

6 July 2010

Dear Member

The Council held a regular meeting on 25 & 26 May 2010 that covered a wide range of issues on which you need to be informed as follows:

- Our core functions of administration and registration (with Studbook) are generally running satisfactorily.
- Our financial position and procedures are sound and secure due, in part, to our member's co-operation. Thank you.
- Our annual inspections are all but complete. Many thanks to our inspectors who make the time to conduct this vital function. Applications for next year's inspections will be sent out soon and we implore you to respond timeously, so that the planning for next year can be done even better.
- Our general feeling is that as our (animal) numbers increase, we as breeders need to take greater responsibility for stricter selection within our herds. The sales results are indicating that better animals are obtaining better prices and this is a positive trend.
- We have attempted to lift the profile of sales under our auspices by tightening up on the reproductive loopholes, embarking on an advertising campaign to encourage buyers to use them and will, henceforth, be more strictly applying the requirements of "Schedule G" that govern such sales.
- We are also in the process of reviewing our Schedules X & Y, the rules governing semen and embryo donors, respectively. We hope to finalize this process in the near future.
- Evidence suggests that the major growth area at present is in the non-registered sector and that "commercial breeder" numbers are increasing rapidly. It is incumbent on all our registered breeders to support this development on a local level as they ('commercial breeders') form the basis of our industry.
- It is very pleasing to note the ARC's offer to take up historical data (past 5 years) for purposes of performance recording. We strongly encourage all members who do not yet partake in the Beef Cattle Performance Recording Scheme to make use of this opportunity to register and submit their own accurate records, thus acquiring a head start towards accurate performance information of your herd. Even though our official policy remains that participation is not mandatory, we encourage members to join the Scheme. The minimum requirement is the submission of cow and calf weights at weaning, something we're sure most of our members are taking anyway. Please see accompanying letter in this regard.
- The IDC-funded provincial Nguni Development Trusts have begun to near the end of their initial contract periods with the IDC. They have played a major role in expanding the Nguni industry and establishing emerging farmer participation in the beef industry. We will continue to lobby for the renewal of these funding contracts, but have been warned by the IDC that this cannot be taken for granted. We are in the process of engaging the IDC, based on the relative success of these projects and the IDC's willingness to consider financing beneficiation projects in the Nguni industry. We will keep you posted of any significant developments in this regard.
- Our comparatively poor turnaround times for rectifying registration faults (at Studbook) indicates a poor administrative performance by our members in relation to other breed societies. We must respond immediately to any error reports that we receive as this has an administrative drag effect that wastes time and reflects poorly on our Society.

- The office is still getting requests for late birth notifications (BN's) in spite of our efforts to discourage this bad habit. Please design systems within your own record keeping that will ensure that you notify all your births within the required three-month period. The office will be getting even stricter with the handling of these requests. Late BN does generally have the effect of undermining the integrity of our data.
- Member training will be receiving renewed attention in the future and revised material is being developed in this regard.
- A growing number of enquiries have been received of late with regard to attempts by livestock agents to pay less for Nguni weaners. The council's response is to plan and execute a thorough investigation into this matter, which will include formal enquiries to feedlotter, renewed feeding trials in collaboration with the industry and proposals for alternative markets for our weaners. We are of the opinion that this must be a thorough process and may, as a result, take some time to complete. In the meantime, we suggest to those who are affected by this phenomenon, that you scout around for better agents and/or markets and use the opportunity to report incidence of this practice to the office (Elmarie) so that we can have better information. Also let the office know of agents/feedlotter that are not discriminating against our calves.
- Congratulations and sincere thanks to Naledi Roberts for her efforts in compiling our excellent 2010 journal. This probably brings to an end Naledi's four-year tenure with compiling the journal and we all agree that her efforts have played a significant role in promoting our breed. Very well done!
- Thanks also to Barry & Naledi Roberts, Hannes du Toit, Ben & Marguerite Fyfer, Jaap Mostert, Chris Fourie, Archie du Plessis and all the others who assisted at our successful NAMPO stall.
- Finally, we, with the assistance of Mr Graham Hallowell, have made significant progress with the cleansing of our database. This has been a huge task that has had an effect on a significant number of our breeders. Many of you have had animals cancelled as a result of this exercise and we appeal to you to see this action in the light of the fair, correct and accurate application of our breed standards. Where you disagree with our decision to cancel an animal, it remains your right to engage with us in writing, but always remember that it is your responsibility to ensure that your animals continually comply with the breed standards. In the past too many animals have been allowed to enter the system erroneously due to insufficient programming. This exercise will give us accurate information and put us "ahead of the pack" regarding the integrity of our figures. In future we will be running a similar exercise on a quarterly basis in order to maintain the credibility of our data.

Nguni Regards

Kevin Watermeyer
 President: Nguni Cattle Breeders' Society