance testing".
Inspection	Donor cows must have been approved by at least two inspectors specifically appointed by the society (at least one of which should always be a senior) at a special inspection held for this purpose.
DNA profiling	The DNA profile must indicate purity and the LidCat number must be registered
Legal	All other relevant legal requirements, as prescribed by the Act, must be adhered to, including all veterinary requirements such as the submission of "Schedule O" forms