



# NGUNI Beestelersgenootskap Cattle Breeder's Society

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Dear Breeder

## **Message from the Chairman**

As Chairman, it is a privilege to be part of the Nguni Society and breed. I noticed on several occasions how comfortable and supportive breeders are towards each other! It is really enjoyable to attend such events. It makes me very positive and excited about the future of our breed as well as the large number of young breeders who join the Society. It was also a pleasant surprise for me during the past Nampo Harvest Festival to hear how many people paused at our stall just to say they are Nguni, commercial or stud farmers. There are many commercial Nguni farmers but I think we need to involve them a lot more.

Currently it is going well with the Society and its members, but there is always room for improvement and for better service delivery – and that is the purpose of this letter. Great pressure is put on our office because breeders do not follow the correct procedures. Maybe it's because everyone do not always know exactly what to do or how to do it. I hope you will read this letter and take to heart what applies to you. However, there are a few concerns that I want to share with you.

1. **Integrity, honesty, loyalty and accurate record keeping** are the most important founding principles on which the stud industry is based. The complaints from breeders against other breeders', from whom animals are purchased, where the animals do not meet the minimum breed standards, have greatly increased. It is the seller's responsibility to make sure that the animals meet the minimum breed standards. The Society will in such cases ask the seller to replace the animal on his cost. This problem puts the Society in a difficult position as we do not want to interfere in private negotiations. The Society will address a breeder if the code of conduct is breached or if animals are sold as stud animals that do not meet the breed standards. I also want to warn buyers and sellers to be very careful when calf book (unselected) animals are sold or purchased; there is always a risk involved. A written agreement can minimise future problems. I also want to appeal to our breeders to take responsibility for their own product and if there is any dissatisfaction regarding these animals, the Society expects the seller to firstly try to solve the problem and not just to shrug his shoulders. It is difficult for the Society to intervene in private transactions, but if it has a negative impact on the breed the Society will surely investigate the matter to determine whether the seller acted according to the Constitution and the code of conduct. Please read through the Constitution again and take a close look at the code of ethics for breeders.

## **2. Sale of animals on auctions (not under the auspices)**

If auctions do not take place under the auspices of the Society, it is the seller's responsibility to transfer these animals to the new owners. Breeders cancel these animals on completion of the auction instead of transferring them to the new breeder. Reinstatement of these animals in order to transfer them will in future be for the seller's account. Animals that cannot be transferred will have to be replaced by the seller. Make sure when you sell animals at an auction that the animals that need to be transferred meet the minimum breed standards, as it is your responsibility to transfer these animals to the new owner. Such animals should not be cancelled but the correct information of the buyer should be supplied to SA Stud Book to enable transfer to the buyer.

The office will in future not resolve these problems if auctions do not take place under the auspices of the Society. This places undue pressure on the office while it is the seller's responsibility. In some cases auctions are held and almost a year after the sale the sold animals have not been transferred to the new owner. **NB It is a direct action with SA Stud Book to get these animals transferred to the new owners and not the duty of the Society.**

## **3. Auctions under the auspices of the Society**

The Society receives the auction list from the Auctioneers according to which SA Stud Book is instructed by the Society to do the necessary transfers. It increasingly happens that the breeder cancels the animals that were sold on the auction and the animals can therefore not be transferred. The costs for reinstating these animals will be for the seller's account. It is the duty of the auction coordinator or the seller to see that the auction list is sent to the office as soon as possible so that the animals can be transferred. Breeders must also ensure that the records of the animals entered for auctions are correct. It is very difficult to prepare the catalogue on time if there are animals that are not on the system and the administration needs to be ironed out first. Those animals will in future not be published in the catalogue. In the past it was done on the strength of the promises from the breeders that they will rectify the problems, but once the animal appears in the catalogue and is included in the auction, they do not keep their promises. No exceptions will be made in future. This also applies to cows that calved just before the auction where the calf has not being birth notified. Remember that the calf should be registered with SA Stud Book and not with the Society. The office communicates only with the sales coordinator to clear up and finalise any catalogue problems and not with the sellers separately, as this will only cause chaos. One seller can be responsible for the delay of the catalogue while the other breeders assume the delay is caused by the Society. It is the coordinator's responsibility to communicate with the seller and to give the final approval for the catalogue (on behalf of the seller) to the Society.

Veterinary certificates must be handed to the auctioneer or inspector when animals arrive at an auction. The Society has several vets as breeders and appeals to these vets to be sensitive when examining their own animals and issue certificates to themselves. This places a great responsibility on them.

Inspection of calf book animals at auctions: In future no calf book animals will be inspected at an auction inspection. Breeders must make sure animals are inspected before they enter these animals for sales. No exceptions will be made.

**4. Direct dealing:** You pay for this service; therefore, use it. Birth notifications, cancellations and transfers SHOULD BE SENT DIRECTLY TO SA STUD BOOK. It does not help your cause to send it to the Society, as the Society must in turn forward the documents to SA Stud Book, causing unnecessary work and delays.

**5. Semen for AI:** There are specific rules in the Constitution that dictates the collection of semen. I appeal to you as a breeder to make sure you obey these rules, even if the semen is for use in your own herd. "Own use" is exactly what it says and is therefore for the owner's own use in his own herd. (See clause 7 in the "BYE-LAWS" of the Constitution). As mentioned earlier, careful and accurate record keeping and integrity are the Society's most important cornerstones and I urge breeders to abide with these rules. Our Constitution states that a breeder must notify the Society when he collects semen for use in his own herd, as well as the quantity. I also want to bring to your attention that it is compulsory for a breeder to disclose it when semen was collected from a bull when selling this bull. A bull can only be transferred if a certificate accompanies the transfer application, stating how much semen was collected and where it is stored. If it is not declared, calves raised from the semen will not be eligible for registration. I also appeal to breeders who want to AI cows to make sure that the semen you plan to use is legal, otherwise the calves will not be recorded. The Society cannot afterwards bend or break the rules to rectify any mistakes. I seriously ask for your co-operation in this regard

**6. Out of hand sales.** Currently this is a big problem as there usually are no written agreements on the conditions of the sales. It is important to sign a written agreement between buyer and seller to prevent accusations from occurring at a later stage. This can be in the form of a compact agreement and mention must be made whether the animals were sold as stud or commercial animals as well as the conditions under which they were sold. It is the seller's duty to transfer the animals to the new owner. The seller should ensure that the animals meet the requirements to be transferred prior to selling them or else he should sell the animals as commercial, otherwise he should get the animal's records up to date. If a breeder sells an animal as a stud animal and the animal does not meet the minimum breed standards, the seller will be requested by the Society to replace the animal at his own cost.

### **7. Catalogues for auctions**

As already known to all breeders, performance testing (Animal Recording) is not compulsory for members of the Society and breeders can choose where they want to take part in performance recording. Currently there is no exchange of information between SA Stud Book and the ARC. The result is that the catalogue compiled by SA Stud Book (as the registering authority responsible for Nguni registrations) does not contain any information on the ARC performance measurements. The breeder is therefore responsible to provide all information and birth notifications to the ARC. Breeders can ask the ARC to print their catalogues with their performance data, if possible, but in that case there will be two catalogues for the same auction.

**8. Performance recording** increasingly plays an important role in the purchase of registered animals as buyers enquire on the breeding values of animals which they are interested in buying. A very small number of breeders participate in performance recording and unfortunately the breeding values are not quite accurate, especially because breeders do not do their performance recording at the same institution. The calculated performance values cause inaccuracies in the analysis, not because the calculations are done wrong, but because there are too few participants and insufficient information in some schemes that can be linked together. The majority of breeders do performance their performance recording at SA Stud Book, while a small percentage of breeders make use of the ARC. The more breeders that participate in performance recording at the same institution, the more value can be attached to the processed information, but it remains a private agreement between the breeder and the service provider.

**9. SA Stud Book and ARC.** As you have been informed, SA Stud Book and the ARC broke ties in November 2011. The organizations received the same list of participants and the result is that both institutions were under the impression that breeders will make use of their respective services. You may receive an invoice from the institution you are NOT involved with, in which case you must notify the institution that you will not make use of their services. If you prefer that the ARC to handle your animal recording, you have to send your birth notifications to them or you can negotiate with SA Stud Book and request them to do so.

**10. DNA:** DNA profiles from animals can be of much value. **The Council has decided to make DNA profiles for bulls compulsory from 1 January 2013.** This means that no calf will be recorded if the father does not have a DNA profile on the system. It will also help with parentage verification and to identify parents of multiple sires. Where parentage tests need to be done, the bull's profile will already be available. It will furthermore help in cases where a bull dies or is sold.

#### **11. Parentage verification**

Annually about 10 breeders are identified by the system and requested to do parentage verification tests on five animals, as selected by the system. The Society carries the costs of these tests and the Society also has the right, for whatever reason, to nominate any breeder for these tests. Tail hair should be taken from the calf, the dam and the sire and sent to the nominated laboratory, according to the instructions. This will determine whether the cow and bull are the correct parents of the calf. This analysis is important to give credibility to the Society's records. Animals that test negative will immediately be cancelled and new animals will be nominated from which samples must be submitted.

**12. IDC Nguni projects.** These projects can provide a sustainable market if it is managed correctly. Breeders should make themselves available to act as mentors for these new farmers. Breeders cannot just sell the animals without rendering practical and administrative assistance. Unfortunately there also are opportunistic breeders who sell substandard animals at top prices to these projects and that may impair the projects and could harm the market. It is suggested to co-ordinate these activities through the various clubs. In doing so, the records of the animals can be verified. This method is also preferred by the IDC.

**13. The NGUNI trademark** has after many years been registered for the Nguni Cattle Breeders Society. Confirmation of this has been received and the necessary certificates are in the process of finalization. Council hopes that this unique product will be protected in its own right. Once the documents are received the breeders will be informed and an explanation of the various classes of registration will be sent to the breeders.

**14. Inspection lists.** In cases where inspections must be done shortly before an auction I appeal to the inspectors to submit the lists to the office as soon as possible. The office needs these lists to compile the catalogues from the information on the lists. Breeders can also send a copy of their completed inspection lists to the office to make sure the necessary information is received by the office. Please ensure that the correct lists, where the completed forms were signed by you as the breeder, as well as the inspector, are submitted.

**15. FR / ER animals.** First Registration animals cause the Society a lot of problems. What was the intention with the registration of FR / ER animals? The aim was to allow animals that are outside the system, and that looks very typical of the breed, on to the system. Due to the abuse of this practise the rules were changed so that FR / ER animals can no longer be transferred. If a breeder owns unregistered animals that phenotypically look like Nguni's, these animals can be presented as FR during an inspection. During the inspection of FR / ER animals all other brands are recorded and checked to determine whether the animal was not rejected previously. The breeder is taking a chance to add an unknown animal to the system and to record offspring from this animal. The offspring from FR animals who have passed an inspection, with dams that meet the minimum breed standards, can be transferred as Appendix A animals. Unfortunately there are more and more evidence that this permission is grossly abused. Females that have been rejected are kept in the herd and their offspring are presented as FR / ER animals. It is short-sighted and harms the breed. What is not acceptable for the system now remains in the system. Maybe we should think about changing the FR / ER system. A possibility is to keep offspring of FR / ER animals' as FR's and not to make them transferable, but only to upgrade them to Appendix A after the third or fourth generation. Your support and time will learn that **FR / ER animals are not bred from rejected animals, as this is wrong**

**and can cause the breed great harm!!!** If FR / ER animals and the abuse thereof increase drastically the Society should change the rules.

These rules have always been in place. If everyone is honest and operates their studs with integrity and loyalty, it would greatly reduce unnecessary pressures on the office. It will also reduce the unpleasant task of the Council to address breeders. Maintain the orderliness in the Society and obey the rules. The Nguni Society is the beef breed with most breeders registered with SA Studbook and the abeyance of these rules is the only way to function well and to provide a good service to the members

With this letter I call on your loyalty and cooperation as a breeder.

Good luck with the new auction- and calving season. Remember to stick to all the rules.

NGUNI Greetings

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President: Archie du Plessis

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