

LRF-TS news

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*A Simmentaler cow owned by Kaspar Günzel
from Grootfontein in Namibia.
(Photograph: Stefanie Günzel)*

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Gauging maternal productivity in the rangelands

By Alastair Rayner, genetics editor, beefcentral.com

Australia's rangelands extend to almost 75% of the continent, with grazing enterprises located across close to 58% of the rangeland environment. For many producers, the challenges of operating a grazing system in an environment characterised by highly variable rainfall are further compounded by the inability to influence the feed base.

Production is the result of decisions around environmental management and genetic selection. In areas such as the rangelands, where producers are more exposed and have less opportunity to manage the environment, particularly the feed base, genetic selection becomes a crucial consideration.

As part of the recent International Rangelands Congress held in Adelaide, Prof Wayne Pitchford of Adelaide University presented to delegates an overview of the importance of genetic selection and applications from research into the maternal productivity projects conducted as part of the Beef CRC.

Weaning rate

The key driver of profitability in extensive operations is weaning rate. Unlike conception rates or calving rates, which are stand-alone measures, weaning rate captures both fertility and calf survival.

As a measure for producers, this can become a powerful measurement for maternal performance across mobs and across the overall herd. While this is often a well-recognised concept among producers, moving from a conceptual recognition to practice can remain challenging. Research from

the Beef CRC Maternal Productivity Project clearly demonstrated the importance of weaning rate.

Across large datasets, weaning rate was shown to explain 37% of the variation in maternal productivity, compared with only 9% attributed to calf weight. While heavy weaners may be more appealing in the short-term, it is the total number of calves weaned that has the most meaningful impact on enterprise profitability, particularly in feed-limited rangeland systems. This highlights the need for selection decisions that favour consistent fertility and calf survival over singular focus on growth traits.

Impact of weight and growth

It is worth considering the contributors to successfully increasing weaning rate. A key factor is the impact of both weight and growth rate, particularly for heifers.

The impact of weight and growth of successful conception among heifers is known. Prof Pitchford presented data collected from more than 14 000 commercial heifers, demonstrating that rapid weight gain (>1kg/day) during joining significantly increases conception rates, even among lighter heifers below 300kg.

In rangeland environments where rainfall events can trigger short-term feed flushes, these events can be used to support joining strategies in response to feed conditions following rain and maximise opportunities to join lighter heifers.

Conversely, where nutritional growth is limited, due to delayed pasture response or overgrazing, heifers must enter joining at a minimum threshold of around 350kg to achieve acceptable conception rates.

Without this weight gain and under this benchmark, the risk of missed conceptions increases, delaying entry into the breeding herd and reducing long-term productivity.

Body condition score

While weight and growth rate are the major factors underpinning heifers, body condition score (BCS) is the foremost indicator for mature cows. Research has continually shown that cows that fail to maintain adequate condition through lactation or into the mating period are significantly more likely to experience extended post-partum anoestrus.

In rangeland systems, where supplementation is minimal and feed quantity and quality vary widely, cows with better inherent ability to build and maintain condition are more likely to remain fertile across variable seasons. This makes condition not only a management outcome but a genetic trait worthy of selection. This can challenge producers who may often focus on selection of traits for growth or carcass outcomes.

Mature cow body condition EBV

In a rangelands environment where seasonal feed flushes are unpredictable, cows that can gain and hold condition in response to these opportunities are potentially more productive. From a selection process, the mature cow body condition EBV has significant value for producers. This EBV predicts a female's genetic potential to maintain condition throughout her life. For rangeland producers, this is more useful than relying on carcass fat EBVs measured in younger animals.

Prof Pitchford highlighted that around 75% of the genetic variation in mature cow condition is independent of carcass fat and muscle traits. This means that selecting for fatness or muscle based on yearling or finishing-stage carcass data will not reliably identify cows that can sustain condition through multiple seasons and reproductive cycles.

For producers in extensive systems, the mature cow body condition EBV is a more targeted and effective tool for building herds that can maintain fertility under fluctuating environmental conditions. Focussing on feed utilisation and BCS does also impact considerations on traits such as net feed intake (NFI).

While there is much interest in selecting cattle that are genetically lower for NFI (meaning less feed eaten for the same weight gain), particularly in environments where feed is not as restricted, in rangeland systems, this trait can potentially work against a producer. Cows that are 'too efficient' may eat less when feed is available

and struggle to store enough condition to get through dry periods. Research suggests that in extensive conditions, a bigger appetite is an advantage, because those animals can build condition when seasonal opportunities occur.

Traits that influence production

In addition to these traits, rangeland producers still need to focus on traits that influence production. Prof Pitchford's presentation highlighted days to calving (DTC) as the most useful EBV for evaluating female fertility. In effect, this EBV offers producers the opportunity to select for two key issues: firstly, the time to conception post-joining and secondly, improving the interval between calving and re-joining in cows.

While a small proportion of variation in DTC is attributed to gestation length, most of the variation reflects post-partum recovery and the conception interval. This makes the EBV a valuable tool in genetically selecting to improve reproductive

efficiency in commercial conditions. Prof Pitchford's analysis demonstrated that for every one-day reduction in DTC, producers can expect up to a 4% increase in calves weaned over two joining periods.

Although rangeland production systems are environmentally challenging, genetic selection offers producers a practical and cost-effective strategy to improve herd performance. By focussing on traits such as DTC, mature cow body condition and overall weaning rate, and applying this alongside sound physical selection, producers can make measurable gains in maternal productivity.

When used well, accurate EBVs provide a framework for building herds that are more fertile, resilient, and better adapted to the seasonal variability of extensive systems. **LRF**

To read the original article, [click here](#).

Maximise genetic gain with your bull pack

'The value of the bull pack' was the subject of Dr Christian Duff's talk at the LRF Stockman School in October last year. Dr Duff is chief of operations at ABRI in Australia.

Focussing on a team of bulls in a cow group, rather than individual bulls could maximise genetic gain while managing the risk associated with possible low estimated breeding value (EBV) accuracy of individual bulls in the pack.

EBVs express an animal's true breeding value, while the accuracy of an EBV expresses the confidence level in the EBV prediction. The higher the accuracy, the less EBV change is expected as more data becomes available about that individual animal. Lower accuracy implies that the EBV may shift as more info is added.

Accuracy and risk mitigation

An EBV with an accuracy of more than 90% is considered a high accuracy estimate of the animal's

true breeding value. It is unlikely that EBVs will change considerably with the addition of more progeny data. With a 75 to 90% accuracy, EBVs are of medium-high accuracy. EBVs in this range is usually calculated based on the animal's own performance coupled with the performance of some of the animal's progeny.

With a 50 to 74% accuracy, the EBVs are of medium accuracy. EBVs in this range are usually calculated based on the animal's own performance and pedigree and possibly genotype information.

EBVs with less than 50% accuracy are preliminary. EBVs at this accuracy level could change substantially as more direct performance or genotypes becomes available for the animal.

EBVs can describe the genetic merit of groups, not just individuals, Dr Duff pointed out. This is useful for evaluating bull packs or donor females in ET programmes.

While low individual EBV accuracy implies a higher risk, the bull pack approach spreads this risk. Younger bulls can rival proven sires when used in teams. A bull pack approach thus avoids an 'all eggs in one basket' strategy. This approach should also be considered across breeding years, providing more predictability to reach genetic goals.

Dr Duff's take-home message regarding bull selection was to compare animals based on EBVs regardless of accuracy, and when EBVs are similar, to give preference to the EBV that shows higher accuracy. To improve accuracy, record more traits or genotypes, maximise contemporary group sizes, source from performance-recording herds, and use proven sires or pack strategies. **LRF**

Article courtesy of *Stockfarm*,
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Selecting for cow maternal performance: Making your breeding and selection systems pay

By Robert L Weaver, PhD, professor and head, Eastern Kansas Research and Extension Centres, Kansas State University

The dramatic changes and volatility of cow-calf production system input costs and calf values have many producers seeking options to improve cow herd production efficiency and profitability. Profitability may be enhanced by increasing the volume of production (i.e. the pounds of calves you market) and/or the value of products you sell (improving quality). The reduction of production costs, and thus breakeven prices, can also improve profitability. Better yet, improving the input:output ratio should enhance profit.

For commercial beef producers, the implementation of technologies and breeding systems that increase the quality and volume of production and reduce input costs is essential to maintain or improve the competitive position of the operation. Central to the success of the commercial cattle operation is the maternal performance of the cow herd.

It is becoming progressively more difficult to find bulls for use in commercial production that meet all the goals of being a suitable sire for terminal calves and desirable replacement females due to the growing antagonisms in the value chain between traits in the terminal and maternal objectives. The desire to produce environmentally adapted replacement females that are appropriate for mature weight and lactation potential in a given forage environment and management system, while simultaneously producing high-value, market-targeted feeder cattle, has challenged the thinking of many producers.

A number of traits contribute to the maternal capability of the herd. Several of the traits, like mature size and lactation potential, interact with

environmental constraints (weather, forage production, parasite load) to affect the reproductive efficiency of the cow herd. Cattle producers through the selection for appropriate genetic potentials for growth and lactation and sustained fertility, coupled with hybrid vigour from crossbreeding, can build highly 'maternal' cow herds. Leveraging both additive (think EPDs and selection indexes) and non-additive (hybrid vigour or heterosis) genetic effects empowers producers to design excellent breeding cows.

Selection for fertility and longevity

A number of breeds have developed or are working to build suites of traits for genetic evaluation that capture the essential aspects of maternal performance. Primary among these are mature cow weight (corrected for differences in body condition or fatness) and lactation, expressed as milk EPD. Combined, these two traits provide key insights into differences in maintenance energy requirements and provide the backdrop for further investigation of fertility.

Several trait definitions have been adopted for evaluating the sustained fertility, longevity, or stayability of cows in a production environment. These traits aim to identify sires that produce females that have high levels of reproductive performance in their production environment. Many of the maternal traits that describe fertility and longevity have relatively low heritability of ~10%, indicating that the environment has a large effect (~90%) on fertility trait outcomes.

Mature weight has a substantially higher heritability of 30 to 40% and represents a key opportunity for producers to control nutrient demand. Producers should leverage selection

tools that describe differences in reproductive performance and longevity, as small improvements in culling rates have a significant impact on amortised cow costs through changes in replacement rate. Reduced replacement rate supports cost savings through deferred replacement costs and enhanced revenues by marketing additional calves in the value chain.

Leveraging maternal heterosis

The use of crossbreeding offers two distinct and important advantages over the use of a single breed. First, crossbred animals have heterosis or hybrid vigour. Second, crossbred animals combine the strengths of the parent breeds. The term 'breed complementarity' is often used to describe breed combinations that produce highly desirable progeny for a broad range of traits.

One potential solution that may help optimise the selection of sires that produce desirable maternal trait attributes and market targeted calves

Table 1: Units and percentage of heterosis by trait for *Bos taurus* crossbred dams.

Trait	Heterosis	
	Units	Percentage (%)
Calving rate, %	3,5	3,7
Survival to weaning, %	0,8	1,5
Birthweight, lb	1,6	1,8
Weaning weight, lb	18	3,9
Longevity, years	1,36	16,2
Lifetime productivity		
Number of calves	0,97	17
Cumulative weaning weight, lb	600	25,3



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Table 2: Units and percentage of heterosis by trait for *Bos taurus* by *Bos indicus* crossbred dams.^{1,2}

Trait	Heterosis	
	Units	Percentage (%)
Calving rate, % ¹	15,4	-
Calving assistance rate, % ¹	-6,6	-
Calf survival, % ¹	8,2	-
Weaning rate, % ¹	20,8	-
Birthweight, lb ¹	-2,4	-
Weaning weight, lb ¹	3,2	-
Weaning weight per cow exposed, lb ²	91,7	31,6

¹Adapted from Franke et al., 2005; numeric average of Angus-Brahman, Brahman-Charolais, and Brahman-Hereford heterosis estimates. ²Adapted from Franke et al., 2001.

is to separate this into two distinct breeding decisions. Doing so increases the selection intensity of both sire groups as they are no longer bound by the demands of balancing the trait groups.

Heterosis effects

Improvements in cow-calf production due to heterosis are attributable to having both a crossbred cow and a crossbred calf. Tables 1 and 2 detail the maternal (crossbred cow) heterosis observed for various important production traits for *Bos taurus* and *Bos indicus* crosses.

These heterosis estimates are adapted from a report by Cundiff and Gregory, 1999, and Franke et al., 2005. They summarise crossbreeding experiments conducted in the Southeastern and Midwest areas of the United States and the Gulf Coast, respectively. Heterosis generates the largest improvement in lowly heritable traits. Traits such as reproduction and longevity, essential for cow-calf profitability, have low heritability. These traits respond very slowly to selection, but heterosis generated through crossbreeding can significantly improve an animal's performance.

The largest economic benefit (roughly 66%) of crossbreeding for

commercial producers comes from having crossbred cows. Crossbreeding has been shown to be an effective method to improve reproductive efficiency and productivity in beef cattle.

Crossbreeding's impact on profit

Enhanced profit is likely one of the strongest motivators for producers to implement effective, structured crossbreeding systems. The substantial improvements in production efficiency, measured as weaning weight per cow exposed, support improved profit and operational sustainability.

Improved profit potential is realised through the simultaneous improvement in gross revenue stream to the ranch while decreasing costs of production through reduced replacement female requirements. Enhanced reproductive efficiency, especially in harsh environments, favourably decreases the breakeven unit cost of production. Getting more calves to market, marketing heavier calves, and selling a larger percentage of the calf crop through the benefits of individual and maternal heterosis, enhances gross revenue. Increasing revenue while decreasing or maintaining costs improves profit, assuming constant inventories.

Keys to crossbreeding success

If you implement a crossbreeding system, do not be fooled into the idea that you no longer need to select and purchase quality bulls or semen for your herd. Heterosis cannot overcome low-quality genetic inputs. The quality of progeny from a crossbreeding system is limited by the quality of the parent stock that produced them. Conversely, do not believe that the selection of extremely high-quality bulls or semen or choosing the right breed will offset the advantages of an effective crossbreeding system.

Crossbreeding and sire selection are complementary and should be used in tandem to build an optimum mating system in commercial herds (Bullock and Anderson, 2004). The biggest keys to success are the thoughtful construction of a plan and then

sticking to it! Be sure to set attainable goals. Discipline is essential.

Summary

Judicious breed selection and animal selection within breeds is critical to building high value replacement females to support the maternal requirements of your herd. Selection for environmentally adapted cows with enhanced longevity and fertility through the use of genetic improvement tools is critical for success. The economic benefits of crossbreeding are clear, and the production system efficiencies that can be gained are tremendous.

Every breed has strengths and weaknesses relative to an individual commercial operation's production and marketing goals. One of the benefits of crossbreeding is blending strengths from various breeds to meet production goals. It is important to remember that successful crossbreeding programmes focus on optimums, not maximums or minimums, to achieve breeding and marketing goals that fit within the production environment. Commercial cattlemen should use all the available genetic tools to enhance their cow herd's maternal performance. **LRF**



Prof Robert Weaber.

Article courtesy of *Stockfarm* October 2025. For more information, send an email to Prof Robert Weaber at bweaber@ksu.edu

Basiese beginsels van veldbestuur vir volhoubare produksie

Deur dr Louis du Pisani, spesialis landboukonsultant

Goeie veldbestuur behels nie buitengewone stappe nie – dit gaan bloot daaroor dat basiese beginsels buitengewoon goed toegepas moet word. Hierdie artikel bespreek kortliks die belangrikste basiese beginsels. Dr Du Pisani was in Oktober 2025 een van die sprekers tydens die jaarlikse LRF Veeskool by Aldam, waar hy in diepte oor hierdie onderwerp gesels het.

1 Weikapasiteit en veebelading

Veebelading verwys na die getal diere wat 'n veeprodusent op sy plaas aanhou. Die gevolge van 'n verkeerde veebelading word in *Figuur 1* aange-ton. As 'n veeprodusent 100 diere op sy 1 000ha plaas aanhou, pas hy 'n veebelading van een dier/10ha op sy plaas toe. As die belading byvoorbeeld een dier/20ha is, word die plaas onder-belaai. Die gevolg is goeie produksie/dier, maar swak wins/ha. Die plantkun-dige, John Acocks, het hierna verwys as *understocked and overgrazed*.

As 'n belading van een dier/5ha toegepas word, word dit oorbenut – dit beteken daar word nie genoeg voer op die plaas geproduseer om in die diere se behoeftes te voorsien nie. Anders gestel, die veld produseer 500kg benutbare voer/ha/jaar, maar die getal diere op die plaas het 'n voerbehoefte van 1 000kg voer/ha/jaar. Die veld voorsien dus net in 50% van hul voer-behoefte. Diere is dus kronies honger en ondervoed, met gepaardgaande swak diereprestasie (per dier en per ha) en lae kuddewinsgewendheid. Dit lei uiteindelik tot veldagteruitgang, tot waar die veld hoofsaaklik uit minder-waardige weidingsplante bestaan.

Die ideaal is om te boer met 'n getal diere wat in harmonie met die plaas se dra vermoë is (*Figuur 1*, optimale vee-belading). Dit is die belading waarteen

die veld se voerproduksie en die diere se voerbehoefte in harmonie is. In Engels noem ons dit die *sweet spot*. 'n Optimale veebelading sal ook maksimum wins/ha verseker.

In hierdie verband moet 'n paar aspekte altyd in gedagte gehou word:

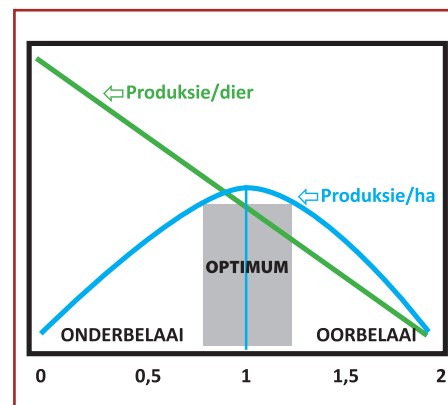
- Veebelading wat in harmonie met die plaas is, is nie die enigste stuk gereedskap vir goeie veldbestuur nie – dit is slegs die beginpunt. Dit help niks as die res van die veld-bestuursbeginsels nie ook korrek toegepas word nie. Dit is soos om 'n tang vir alles te gebruik, van die vasdraai van skroewe tot die inkap van spykers. Dit doen die werk min of meer, maar nie werklik goed nie.
- 'n Plaas kan uit verskillende veldsoorte en kombinasies daarvan bestaan, soos vleie, rante en berge. Netso verskil plase in terme van die aangeplante voerbronne wat daar verbou kan word. Elke veldsoort en aangeplante voerbron het 'n unieke produksiepotensiaal afhangend van elkeen se spesi-fieke grond, watervoorsiening en toestand. Daarom het geen twee plase of kampe dieselfde dra vermoë nie. Elke kamp moet op grond van sy eie dra vermoë bewei word.

'n Plaas se dra vermoë sal van jaar tot jaar wissel soos wat die reënval wissel. Daarom is evaluering minstens jaarliks nodig om deurentyd naby die optimale belading te bly, aan-gesien dit is waar die meeste wins/ha gerealiseer word.

2 Voldoende kampherstel

Wanneer oor veldbestuur gepraat word is die fokus gewoonlik op beweiding,

Figuur 1: Verwantskap tussen veebelading, produksie/dier en produksie/ha.



met min of geen aandag aan dit wat tussen beweiding plaasvind. André Voisin, die vader van wisselbeweiding, se eerste wet van wisselbeweiding lui: “Before the grass sward, sheared with the animal’s teeth, can achieve its maximum productivity, sufficient interval must have elapsed between two successive shearings to allow the grass to accumulate in its roots the reserves necessary for a vigorous spurt of regrowth, and to produce its ‘blaze of growth’ (for high daily yield per hectare)”.



Die kampe by die bergkampproef wat sedert 1934 tot nou slegs in die winter (links bo en onder) en somer (regs bo en onder) bewei word. (Foto's: Dr Loraine van den Berg).

Tabel 1: Invloed van groeiseisoenrus op veldproduksie (kg voer/ha) in die sentrale Vrystaat. (Bron: Prof Hennie Snyman)

Jaar	Nie rus (twee keer/seisoen ontblaar)	Volle groeiseisoen-rus (elke derde jaar)
2007/08	1 011	2 660
2008/09	915	1 914
2009/10	1 851	2 901
Gemiddeld	1 259	2 491
Weikapasiteit (ha/KVE)	1	0,5

Die tydperk tussen twee agtereenvolgende weitydperke staan bekend as 'herstelrus'.

3 Rus vir 'n volle groeiseisoen

'n Groeiseisoen se rus laat die plante toe om al hul fenologiese stadia te voltooi sonder om ontblaar te word, vanaf hergroei aan die begin van die seisoen, tot saadproduksie, rypworing van die saad en storting daarvan. Dit is die belangrikste meganisme om te verseker dat die saadbank van veral die beste plante oor tyd aangevul word en nie uitgeput raak nie.

Dit verseker dat, al sou die kampe in die voorafgaande jare dalk verkeerd bewei gewees het, die skade tydens die groeiseisoenrus volledig opgehef word. Elke kamp op die plaas behoort sowat een keer elke drie tot vyf jaar 'n groeiseisoen se rus te ontvang. Tabel 1 bevat data wat die voordeel van groeiseisoenrus op 'n plaas met kleinvee-eenhede (KVE's) toon.

4 Beperk seisoenale beweidings

Die groeikurwe van plantspesies en plantgroepe verskil van mekaar. Sommige groei aktief in die lente, ander in die somer, en ander weer in die herfs of winter. Plante is op hul smaaklikste en aantreklikste vir weidende diere wanneer hulle aktief groei. As 'n kamp dus jaar na jaar in die lente bewei word, sal daardie plante wat in die lente aktief groei, telkens daardie tyd van die jaar bewei word. As hierdie seisoenale beweidings van 'n kamp lank genoeg aanhou sal daardie plante mettertyd verdwyn.

Veral een weidingsproef demonstreer die invloed van langdurige seisoenale beweidings baie goed, naamlik die bergkamproef by die Grootfontein Landbou-navorsings-instituut by Middelburg in die Oos-Kaap. Dit het in 1934 begin en word steeds volgehou. Dit bevat 'n kamp wat sedert 1934 net in die somer bewei word en tans 100% uit bossies bestaan. Die kamp het in die onlangse verlede met inheemse struik begin verbos, en bykans geen gras is oor nie. Die winterkamp bestaan weer uit 100% gras met bykans geen bossies nie. Die foto illustreer die effek van langdurige seisoenale beweidings.

5 Beperk selektiewe beweidings

Volgehoue selektiewe beweidings lei tot die oorbeweidings van sekere plantspesies en/of plantdele – meestal die smaaklikste en produktiefste plante. Hierdie plante sterf mettertyd af en hul plek word gewoonlik deur swakker weiplante oorgeneem. Dit lei weer tot die agteruitgang van die bogrondse en ondergrondse biodiversiteit van veld, met gevolglike verlaagde veerkragtigheid en produksievermoë, beide wat voerkwantiteit en -gehalte betref. Die grootste sondaar is lang weitydperke in groot kampe met klein troppies vee.

Soms is dit wel voordelig om vee toe te laat om vir kort tydperke selektief te vreet, soos tydens laatdragtigheid en vroeë laktasie wanneer die diere onder voedingsdruk verkeer. Wanneer die kudde egter nie onder voedingsdruk is nie en met 'n laer-gehalte dieet kan klaarkom, is hoëdrukbeveidings 'n belangrike hulpmiddel om

selektiewe weidings te beperk. Hoër druk word bewerkstellig om tropgroottes te vergroot en/of die beskikbare weidingsoppervlakte te verklein.

6 Verwyder beperkende faktore

Verskeie faktore plaas 'n beperking op die mate en tempo van veldherstel. Dit sluit in bosverdigting en -indringing, wind- en watererosie, kaal kolle, swak infiltrasie van reënwater in die grond wat dan afloop, en 'n gebrek aan saad van hoogs produktiewe en smaaklike plante. Ontbos, saai goeie gras in, en raak ontslae van erosieslote en -gate.

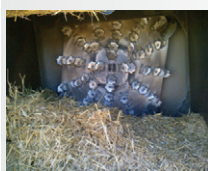
Om jou veld volhoubaar te bestuur, moet jy daaraan dink as 'n spaarrekening – as jy meer onttrek (wei) as wat jy deponeer (rus en herstel), sal jy bankrot speel (jou grond sal agteruitgaan). Volhoubare veldbestuur gaan oor die balansering van gebruik met herstel. **LRF**

Artikel met vergunning van Veeplaas, Oktober 2025. Vir meer inligting, kontak dr Du Pisani by ldupisani@gmail.com



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Brick by brick: Feeding a ruminant from birth to slaughter

By Erin Graham, technical manager, Molatek

Rearing a ruminant from birth to slaughter is a lot like building a house. It demands planning, precision, and the right ‘materials’ at every stage. From the moment of conception to the final finishing touches before market, each phase contributes to the overall integrity of the ‘structure’.

However, we all know that building a house must be done in steps, and skipping steps or using poor-quality inputs early on can lead to costly catastrophes later. To ‘build a ruminant’ brick by brick, there are several critical stages of feeding and development, and foundational elements that determine its success.

Before the first brick is laid, every builder needs a blueprint. In livestock production these blueprints are the non-negotiables and include genetics, nutrition, health management, and environment. They shape the potential of the animal long before feed enters the picture.

The architectural design

Genetics sets the framework for everything that follows. Traits such as calving and lambing ease, reproductive performance such as fertility, disease resistance, feed efficiency, and maternal behaviour are heritable and must guide breeding decisions. Poor genetics can predispose animals to dystocia, weak offspring, as well as poor growth and milk yield, all flaws that no amount of feeding can fully correct.

Selecting sires and dams with proven performance records, sound fertility, good feed efficiency, and desirable maternal traits is like choosing the right architectural plan. You cannot build a skyscraper on a blueprint designed for a garden shed. In the same way, genetic potential sets

the foundation for how well the animal will respond to nutrition, resist disease, and grow efficiently.

Quality building materials

The dam’s diet during pregnancy directly influences foetal development, birth weight, and colostrum quality. Undernutrition leads to low birth weight, poor thermoregulation, and weak immunity; overfeeding, especially in late gestation, can result in oversized foetuses and birthing complications. Think of nutrition as the bricks and mortar.

If the materials are substandard, the structure will be weak. Balanced energy and protein intake, along with adequate fibre and micronutrients, ensure that the ‘foundation’ of the newborn is strong and resilient.

Skilled builders

Effective health management is like relying on skilled builders – without their expertise, even the best-designed plans can fail. Vaccinations, parasite control, and mineral supplementation (e.g., selenium, iodine, and copper) are essential for foetal development and maternal wellbeing. Body condition scoring (BCS) helps monitor nutritional status and readiness for birth. A well-managed dam is more likely to produce high-quality colostrum, deliver without complications, and care effectively for her offspring.

Health protocols should be proactive rather than reactive and tailored to the specific production system. Therefore, choose your ‘builders’ wisely and well in advance.

Construction site conditions

Environmental stress is like trying to build in a storm – even the best materials and workers cannot perform under chaotic conditions.

Minimising noise, stress during handling, and exposure to pathogens helps keep the ‘build’ on track. Stress during gestation – whether from overcrowding, poor handling, or inadequate shelter – can compromise foetal development and maternal behaviour. Clean, dry, and safe birthing environments lower the risk of infections and injuries. A calm, well-managed ‘construction site’ supports a smooth, safe delivery.

With the blueprint complete the focus now shifts to the building phases – each step critical for ensuring the structure’s strength, integrity, and long-term success.

Phase 1: Laying the foundation

The journey begins before birth. The dam’s nutrition and care during pregnancy prepare the site. Colostrum intake in the first hours of life is like pouring concrete – it sets the immune system and establishes early health. If the foundation is weak, the rest of the structure is at risk. A calf or lamb deprived of adequate colostrum is like a house built on sand – it may stand for a while, but it is vulnerable to collapse. Ensuring timely, sufficient colostrum intake is one of the most critical interventions in early life.

Phase 2: Framing the structure

In the early weeks, the calf or lamb transitions from a monogastric-like milk stomach to a fully functional rumen. This is the framing stage – building walls and adding plumbing. A high-quality diet acts as scaffolding, supporting microbial colonisation and rumen papillae development. Without proper framing the digestive system remains inefficient.

The rumen is the ruminant’s engine room. Its development depends on exposure to solid feed,

fermentation products, and microbial diversity – early exposure to high-quality feed accelerates rumen maturation and sets the stage for efficient growth. A well-structured fodder flow plan is the rebar, providing support and the structure needed for rumen development. Just as rebar reinforces concrete, a year-round supply of roughage ensures a robust and efficient digestive system.

Phase 3: Roofing and insulation

Weaning is the roofing phase, protecting the young animal from external stressors. Backgrounding adds 'insulation', supporting steady growth and immune resilience. Clean water, vaccinations, and stress management are the weatherproofing elements that keep the structure strong.

This phase is often underestimated. Poor weaning practices can cause growth setbacks, immune weakness, and behavioural stress. A smooth

transition from milk to solid feed, supported by consistent management, ensures the 'roof' holds firm.

Phase 4: Interior design

The finishing phase – whether in a feedlot or on veld – is like choosing your finishes. Energy-dense feed adds polish and market value, while carcass quality becomes the curb appeal. Consistency and precision in this stage determine the success of the final product.

Finishing is where the animal's potential is realised. Whether the goal is marbling, lean muscle, or optimal weight gain, the finishing diet must align with production objectives.

Start strong

But here's the twist: A fancy finish cannot fix a cracked foundation. No matter how luxurious the final touches – high-quality feed, supplements, or management – poor early development

cannot be undone. A calf or lamb that began life with weak genetics, poor maternal nutrition, or inadequate colostrum will always carry those limitations.

It is like trying to repair a cracked foundation with expensive tiles or hiding a slanting wall with fancy curtains. The structure may look appealing for a while, but it won't last. So, start strong, build smart, and finish well. The finishing phase can enhance what is already there, but it cannot compensate for what's missing. That is why successful producers invest in the early stages, knowing it pays dividends at slaughter.

Slaughter is the handover – the moment the keys are passed to the new owner. It's the culmination of the careful planning, management, and investment throughout the animal's life. A well-fed, well-managed ruminant is strong and valuable, just like a well-built house. **LRF**

Article courtesy of *Stockfarm*, October 2025. For more information, send an email to Erin Graham at erin.graham@rclfoods.com

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RPO-vleis amptelik op internasionale standaard

Deur Susan Marais

Hier is nóg rede om met jou braaivleis te spog: Die Rooivleisprodusente-organisasie (RPO) voldoen nou aan internasionale ISO 9001-standaarde en het ook 'n RPO-gehaltebestuurstelsel geregistreer wat binnekort deel van 'n 'plaas-tot-bord' ISO-gesertifiseerde skema sal vorm.

Tydens sy kongres het die nasionale RPO amptelik bekendgemaak dat 'n nuwe ISO 9001- en RPO Skema-gehaltebestuurstelsel met behulp van Certification Partner Global (CPG) in werking gestel is. Thea Laufs, voedseldirekteur by CPG, sê dié internasionale sertifisering (ISO) beteken eerstens dat die nasionale RPO-kantoor op 'n internasionale vlak funksioneer wat administrasie-stelsels betref. Tweedens maak dit binnekort 'n universele oudit op plase moontlik, wat sal verseker dat boerderye regoor die land aan eenvoudige standaarde voldoen.

In die praktyk

Die ISO 9001-sertifisering verwys na die nasionale RPO se oorhoofse stelsels en standaarde, terwyl die RPO Skema op die spesifieke standaard fokus wat nou geïmplementeer en geverifieer kan word. Die skema het kortom ten doel om te bewys dat produsente voldoende na hul diere, mense en omgewing omsien. Plase sal dus geoudit word op grond van faktore soos dierewelstand en -gesondheid, omgewingsbestuur, arbeidspraktyke, biosekuriteit, naspeurbaarheid en wetlike nakoming.

“Uiteindelik hoop ek dat hierdie proses vir produsente gemoedrus sal bring, deur hulle te laat besef dat hulle vir baie jare al ‘reg’ boer, maar hulle ook die kans gegun word om selfs meer aandag aan die fyner detail van hul boerderye te skenk.”

Laufs sê verder sy hoop dié stelsel bied aan produsente die geleentheid om hul boerderye uit te brei, omdat dit meer beheer aan produsente belooft. Die feit is dat jy meer kan vermag wanneer jy 'n saak beter kan beheer. “Elke keer as 'n nuwe stelsel in plek gestel word, lei dit tot groei, juis omdat meer dinge dan reg gedoen word.”

Oor die jare het Laufs gesien dat diegene wat sulke stelsels in plek het, minder kommer oor die herroeping van produkte het. ISO 9001 is juis 'n internasionale standaard wat raamwerke vir gehaltebestuur bied, met die klem op kliëntetevredenheid, deurlopende verbetering en die bestuur van risiko's. Kwessies soos biosekuriteit, dierewelsyn en voedselveiligheid word deur die geregistreerde gehaltebestuurskema ingesluit wat onder produsente geïmplementeer sal word.

“Natuurlik is dit nie 'n oplossing vir byvoorbeeld die verspreiding van aansteeklike dieresiektes nie, maar dit kan wel help met bestuur en risikobeheer,” sê Laufs, en voeg by dat die hele stelsel in die bekende ‘One Health’-beginsel geanker is. One Health beteken eenvoudig: Wat goed is vir jou diere en jou omgewing, is ook goed vir menslike gesondheid. Siektes kan van diere na mense oorgedra word, en vuil water of swak gesondheidsbestuur kan almal siek maak. Deur dus jou vee gesond te hou, jou grond en water skoon te hou, saam met veeartse en ander gesondheidspersoneel te werk, en goed na jou arbeiders om te sien, beskerm jy jou gesin en plaas se toekoms.

ISO 9001 in die rooivleisbedryf

Die rooivleisbedryf het die afgelope dekade geweldige internasionale druk ervaar om aan strengere voedselveiligheid- en gehaltestandaarde te voldoen. Deur ISO 9001 en die RPO Skema toe te pas, poog die RPO om te

verseker dat Suid-Afrikaanse rooivleis aan plaaslike standaarde voldoen en internasionaal kan meeding.

Produsente sal baat vind by duideliker riglyne vir boerdery- en hanteringspraktyke, terwyl verwerkingsaanlegte en abattoirs hul prosesse meer vaartbelyn kan maak om vermorsing te verminder en produkte van meer konsekwente gehalte te lewer. Soortgelyke stelsels is reeds by voerkrale en abattoirs geïmplementeer.

Die byvoeging van die RPO Skema stel die bedryf dus in staat om 'n spesifieke produk te lewer, aangesien elke stap in die waardeketting aan die nodige standaarde voldoen. Rooivleisbedryfsdienste (RMIS) sal as oorhoofse platform tussen die verskillende stelsels dien. RMIS het ook sy eie ISO 9001- en RMIS Skema-sertifisering gekry. Dit help om die sertifisering van die onderskeie rolspelers in die waardeketting te verbind. Dit behoort op sy beurt tot groter verbruikersvertroue te lei.

“Die jonger generasie verbruiker is 'n ingeligte persoon, en hulle wil weet dat die produk wat hulle gebruik op standaard is,” sê Laufs. En wat van 'n premie? “'n Produsent moenie net fokus op 'n beter prys nie, maar eerder die hele prentjie. Dit sluit in om te bepaal hoe winsmarges verbeter en risiko's verlaag kan word deur hierdie stelsel te implementeer en produksiepraktyke te verfyn. Die werklike vraag is: Kan 'n produsent dit bekostig om die risiko te loop dat verbruikers hul rug op rooivleis draai, bloot omdat daar nie genoegsame inligting oor die produk beskikbaar is nie?” **LRF**

Artikel met vergunning van Veeplaas, Desember 2025. Vir meer inligting, kontak Thea Laufs by Thea.Laufs@cpg.global

Presisievoeding vir optimale produksie

Deur Koos du Pisanie

Presisievoeding is 'n belangrike aspek in enige boerderyplan. Volgens Ashley Grimsell, 'n voedingkundige en tegniese bestuurder by Voermol, is voeding en gesondheid die twee belangrikste steunpilare in enige veeboerdery. As die diere nie die nodige inentings of die regte voeding volgens die produksiestadium waarin hulle is ontvang nie, is die kans goed dat die produsent sy doelwitte kwyt gaan wees.

Presisievoeding verseker dat die produsent akkuraat aan die diere se behoeftes voldoen, en boonop spaar aangesien voedingstowwe optimaal benut word. Dit wil sê, minder van die voedingstowwe wat nie opgeneem is nie, word in die mis en urine uitgeskei. Produsente moet wel daarop let dat die byvoeding wat gegee word in ooreenstemming met die basiese voedingsprogram moet wees.

Presisievoeding in veeboerderye

Presisievoeding word hoofsaaklik in voerkrale gebruik, maar dr Conrad Coetzer, produksie- en tegniese hoof by Westbury Supplement Feeds, poog om die beginsels van presisievoeding eerder in praktyk om te sit. Dit behels 'n wetenskaplike en streekspesifieke benadering wat gebruik maak van tegnologie, streekspesifieke formuleerings en 'n goeie begrip van die produsent se unieke uitdagings.

“Presisievoeding is die afgelope dekade toenemend in die kollig. Dit is 'n bestuurstrategie wat daarop gemik is om diere op 'n geskikte tyd en plek van die nodige voeding in die regte hoeveelhede te voorsien. Hierdie benadering kombineer wetenskaplike analise, moderne tegnologie en praktiese landbou-omstandighede om optimale produksie en gesondheid te bevorder,” verduidelik hy.

Vir beide hierdie kenners kan presisievoeding gedefinieer word as

die doelgerigte aanvulling van voedingstowwe wat nie voldoende in natuurlike weiding of plaaslik beskikbare grondstowwe voorkom nie. “Dit behels om die diere presies te voer wat hulle nodig het. Dit is noodsaaklik om die regte hoeveelheid te voer, omdat voedingstoftekorte direk diere se gesondheid, reproduksie en groei kan benadeel.”

Die begin van presisievoeding

Die proses van presisievoeding begin by die ontleding van weiding en, indien nodig, die grond en water om te bepaal watter voedingstowwe ontbreek. Maar hoe bepaal 'n mens watter grondstowwe addisioneel benodig en hoeveel daarvan aan die diere gegee moet word? Volgens dr Coetzer neem sommige veevoermaatskappye namens die produsente monsters van die weiding om te ontleed en vas te stel of daar 'n tekort aan minerale en ander voedingstowwe is. Hierdie inligting word gebruik om 'n unieke voedingsprogram saam te stel.

Die databasis het oor die jare ontwikkel, en dikwels is genoeg data vir 'n spesifieke omgewing ingesamel wat onmiddellike aanbevelings bied sonder dat dit nodig is om vir die ontledingsresultate te wag.

Daar is egter ander faktore wat 'n rol speel. “Die klimaat, grondtipe, produksiestelsel, plaaslike habitat en selfs die ras waarmee geboer word, dra tot die formulering van 'n voedingsplan by. Geen produsent kan van 'n gestandaardiseerde plan gebruik maak nie en moet dit eerder by die unieke omstandighede op die plaas aanpas,” sê dr Coetzer.

Goeie bestuur is ook 'n vereiste vir suksesvolle presisievoeding. Produsente moet gereeld die diere se voer-inname en kondisies monitor om sodoende die aanvulling as deel van 'n holistiese produksiebestuurstrategie

toe te pas. Geen plaas is identies nie en daarom moet elke presisievoedingsplan by die plaas se unieke produksiestelsel aangepas word.

Volgens Grimsell is klimaat, weiding, voeding, gesondheid en spanning van die belangrikste faktore wat 'n dier se produktiwiteit kan beïnvloed. Met goeie bestuur kan hierdie probleme egter oorbrug word.

Voedingstekorte in weiding

Hoewel presisievoeding dikwels met intensiewe stelsels soos voerkrale geassosieer word, is dit ook belangrik in ekstensiewe veeboerderye. Omdat weiding in Suid-Afrika dikwels arm is aan sekere mikro- en makro-minerale, moet diere bykomende aanvullings kry om die minerale op te neem. Die voedingstofsamestelling van grondstowwe wissel en daarom is ontledings belangrik om voedingkundiges in staat te stel om goed-gebalanseerde voere te formuleer.

Tekorte is nie altyd sigbaar nie en kan dus nie op waarneming alleen bepaal word nie. Die doel is nie om blindelings te voer nie, maar eerder presies te voer wat die diere in daardie stadium benodig. Grimsell meen presisievoeding word die beste in intensiewe omstandighede toegepas, omdat die produsent beheer het oor wat die diere inneem. Dit is moeilik om elke dier se tekortkominge in 'n ekstensiewe boerdery te bepaal.

“Hoewel die weiding in elke kamp wissel, is daar tog tekens wat uit tekorte voortspruit waarna die produsent kan oplet. Swak melkproduksie, 'n lae liggaamskondisietelling, besetting-syfers, kalwingsprobleme, haarkleed en dies meer is aanduidings van voedingsstekorte,” verduidelik sy.

Algemene simptome van 'n voedingsstekort sluit in:

- **Kalsium:** Vertraagde groei by jong diere en osteoporose.

- **Fosfor:** Swak eetlus en voerinnamename, pika, lusteloosheid, laer groeitempo, gewigsverlies, verlaagde melkproduksie.
- **Magnesium:** Bewerasies, skuim om die mond, hipertensie, gebrekkige spierkoördinasie, stuiptrekkings en skielike vrektes.
- **Swael:** Verminderde voerinnamename, gewigsverlies.
- **Natrium:** Swak eetlus, verlaagde melkproduksie, neiging om te lek, droë borselhaarbedekking.
- **Chloor:** Hittestres.
- **Kalium:** Verminderde voer- en waterinnamename, verlaagde liggaamsgewig en melkproduksie, verlies aan haarglans, swakheid, vrektes.

Hoë hoeveelhede van makro- of spoorminerale kan ook tot tekorte lei. Aanvullings met 'n hoë swaelinhoud kan byvoorbeeld 'n seleniumtekort

veroorsaak, terwyl 'n hoë ysterinhoud – soos in sekere waterbronne in Suid-Afrika – weer tot 'n sinktekort kan lei. Grimsell se raad is om die hulp van 'n voedingkundige in te roep om die nodige byvoedingsbehoefte te bepaal.

“Voeding en 'n goeie gesondheidsprogram is die spil waarom 'n goeie veeboerdery draai. Kyk na die volledige voedingsprogram in 'n ekstensiewe boerdery. Neem die diere genoeg energie en proteïene vanaf die weiding en deur aanvullings in? Wat behels die gehalte en opbrengs van die weiding? Eers dan kan die makrominerale, en daarna die spoorminerale wat moontlik tekortskiet, in aanmerking geneem word.”

Prys versus wins

Dr Coetzer meen baie produsente kyk onmiddellik na die prys van voer en werk hul begroting daarvolgens uit,

maar met presisievoeding moet jy eerder die hoogste wins per eenheid oorweeg, hetsy dit 'n vleis-, melk- of wolproduksie-eenheid is. Verder moet die totale hoeveelheid wat geproduseer word teenoor die grootte van die produksie-area bepaal word deur voerdoeltreffendheid, groeitempo, melkproduksie en reproduksiesukses te monitor.

Hoewel presisievoeding oënskynlik duur mag voorkom, is die wins wat oor die lang termyn gegenereer word soveel groter. Om winsgewend te boer behoort produsente altyd die bestuursfaktor in gedagte te hou. “Selfs die beste aanvullings kan nie opmaak vir swak bestuur nie. Presisievoeding vereis dat produsente hul vee se voerinnamename monitor, weidings reg bestuur en kondisie dophou. Goeie bestuur verseker dat aanvullings nie vermors word nie en dat vee die volle voordeel daarvan geniet.” **LRF**

Artikel met vergunning van Veeplaas, Desember 2025.

Vir meer inligting, skakel dr Conrad Coetzer by 082 450 6196 of Ashley Grimsell by 083 296 8368.

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A comparison between phase C and D growth tests

By Melville Ferreira and Freek Botes, ARC-Animal Production

Feed is one of the major cost drivers of beef production, and due to its high cost, it is important to have a positive feed margin. A positive margin can be influenced by the feed price and feed efficiency (gain/kg feed consumed). This can be achieved by improving the average daily gain (ADG) and reducing the feed costs by breeding animals that utilise feed more efficiently.

The National Beef Cattle Recording and Improvement Scheme (NBRIS) was established in accordance with Section 20 of the *Animal Improvement Act, 1998 (Act 62 of 1998)*, whereby the performance of animals is recorded and progeny summaries calculated.

The NBRIS of the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) has seven phases: the reproduction phase (Phase A1); the suckling phase (Phase A2); the post weaning phases that comprise on-farm recordings (Phase B), central performance tests (Phase C), on-farm performance tests (Phase D), and feedlot recordings (Phase E1); and the slaughter phase (Phase E2).

Summary

Both phases C and D have advantages as indicated in *Table 1*. Phase C is the only test in which individual feed intake can be measured. Each bull is fed individually, with bodyweight and feed intake recorded on a weekly basis. The ADG and feed conversion ratio (FCR) are calculated on a bi-weekly basis when issuing interim reports. FCR is a ratio of the amount of feed consumed by the bull and the weight gained over the test period. The average FCR in South Africa currently is 4,5 to 7,5 across all breeds.

While individual feed intake cannot be measured during phase D tests, a Kleiber ratio can be calculated.

Table 1: Comparison between Phase C and D.

	Phase C	Phase D
Age	151 to 250 days	Maximum age 425 days (variation within group not more than 100 days)
Adaption	28	21 to 90
Feed	Bulls receive standardised ration across all ARC testing stations	Each breeder decides what ration he wants to use
Weight limits at start of test	Depending on breed	Only when more than one breeder form part of the test
Regularity of weighing of bulls	Weekly	Bi-weekly
Reports	Breeder receives interim reports bi-weekly	Breeder to submit weights bi-weekly to ARC
Test length	84	84 to 270
Minimum bulls per test	1	10
Traits measured: • ADG • FCR • Kleiber • Body measurements • RTU	Yes Yes No Yes Yes	Yes No Yes Yes Yes
Individual feed intake measured	Yes	No
Merit award	Yes	No
Performance compared to	An individual bull's performance is compared to the ten-year rolling average per breed per station	Bulls are compared within the group

ADG: average daily gain; FCR: feed conversion ratio; RTU: realtime ultrasound scan.

This is a useful indicator of growth efficiency and provides an indirect selection criterion for feed conversion. Phase C tests are more expensive than phase D tests as they are intensive, lasting 84 days, and include the measurement of individual feed intake.

Residual feed intake (RFI) is receiving more attention globally, as it is phenotypically independent of growth and bodyweight. This trait is also moderately heritable (18 to 49%), allowing for improved feed efficiency through selecting for more efficient animals. RFI represents the difference between an animal's actual and predicted feed intake, and is in line with an animal's maintenance requirements relative to its bodyweight and growth. It may be more desirable to select for a trait such as RFI, since selecting for high ADG and low FCR

may result in larger animals with higher maintenance requirements.

Feed accounts for 55 to 70% of total production costs. A 10% improvement in feed efficiency could save the industry millions per year. Measuring efficiency enables informed decisions that boost productivity without increasing production costs, thus improving profit margins. Feedlot studies in the United States showed that a 10% increase in ADG, resulting from a 7% increase in feed intake, improved profitability by 18%. In contrast, a 10% improvement in feed efficiency led to a 43% increase in profits. **LRF**

Article courtesy of *Stockfarm*, December 2025. Send an email to Melville Ferreira at ferreiram@arc.agric.za for more information.



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Is the 'second bite' really so bad?

By Izak Hofmeyr

One of the most common misconceptions among grazing managers is that allowing animals to graze grass regrowth is harmful, says Richard Fynn, professor of Rangeland Science at the Okavango Research Institute, University of Botswana.

This approach suggests that animals should take only a single bite from each blade of grass before moving on. The belief is that a second bite will damage the grass and ultimately lead to veld degradation. Based on this view, animals should only return to a specific tuft after a long rest period.

Differences in grassland types

Speaking at the 2025 congress of the Grassland Society of Southern Africa, Prof Fynn said this perspective fails to account for differences in grassland types.

"In arid regions, where grasses grow slowly and mature grasses retain much of their nutritional value, restricting animals from grazing regrowth has a limited impact on animal production. However, in mesic areas with annual rainfall exceeding 600mm, grasses grow more rapidly, and quality declines significantly as they mature. Forcing animals to feed only on long-rested, mature grass in these areas can harm production," he explained.

Ultra-high-density grazing

Linked to this misconception is the commonly held belief that ultra-high-density (UHD) grazing – with very short grazing periods and extremely long rest periods – accurately mimics the natural behaviour of large wildlife herds. "In reality, herds move into areas with young green grass, such as recently burnt patches, a few weeks after good rains. They graze the area down and move on,

returning after several weeks when the grass has regrown to provide fresh, highly nutritious regrowth."

Extensive evidence from studies (e.g. in the Serengeti and elsewhere in Southern Africa) shows that herds frequently return to the same area throughout the wet season. Research on buffalo in the Kruger National Park indicates that they revisit specific sites approximately every ten days. This differs from the holistic approach.

Wild herds constantly seek out immature, nutrient-rich grass. By delaying their return for months, they miss the most nutritious stage of the grazing cycle. In nature, animals only consume mature grass if rainfall is insufficient. "Wild herds have a natural system that adapts to rainfall variability, and we can replicate this on our rangelands," Prof Fynn explained.

Facilitating natural grazing

To mimic natural grazing on a cattle farm, management must account for three distinct grassland structural states under high-density grazing – termed facilitative recursive grazing strategy (Figure 1). "The first is the short grass area (priority paddocks),

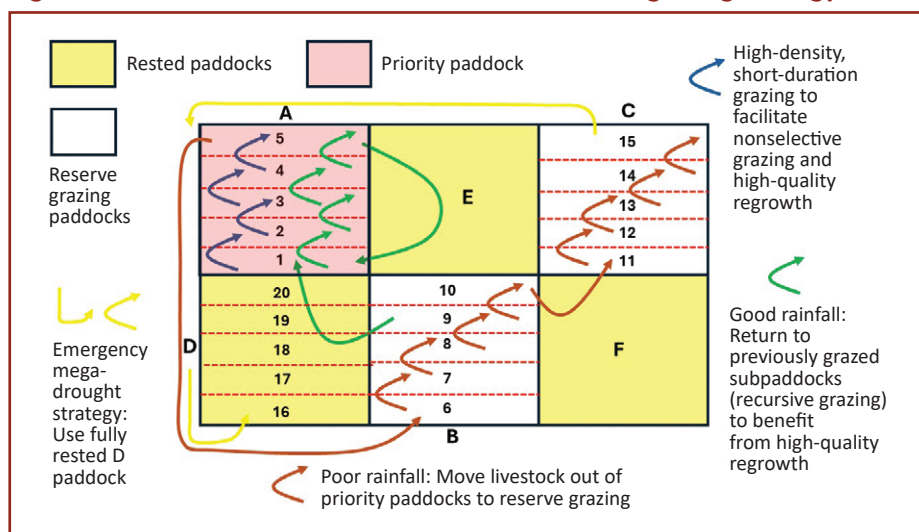
which cattle return to as soon as regrowth is adequate. The second comprises mature grass reserves, grazed only if rainfall is poor and priority paddocks haven't recovered. The third includes areas rested for a full growing season, serving as grazing during the dry or winter season." This approach better reflects how wildlife naturally moves across a landscape, compared to the holistic method.

Prof Fynn also advocates the split-ranch system, where half the farm is rested for an entire growing season while the other half is grazed intensively. For instance, on a farm with 12 paddocks, six are grazed while six are rested, with the grazing/rest cycle running from August to August.

"The challenge with the holistic approach isn't the long rest period itself, which is essential. The problem arises when animal performance is compromised because they are only offered mature, low-quality grazing during extended rest periods. This can be mitigated by altering the way cattle are moved," he explained.

This strategy is built on three key pillars: non-selective, high-density grazing, a full season's rest every

Figure 1: A visual illustration of the facilitative recursive grazing strategy.

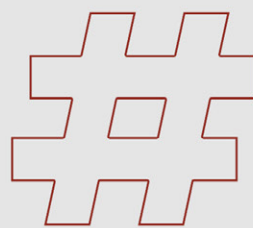




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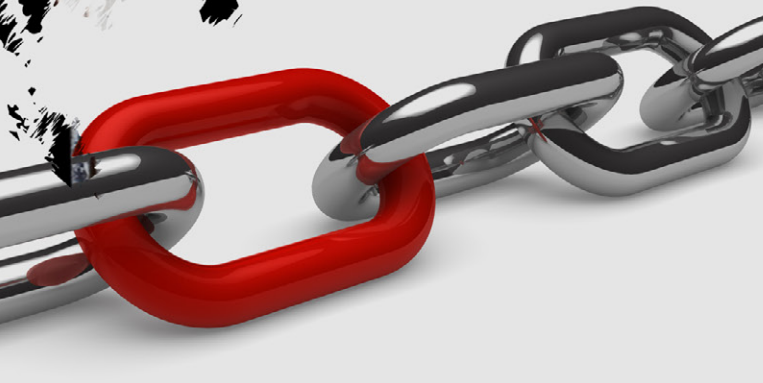
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In the taller grass scenario (photo 1), Sam McNaughton found that protein content was 10,8%. After the grass was grazed down (photo 2) and fresh regrowth was stimulated (a process known as facilitation), the new growth contained 15,7% protein. This explains why wildebeest and zebra often return to areas grazed a few weeks earlier, taking advantage of the nutrient-rich regrowth in what is called a recursive grazing strategy. (Photographs: T Michael Anderson)

second year, and the use of fire in high-rainfall areas during spring to encourage non-selective grazing.

Grazing cycle in practice

In practice, paddocks are burned shortly after the first rain. Grazing begins once the grass reaches the height of an upright beer can, using high-density stocking. When the grass is reduced to the length of a beer can lying on its side, the cattle are moved to the next paddock.

This rotation continues until the grass in the first paddock has regrown to the height of an upright beer can, at which point grazing returns to that paddock and continues through the others, depending on regrowth and rainfall. Priority is always given to paddocks with the best regrowth but if regrowth is insufficient due to dry conditions, cattle are moved to reserve paddocks with mature grass.

In years of good rainfall only some priority paddocks may be necessary, allowing others to rest for more than a year. In dry years all priority and reserve paddocks may be used. The system is flexible and adaptive.

As each new grazing cycle begins in August, cattle will probably be required to graze dry, mature grass until the rains arrive. If the veld has not been sufficiently trampled, priority paddocks are burned after the first rain to make previously unpalatable grasses suitable for grazing.

High-density grazing then begins. By returning to paddocks only once they have adequately recovered, sufficient winter grazing can be preserved in unused camps, sustaining the herd until the next grazing cycle starts in August on the other half of the farm.

Importance of resting veld

He explained that resting the veld for an entire year is crucial because soil microbes release nitrogen into the soil early in the growing season, right after the first rains. This means nitrogen is most available to plants during this period.

“By resting your veld over November and December when nitrogen availability peaks, plants can replenish the nitrogen lost during the previous year’s grazing. However, for nitrogen to be stored in roots through the dry season, resting must continue into the early dry season to cover the period of maximum root growth at the end of the growing season. Grazing too early disrupts nutrient translocation to the roots, causing nitrogen that could have been stored there to be lost.

“When plants are allowed to complete their full growth cycle, which may extend to June or July, they emerge in the next season much more productive and resilient to drought.”

Adapting strategies

He recommended that producers in high-rainfall areas get all grasses in

priority paddocks – both palatable and unpalatable – down to ground level at the start of grazing, which often requires fire. In semi-arid areas, high-density grazing combined with trampling between August and the first rains can level paddocks and create a protective litter layer on the soil.

Most grass species are relatively palatable when producing new shoots. By applying a sufficiently high grazing density, selective grazing can be largely avoided – this is a crucial point. If the grazing cycle does not commence when the grass is uniformly short and young, the less palatable grasses will gain an advantage, monopolising below-ground space with their roots. This is why selective grazing can be so harmful.

In contrast, non-selective grazing benefits the palatable grasses, which are better adapted to frequent grazing. Under these conditions, palatable grasses grow more quickly than unpalatable ones, gradually displacing them.

The conclusion is that this grazing management approach offers an effective balance between animal production and veld regeneration. ^{LRF}

Article courtesy of Stockfarm, November 2025. Send an email to Prof Richard Fynn at rfynn@ub.ac.bw for more information.



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Testing the limits with genetic progress

By Izak Hofmeyr, Plaas Media

Koos Kooy was named the Santam Agriculture LRF Stud Breeder of the Year at the 2025 Livestock Registering Federation (LRF) Stockman School. Stockfarm visited him on his KwaZulu-Natal farm to uncover the secret to his success.

Koos and his wife, Nada, live on Misty Heights, a farm near the small town of Mooi River. Koos is the general manager of De Heus South Africa, while Nada is an industrial engineer.

Interest in cattle farming

Koos has long had a keen interest in cattle farming, with a particular fascination for optimising resources through improved genetics. His interest in the Simmentaler breed was sparked by Nada's uncle, Abraham Kruger, a pioneering stud breeder from Colesberg, and later reinforced by a chance meeting with Johan Styger, chairperson of the LRF.

"In 2015, while searching for a bull for a few commercial heifers, Johan referred me to Ian Curren in KwaZulu-Natal. I did not buy a bull from Ian, but ended up purchasing his farm, Misty Heights, along with his entire Simmentaler stud of 25 animals. That marked the beginning of Oggendstond Simmentalers."

Misty Heights is a small, hilly 90ha farm situated in the mist belt of the Midlands, with its highest points reaching 1 720m above sea level. Grazing consists of kikuyu in the lower-lying areas and natural sourveld on the ridges. The farm has a carrying capacity of around 1,2ha/LSU and



OS2133 (E), pictured here with her second calf, ranks in the top 10% of the breed for easy fleshing ability.

receives annual rainfall of between 800 and 900mm. Winter temperatures can drop to as low as -8°C, while summer temperatures can reach 32°C.

Shortly after settling on the farm, Koos purchased a few in-calf cows from three breeders, namely BTB, Tendele, and Jokama Simmentalers. This provided a diverse genetic foundation to which he could apply his own selection criteria and make his own mark.

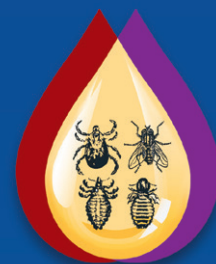
Smart selection practices

The biggest challenge on a small farm, where only a limited number of animals can run, is achieving meaningful genetic progress with relatively few animals. "Performance testing, and therefore breeding values, are at the heart of genetic progress. When applied correctly, breeding values neutralise environmental effects. This makes it possible to link your breeding values to those of other stud breeders who generate high-quality data using the correct performance measurements. As a result, I can compare my breeding values with those of stud breeders operating in environments different from my own. Although my stud is small, my reference pool is much bigger."

He believes a key prerequisite for this approach is starting with sound genetics and having clearly defined breeding goals. "An equally important aspect is the relationship with commercial breeders. Bull buyers are not simply purchasing a bull from a stud breeder; they are buying into that breeder's breeding philosophy. They need to understand what the breeder aims to achieve."



Koos Kooy's cow, OS1616 (E), exemplifies excellent easy fleshing ability. Her offspring consistently show very high fat scan results.



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OS167 (C) is a small-framed cow with an average ICP of 364 days over eight calves.

Koos also notes that stud breeders have a responsibility to continually test the limits. “Animals must be placed in situations where their true potential is revealed. This requires selection criteria that are stringent enough to identify and cull animals that do not meet the required standards.”

Feed efficiency

From the outset, feed efficiency was a key trait he selected for. Feed is the second-largest economic factor after fertility. For this reason, he established a Vytelle test station on his farm to measure net feed intake, allowing him to identify animals with low maintenance requirements. “Low maintenance requirements, or feed efficiency, are difficult to assess visually. However, feed efficiency is an independent genetic trait that can be incorporated into a breeding programme alongside other important traits, such as easy fleshing, fertility, and growth.”

When he established his herd 12 years ago, he observed that easy fleshing ability is strongly concentrated in

specific cow lines. Initially, he worked with approximately 25 different cow lines; today, the herd consists of no more than six. His current challenge is to successfully combine feed efficiency with easy fleshing ability. He believes this combination addresses the primary needs of commercial producers, who must operate extensively while keeping input costs low.

Stud breeder of the year

Koos believes he was named stud breeder of the year because he was able to demonstrate consistent and measurable genetic progress over the past 11 years, by focussing on the five breeding goals he prioritised.

- 1 Fertility, measured through days to calving, scrotal circumference, and intercalving period (ICP). His average ICP for 2024 was 383 days, and his next target is 380 days.
- 2 Calving ease, measured through calving ease direct, gestation length, calving ease daughters, and birthweight.
- 3 Growth, with the goal of remaining at the breed average while reducing mature cow weight. This is where the concept of ‘curve benders’ becomes relevant.
- 4 Fat deposition ability, measured by rump and rib fat, reflects an animal’s capacity to maintain condition on veld. Milk production is included in this category. Koos’s breeding policy for milk emphasises moderation, recognising that higher milk yield is correlated with increased maintenance requirements and can negatively impact fertility. The target is the breed average.
- 5 Feed efficiency, measured as net feed intake. Koos tests all his bulls at around nine to 12 months of age. The results of his breeding policy, compared to the breed average, are expressed as an economic value in the Simmentaler Breeder Index.

Koos believes that performance testing must always be practice-oriented to deliver tangible commercial benefits. A balanced approach must be taken, avoiding selection for extreme individual traits. “It is also important to recognise that we don’t always have all the answers. Our goal is to find solutions that drive progress within the realities of practical livestock production, where limited resources play a decisive role.

“Stud breeders and commercial producers, along with feedlots, must collaborate,” he concludes. “This is the only way to achieve significant and sustainable genetic progress.” **LRF**



OC1912 (G) is a medium-framed cow with an ICP of 358 days over four calves. Her breeding values for days to calving and rump and rib fat deposition are in the top 1% of the breed. She calves first every season.

This article has been shortened for publication in *LRT-TS News*. For the full article, [click here](#) to download *Stockfarm*’s February 2026 issue. For more information, contact Koos Kooy at 072 293 0213.

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Simmentalers belê in veldbulttoetse



Die Simmentaler in Suider-Afrika het 'n ryk geskiedenis van hoogs produktiewe kuddes. Die meeste van hierdie kuddes word onder ongunstige toestande aangehou. Dink maar aan sentraal-Namibië, die Limpopo-provinsie en die verre Noord-Kaap. Hulle presteer redelik goed in areas waar mieliereste deel van die winterweiding is. Sommige van hierdie kuddes is ook hoogs aangepas in die suurveldgebiede.

Voordele van veldbulttoetse

Veldbul en Veldram Suid-Afrika (VBRSA) se toets vir jong bulle bied verskeie voordele vir beesboere asook vir die bedryf.

Evaluering van omgewingsaanpasbaarheid: VBRSA se toetse evalueer die prestasie van jong bulle onder natuurlike veldtoestande. Dit bied waardevolle insig in hul vermoë om by plaaslike omgewingsomstandighede

aan te pas. Dit is veral belangrik in streke met diverse klimaats- en weidingsomstandighede.

Oorerflikheidsevaluering: Deur jong bulle in hul natuurlike habitat te evalueer, bied VBRSA se toetse 'n akkurate beoordeling van oorerflikke eienskappe. Hierdie eienskappe hou verband met omgewingsaanpasbaarheid, soos hitteverdraagsaamheid, weerstand teen siektes wat algemeen in die area voorkom, en die vermoë om op inheemse weiding te gedy.

Kostedoeltreffendheid: Dit is dikwels meer koste-effektief om jong bulle op die veld te toets as in intensiewe voeroproeue in beheerde omgewings. Dit skakel die behoefte aan duur insette soos gespesialiseerde voer en behuisingsfasiliteite wat die algehele koste van prestasietoetsing verminder, uit.

Seleksie vir weidingsdoeltreffendheid: Weidingsdoeltreffendheid is 'n belangrike faktor in beesproduksiestelsels wat van uitgebreide weiding afhanklik is. VBRSA maak dit vir telers moontlik om bulle te identifiseer wat voer in natuurlike weidingsomstandighede doeltreffend na vleis kan omskakel. Dit lei tot meer volhoubare en ekonomies-lewensvatbare produksiestelsels.

Objektiewe prestasie-evaluering: Die toetse bied objektiewe prestasiedata wat op werklike veldomstandighede gebaseer is en wat gebruik

kan word om ingeligte telingsbesluite te neem. Dit help telers om bulle met uitnemende genetica vir eienskappe soos groeitempo, voerdoeltreffendheid en karkasgehalte te selekteer. Die algehele produktiwiteit van die trop word uiteindelik verbeter.

Uitbouing van genetiese diversiteit: Telers kan help om genetiese diversiteit binne beesbevolkings uit te bou deur bulle te selekteer wat goed op plaaslike veld presteer. Dit is veral belangrik vir die handhawing van geharde en aanpasbare teeldiere wat in diverse omgewings moet presteer.

Verbruikersvertroue: Verbruikers verkies toenemend produkte wat afkomstig is van diere wat in natuurlike en volhoubare produksiestelsels grootgemaak is. VBRSA se toetse verseker verbruikers dat die genetica wat hulle aankoop, afkomstig is van diere wat aangepas is by hul natuurlike omgewing. Dit verhoog die bemerkbaarheid van en aanvraag na beesvleisprodukte.

VBRSA se toetse behels 'n holistiese benadering tot die evaluering van die prestasie en aanpasbaarheid van jong bulle. Dit belyn teel doelwitte met die realiteite van uitgebreide weidingstelsels en volhoubare beesproduksie.

Aanpassing van die rumen

Tydens die veldtoetse pas die rumen op verskeie maniere aan by die beskikbare ruvoer. Hierdie aanpassings sluit in: 'n Verandering in die rumen se mikrobiële samestelling met meer veselverterende mikrobies wat voorkom; verhoogde vertering van vesel; aanpassing van die rumen pH; 'n toename in die ontwikkeling van papille; en 'n verhoogde waterinname. **LRF**



Willem Botha by sy Tendele Simmentalers tydens hul eerste veldbulttoets.



Hannes, Riaan en Karin Odendaal saam met dr Hannes Dreyer tydens die afsluiting van die Simmentaler-veldbulttoets.

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Why do we DNA test commercial heifers?

By Shaye Koester-Wanner

Genomic testing improves confidence in the decisions producers make when selecting replacement heifers and bulls. Genomic testing of heifers is a standard practice for many seedstock suppliers and is becoming more of a common practice among commercial cattlemen across the country. But what about this practice is drawing in more cattlemen and -women?

For my husband, in-laws and I, it boiled down to having more confidence in the decisions we made when selecting replacement heifers and bulls. From there, more benefits began to present themselves.

We are approaching our third year of genomic testing our replacement heifers. The first year we tried it was a few months after Phillip and I got married and moved out to the farm. As I started falling into my role as herd manager, I realised I had no idea what we had for cows other than being predominantly Angus and Red Angus genetics.

Sure, I could look up our past weaning weights, pregnancy rates and other herd records, but selecting replacement females and bulls felt like a shot in the dark, especially for someone who grew up raising seedstock cattle and always had ample information at her fingertips.

We couldn't even set true goals for the cattle enterprise of our operation, because we had no true benchmark for where we were at. Having a benchmark is an integral component of making progress in any business. Without it, progress is either slow or non-existent.

Data-driven decisions

After we sold steers that fall and looked at our books, I brought it

up to the rest of our team, and we unanimously decided to try it out.

I was already familiar with the sampling process, having done it on my parents' operation, but if you aren't familiar, it's incredibly fast and simple to collect a tissue sample from the ear and complete the spreadsheet before mailing samples to the lab. When we got the results back, there were some surprises and some findings that seemed obvious knowing the history of some cows. We worked through both phenotypes and the data to ultimately select the top third of heifers to retain as breeding stock.

While there was some overlap in our sole-phenotype selections compared to using the data and phenotype, there were a few eye openers too. We found some heifers to be much more terminal than we expected.

Having this benchmark of data helped all of us feel more confident in the group of replacement heifers that would be bred in the spring. And guess what? All but one of them bred up, and looking back at the data, we probably shouldn't have kept her. This increase in stayability for our herd is the main outcome we use to measure ROI.

Bull and steer selection

Once we had this information about our replacement females and the herd in general, it opened our eyes to the

bulls we had been selecting. Of course, terminal traits always matter to cow-calf producers who sell through the barn, but we discovered the need to focus on a few more maternal traits.

So, come March, we were able to more confidently select bulls that better complemented the heifers and cow herd. This confidence and increased knowledge ensured we weren't spending money on the wrong bulls. We knew we were investing in the right genetics.

Outside of genetic selection, we also have an idea of the types of steers we are marketing each fall. No, we don't test our steer calves. However, the herd data from the heifers offers an idea of where our steers stand too. This information is valuable in the marketing process depending on how you sell calves.

The bottom line

The benefits of genomic testing have more than paid off on our operation. Yet they pay off because we use the information to make decisions. That's the key component of seeing an ROI with any new technology. You have to be open to trusting and using the information in order to see the honest impact. [LRF](#)

To read the original article, [click here](#).

News from the LRF

Welcoming our new data processor

We are delighted to announce that Riëtte Venter has joined the Livestock Registering Federation (LRF) team as a data processor. Based in Potchefstroom, Riëtte will support breed societies with their members' data processing requirements, including capturing birth notifications, fates, performance and mating records, and preparing catalogues.

Riëtte will also provide HerdMASTER support to the LRF. In addition, she will contribute to the smooth running of the organisation by managing a range of administrative responsibilities, from preparing breeder packs and handling enquiries to processing reports and updating records.

Riëtte's expertise will strengthen our ability to deliver accurate data, seamless support, and valuable services to our members. We would like to extend a warm welcome to Riëtte as she becomes part of the LRF family!

New SBF is a significant milestone

We are proud to announce the establishment of the Stud Breeders Federation (SBF), a unified body formed through the collaboration between SA Stud Book, the Animal Improvement Association, and the LRF. This partnership represents a significant milestone for the stud breeding industry, ensuring that the collective interests of breeders, producers, and all stakeholders are promoted and protected at the highest level.

As a non-profit entity, the SBF will operate across the entire breeding, meat, dairy and wool value chain, with a firm commitment to sustainability, profitability, and responsible practices. Under the guidance of its directors, the federation is committed to advancing traceability, supporting proactive animal health policies, and endorsing quality-driven grading systems.

By working closely with government, industry partners, and producers, the SBF aims to build consumer confidence, strengthen local markets, and open opportunities for cross-border trade.

LRF free online courses calendar 2026

During 2025, the LRF successfully hosted a series of free monthly online short courses that attracted strong participation from breeders across the country. Presented by experts from BREEDPLAN, the Agricultural Business Research Institute (ABRI), the LRF and leading breeders, these sessions covered highly relevant topics. If you missed any of these courses held in 2025, watch the recordings on our [YouTube channel](#).

Building on this success, the LRF is continuing the programme in 2026 with another full year of free online short courses under the theme "Making BREEDPLAN work for me". The 2026 programme will guide breeders step by step through key aspects of performance recording, data submission, estimated breeding values (EBVs), breeding goals, genomics, and much more.

Preliminary schedule for 2026

20 January Topic: Performance recording made simple	23 June Topic: Selecting for maternal performance
17 February Topic: Submitting performance records to the breed society	28 July Topic: Driving genetic progress with BREEDPLAN
17 March Topic: BREEDPLAN EBVs: What to know?	25 August Topic: Using BREEDPLAN for bull selection
21 April Topic: Setting up breeding goals	22 September Topic: TBC
19 May Topic: Genomics: What am I missing out on?	November Topic: TBC

BREEDPLAN news

Dr Brad Crook's retirement from ABRI

The LRF wishes to inform members that, after 25 years of dedicated service, Dr Brad Crook retired from ABRI in January 2026.

Dr Crook has made an exceptional contribution to ABRI and the wider industry. As manager of genetics research and development, he championed innovations that transformed genetic evaluation, most notably the introduction of Single-Step BREEDPLAN. By integrating SNP genomic data with phenotypic breeding values, this innovation has been a game-changer for breeders striving to make more informed and effective selection decisions.

Dr Crook leaves a remarkable legacy of innovation, scientific excellence, and progress. His efforts have established strong foundations that will continue to advance ABRI's mission for years to come.

The LRF extends its heartfelt gratitude to Dr Crook and wishes him all the best in his retirement.

Celebrating the success of the 17th Stockman School

The 17th annual LRF Stockman School once again confirmed its status as one of the livestock industry's premier events. Hosted under the theme "Smart Stockmanship: Back to Basics", the programme delivered a powerful blend of strategic insight and practical knowledge, addressing critical topics such as market competitiveness, genetics, profitability, animal health, and sustainable production. Engaging presentations, practical demonstrations, and focussed workshops provided delegates with actionable tools to strengthen their operations and improve long-term performance.

A highlight of the event was the hands-on component and interactive workshops, where delegates could tailor their learning to key focus areas such as financial management, soil health, traceability, cow/calf performance, and vaccine handling. These sessions reinforced the Stockman School's commitment to practical, producer-focussed education.

We proudly congratulate all Stockman School award recipients, including breeders recognised for excellence in Completeness of Performance, Proven Bull of the Year, Cow Group of the Year, and Most Genetic Progress over five years. The Services to the Industry Award was presented to Dr Faffa Malan for his outstanding lifelong contribution, while the prestigious LRF/Santam Stud Breeder of the Year award was awarded to Koos Kooy for his exceptional commitment to genetic excellence.

The LRF also proudly announced Danielle Alberts as the recipient of the 2026/2027 LRF Michael Bradfield Bursary. As a PhD candidate in Animal Breeding and Genetics at the University of Pretoria, Danielle represents the future of the industry, and the LRF is honoured to support her academic journey.

Sincere thanks go to our sponsors and partners for their invaluable support, and to Plaas Media for amplifying the reach of this event. Most importantly, we thank our delegates whose enthusiasm and engagement made the 17th Stockman School a resounding success. We look forward to welcoming you back this year as we continue building a stronger, smarter livestock industry together. **LRF**

Monthly tipsheet and video series

In 2025, the LRF released a one-page tipsheet and a one- to two-minute video every month, focussing on a key trait in beef cattle performance recording. These compact resources highlight why each trait matters, how to record it accurately, and how to submit your data to your breed society, making the process simpler and more effective.

Access the tipsheets and watch the videos here by clicking on the blocks below:

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Basterkrag bied nageslag wat kán

Deur Jamie Berger, hoofbestuurder, Simmentaler Beestelersgenootskap van Suidelike Afrika, en John Rafferty, veekundige

Basterkrag, of heterose, verwys na die verskynsel waar die afstammeling van twee verskillende rasse eienskappe toon wat beter as dié van beide ouers is. In 'n beeskudde kan dit voorkom as verhoogde groeikoerse, groter voerdoeltreffendheid, en beter weerstand teen siektes, terwyl die diere oor die algemeen beter sal presteer en meer aanpasbaar is as suierrasdiere.

Die kruising van verskillende rasse met verskillende wenslike eienskappe vanuit verskillende genetiese poele, kan met ander woorde lei tot 'n nageslag wat sterker ten opsigte van die meeste produksie-eienskappe is.

Die belangrikheid van basterkrag

Die winsmarges in beesboerdery is klein en groter doeltreffendheid kom teen 'n prys. Basterkrag is egter 'n voordeel wat geen ekstra koste dra nie. Om die waarheid te sê, dit is een van die min meevallers in 'n beesprodusent se onderneming.

Basterkrag lei tot verbeterde kuddeprestatie en lewer dikwels afstammeling met eienskappe wat hul ouers s'n oortref. Dit sluit in verhoogde groeikoerse, voerdoeltreffendheid en karkasgehalte. Komplementêre raskeuses kan ook tot beter natuurlike weerstandigheid teen siektes lei en kan produksievlakke in stand hou of verbeter wanneer bepaalde siekte-uitdagings voorkom.

Versnelde groei

Kruisdiere se groeikoerse versnel as gevolg van die voordelige kombinasie

van genetiese eienskappe wat verband hou met die algehele metabolisme doeltreffendheid wat van beide rasse oorgeërf word. Hierdie diere benut ook voerbronne beter, met gevolglike versnelde groeikoerse en dus groter winsgewendheid.

Dit is baie opmerklik dat speengewig aansienlik toeneem wanneer suiwer Simmentaler-genetika op enige ander ras gebruik word. Hierdie verhoging kan tot soveel as 30kg op die ouderdom van sewe maande behels. Indien 'n kruisteelprogram op 'n strategiese wyse geïmplementeer word, kan produsente basterkrag tot hulle voordeel aanwend om beduidende toenames in eienskappe soos speenmassa te realiseer.

Vrugbaarheid

Daar is twee produksie-areas waarin vrugbaarheid verbeter kan word. Die eerste is beter reproduksiedoeltreffendheid as gevolg van verhoogde dragtigheidskoerse weens beter hitte-waarneming en konsepsie-uitkomst. Enige vorm van inteeldepressie word deur kruisteling gekniehalter.

Die gevolglike kruisverse en -koeie toon voortreflike moedereienskappe, soos verhoogde moederlike instinkte, beter maternale vermoëns, en hoër melkproduksie. Beter kalfoorlewing en vinniger kalfgroei is ook beduidend.

Rasse geskik vir kruisteling

As dit kom by die keuse van suiwer teenoor kunsmatige rasse, hang die doeltreffendheid van basterkrag in die praktyk af van die betrokke teel-doelwitte en bestuurspraktyke.



Kruisteling lewer kruisverse en -koeie met voortreflike moedereienskappe, asook beduidende beter kalfoorlewing en vinniger kalfgroei.

Die sleutel tot sukses lê opgesluit in die strategiese keuse van ouerras. Die suiwer Simmentaler bly strategies 'n uitstekende keuse weens sy unieke genetiese samestelling, uitstekende groeikoerse, en melkproduksie. Die speenkalwers is gesog vanweë hul voeromsetpotensiaal.

Die gebruik van 'n Simmentaler-bul op die *Bos indicus*-rasse en enige van die sintetiese rasse, sal aansienlike verbeterings in speengewig meebring. Die gevolglike kruisverse besit die inherente melkproduksie van die Simmentaler en is uiters kosbare koeie in enige beeskudde. Die Simmentaler bied die beduidende voordeel van 'n kombinasie van goeie groei en moedereienskappe. So 'n kruising is dus nie 'n terminale kruisteelkeuse nie, maar het 'n uiters produktiewe teelkudde tot gevolg.

In 'n neutedop

Die gebruik van Simmentaler-genetika in kruisteling bied drie besliste en noodsaaklike voordele in die gevolglike nageslag:

- 'n Noemenswaardige verhoging in speengewigte.
- Hoogs produktiewe verse vir die toekoms van die kudde.
- Goeie bouvorm en groeipotensiaal by speenkalwers wat gevoer word. **LRF**

Vir meer inligting, kontak Jamie Berger by 084 410 3703



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