

Dear Nguni Breeder

Herewith feedback on the past weekend's proceedings during the Nguni Cattle Breeders Society's AGM 2014 at Sandstone Sleeper Estate.

Inspectors' refresher course

The course was offered by Archie du Plessis and attended by 32 inspectors.

Administrative problems and the teething troubles in changing over to being an "independent contractor" were mainly addressed. The breed standards and breed characteristics were discussed, followed by a discussion of differences of opinion. The fact that no appeal inspections were requested after the annual inspections is proof of the high standards maintained by the inspectors.

Symposium: Establishment of an alternative marketing strategy for Nguni cattle

Various speakers introduced the symposium with presentations on "Value-chain marketing" – Michael Duckitt and Carlo Peacock, "Ox systems" – Prof. Frikkie Nesor, and "Hotel system feedlots" – Gys Jooste. A discussion followed, with audience participation, during which differences of opinion and frustrations with current problems in the industry were addressed.

Summary:

- The Nguni Society must take the lead by entering onto discussions with the societies of other indigenous breeds to discuss the possibility of establishing "Sanga beef cattle" as a trade mark for the local and export markets.
- A decision was taken to do a survey of the number of commercial Nguni breeders.
- The importance of establishing a strong commercial market, particularly for the Nguni dam line, was also emphasised for the continued existence of the breed.
- Various marketing alternatives are possible for Nguni breeders, such as:
 1. The ox system, which offers the opportunity to market meat directly from the veld.
 2. Hotel system feedlots, which offer the opportunity to gain a larger share of the increased profit.
 3. Terminal cross-breeding, in order to provide weaners for the existing meat production system from a pure Nguni dam line.

All the above possibilities each offers its own challenge. Breeders will have to assume responsibility themselves to make decisions regarding which opportunity suits their particular circumstances. The Nguni breeders are spread all over the country and challenges and circumstances vary from area to area. Breeder groups and clubs will have to take the initiative and cooperate in a specific area so as to establish projects for marketing purposes.

The main objectives of the Nguni Cattle Breeders Society is to protect, promote, market and preserve the breed. The Nguni Society is a non-profit institution which is not empowered to do financing but may make funds available for research and marketing. The council, however, is in discussions with financing institutions to establish partnerships for projects such as those launched by its breeders.

The symposium served once again to emphasise the fact that Nguni breeders are experiencing frustrations with exploitation and discrimination by the market. However, the Nguni breed offers so many opportunities which the other large-frame breeds do not have. Breeders are requested please to assist the Society in establishing a database of commercial Nguni breeders by sending the particulars of such breeders to the office.

Dinner

Approximately 120 people attended this special occasion. People had a lovely time eating, dancing and socialising, while Zak Steyn provided the entertainment. A trophy for the best club was also presented to the Kalahari Nguni Club.

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The meeting was addressed by Gerrit van Zyl, who shared his positive experience with animal recording. He pointed out to the meeting how he had improved his production and the profit in his pocket.

During the meeting the following decisions were taken:

- The next AGM will be preceded by a discussion session where finances, the budget and points on the agenda will be debated. Thereafter the official AGM will take place and decisions will be formally ratified.
- The next AGM will be held on a Friday afternoon.
- Constitutional amendment clause 4. Membership: An additional member may be a commercial Nguni breeder or interested person who will only receive all communication and attend meetings but will have no right to vote and who may also not serve on the council. This point will be formulated during the next council meeting.
- The decision was also taken to move the closing date for the submission of the pre-designed Advertisements for the Journal to 15 February 2015. Photographs for advertisements designed by PVC must be received before 30 January 2015.

Cognisance was also taken of a point by Michiel van Niekerk (Jnr) regarding a marketing strategy for the Nguni Society.

Archie du Plessis and Pat Hobbs were re-elected as council members during the election.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30.

Nguni Council

