

STOCKOWNERS'

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DURBAN 4000
Republic of South Africa



NEWS

Registered at the General Post Office as a newspaper

Vol 19 No 2

Monthly Circulation 8 000

January 1984

MARKET REPORT

CATO RIDGE ABATTOIR

Cattle: Supplies are not readily available and prices are expected to remain relatively firm but at lower levels during January 1984 compared to December 1983.

Sheep/Lambs: Supplies are freely available and prices are expected to show a sharp downward trend after the festive season.

Pigs: The market remains under supplied of good quality porker and baconer type of pigs and prices are expected to remain firm but at slightly lower levels after the holiday period.

FIXED PROPERTY

Normally farm sales are at a lower level in the midst of the ploughing and planting season. Sales this year for the months of November and December however have remained at a very satisfactory level. Some of the sales concluded during December 1983 are:-

Ixopo: Unimproved thornveld grazing farm, 40 ha irrigable — R361/ha.

Highflats: Stock farm with out-buildings and cattle handling facilities — R326/ha.

Magudu/Louwsburg: Fenced middleveld stock farm with dipping tank — R219/ha.

Kokstad: Well improved mixed farm, specialising in dairy, with established pastures, irrigation potential. Two dwellings — R420/ha.

COUNTRY AUCTIONS

Supplies of all classes of **cattle** and **sheep** have remained at higher levels than for the same period in the previous year.

Prices for **weaners**, **long yearlings** and **stores** remain firm.

Quality **slaughter stock** command good value as a result of the high prices maintained at Cato Ridge. Compound grades are well supplied. Prices, however, remain firm alongside those obtained at Cato Ridge. The seasonal demand for **trade stock** has once again attained new high levels.

Offerings of **sheep** and **lambs** have mostly been taken up, although buyers have been selective.

The good demand for **dairy cattle** has not slackened, with prices for heavy in calf and fresh in milk stock reaching extremely high levels.

HIDES AND SKINS

The activities of **Stock Owners Hides and Skins** have expanded substantially over the past few months. Depots for curing hides and skins uplifted from country abattoirs as well as for receiving dry hides and skins from farmers have been established in the following areas:-

Glencoe/Dundee — Mr L Durham
Kokstad/Cedarville — Mr N Du Preez

Newcastle/Utrecht — Mnr S Geyser

Vryheid/Paulpietersburg — Mnr F Stumpf.

(continued on next page)

THE OBJECTIVES OF STOCK OWNERS

(In Summary)

- Stock Owners was formed by farmers to promote the economic interests of every participating farmer.
- It is based on the fundamental element of democratic control by all its members.
- Its activities are guided by the basic principle of selling livestock and slaughter stock for members and others in the most effective, efficient and economic way.
- The highest ethical standards are maintained at all times.

STUD BRANCH

The 1983 Stud sales season ended on a high note, with prices at Mr Piet Cronjes' Frieslands Dispersal Sale being well above expectations.

The demand for his dairy herd was excellent, with all the animals being bought by established dairy farmers. Top price of R3 000 went to what can only be described as a "magnificent" Telstar daughter bought by Mr Chris Butler of Inanda Dairies, Hillcrest. Mr Butler was a strong contender for all the top quality females on offer.

A total of 71 cows in various stages of production were sold for an average of R1 524. Heifers in calf averaged R1 410, with a top price of R1 950.

The demand was extremely keen throughout the sale which was attended by buyers from as far afield as the Eastern Cape.

Further particulars of forthcoming Dairy Sales in January and early February are advertised in this edition of the "News".

HIDES AND SKINS

(continued from previous page)

Ladysmith/Besters — Mr P B Sarjoo

In addition to the depots a facility for farmers to leave their bundled, labelled, dry hides and skins has been created at the **Stock Owners** Experimental farm at Tweedie next to the Howick North turnoff from the N3 national road.

If none of the established depots are convenient, members can rail or deliver their produce to:-

Stock Owners Hides and Skins (Pty) Ltd,
14 Pascoe Road
Reunion
Durban.

Hides and skins prices have shown a strong upward trend over the past months — a trend which is expected to continue over the next few months.

PHASE D2 BULL TESTS AT GLENCOE

Stock Owners is to commence with the Phase D2 testing of Stud Bulls at its research farm "Eversley", near Glencoe in 1984. To initiate planning, Stud Breeders are requested to indicate telephonically (03321-2058) or by post (P O Box 260, Howick 3290).

- whether they would prefer their bulls to be run at Eversley or Fernhill (or both);
- the breeds to be entered;
- the number of bulls entered.

The only difference between the Fernhill (Tweedie) and the Eversley (Glencoe) tests will be that in the summer grazing phase the bulls will be grazed on pasture at the former location and on sour mixed veld at the latter location.

To facilitate effective planning the co-operation of those interested would be appreciated.

OUR OPINION

The further increase of R10 per tonne for maize will impact on the South African economy in many ways.

For the livestock feeder, it will cause a review of beef production strategies.

Already there is recognition of the role that reinforced pastures will play in the beef production cycle. This will need to be expanded in the future.

However, feedlot production of meat will continue to play a very important part in meeting the red meat requirements of South Africa. There is unlikely to be any reduction from the over 30% supply of beef out of feedlots.

At current price levels of feeders and weaners, and the price at the market, there is little scope for feeding a commercial complete ration and showing a profit.

For the future, management will play an ever-more important role in securing profits.

But the "bottom line" for feedlotters is the need for more economical rations. **Stock Owners** is allocating a high priority towards resolving this need.

ABATTOIR TARIFFS DOWN

Lower abattoir tariffs came into effect on 3 January 1984. Producers will now pay the following:-

	New	Previous
Cattle & Calves		
Up to 50 kg	R7,11	R9,30
51 kg to 300 kg	R16,00	R21,00
301 kg and more	R24,00	R31,50
Sheep and Goats	R2,00	R2,63
Pigs		
Up to 20 kg	R2,67	R3,50
21 kg to 90 kg	R8,00	R10,50
91 kg and more	R12,00	R15,75

From the same date meat traders will be called upon to contribute 3c per kg of meat purchased, towards abattoir costs.

MEAT CONSUMPTION PATTERNS

(an excerpt from a recent issue of the Australian "Meat Producer and Exporter")

"Australians are today eating the same amount of meat as 20 years ago. But since then, in the space of a single generation, there has been a marked change in the type of meat eaten.

Consumers are eating the same amount of beef (45kg per annum), only two kilograms less of lamb (16kg) — about 19kg less of mutton, 6kg more of pigmeat, and 15kg more of poultry per annum."

FERGUSON & HILLARY

Stock Owners has sold a non-controlling share in Ferguson & Hillary to AAA (Pty) Ltd. This move is seen as a forward step by the Board of **Stock Owners** towards securing greater control of the Cato Ridge abattoir supplies.

CHAROLAIS BULLS EXPORTED

Three registered Charolais bulls were recently exported by **Stock Owners** to Mauritius for use in the Charolais herd of Medine Sugar Estates. They are regular buyers of stud animals through **Stock Owners**.

Two of the bulls were obtained from Mrs M Bonarius of Sasolburg while the third one came from Mr G W Ford of Henley-on-Klip.

AFTER HOURS TELEPHONE SERVICE

For the convenience of members and producers, **Stock Owners** has installed a telephone answering machine in its Durban branch for recording messages after hours for head office as well as the Durban branch. The facility operates after hours on the usual telephone number — 315521.

PRODUCTION MATTERS*(Compiled by the Production Division of Stock Owners)***BEEF FROM FRIESLAND BULL
CALVES: Reassessment of
Profitability**

In view of the new beef price and rising costs, the profitability of rearing dairy bull calves for beef is reassessed. This is calculated for 3 different maize prices, selling prices and feeding systems, and is based on the results of trials at Fernhill.

All 3 systems commence with conventional early weaning/calf rearing up to the age of 6 months, using a home-mixed complete calf meal from 6 weeks up to 6 months.

Other costs listed include management, labour, veterinary, transport, slaughter, mortality and interest on cost of feed.

1. High Energy Ration (whole maize + beefmaker from 6 months).

	Target Mass (kg)	Maize Price (R/t)		
		165	190	210
Feed cost: 0-6 months	200	148	158	166
6-12 months	460	258	289	315
Other costs		100	100	100
Total Costs		R506	R547	R581
Returns		Margin (R)		
460 kg at 55% at:				
R2-20 = R556	50	9	-25	
2-40 = R607	101	60	26	
2-60 = R657	151	110	76	

Results of Overwintering Trial at Fernhill

Three systems whereby beef weaners could be overwintered were compared:

- 1 Hay ad lib + 1,5 kg chicken litter/day.
- 2 Hay ad lib + 1,5 kg litter + 1,5 kg maize meal/day.
- 3 Maize silage ad lib + 1,5 kg litter/day.

Within each group, different growth stimulant implants were compared:

- (a) Ralgro — one implant only.
- (b) Ralgro — re-implanted after 90 days.
- (c) Compudose.
- (d) Control — no implant.

The trial ran for 140 days and the results are summarised below:

Ration	Overwinter	Feed Cost*	Average Daily Gain				Ave.
	Gain (kg)	per Weaner (R)	Ralgro	Ralgro x 2	Compudose	Control	
Hay + litter	40	58,40	0,27	0,28	0,32	0,27	0,28
Hay + litter + Maize	76	91,50	0,51	0,54	0,50	0,58	0,53
Silage + litter	102	53,00	0,72	0,68	0,71	0,74	0,71

* Prices used: Silage R25/t, hay R1-50/bale, maize meal R200/ton, litter R50/ton.

At these prices, silage was the cheapest and best of the systems tried. The cattle from this trial have now been put into a fattening trial, where the value of their winter performance will be further evaluated. The results of this trial indicate that there is little point

2. Stockowners Standard Ration (ad lib from 6 months)

	Target Mass (kg)	Maize Price (R/t)		
		165	190	210
Feed costs: 0-6 months	200	148	158	166
6-15 months	520	329	364	393
Other costs		130	130	130
Total Costs		R607	R652	R689
Returns		Margin (R)		
520 kg at 55% at:				
R2-20 = R629		22	-23	-60
2-40 = R686		79	34	-3
2-60 = R743		136	91	54

3. Reared on Summer Pasture and Silage + Supplement from 6 to 15 months, the Fatten for 3 months on Whole Maize + Beefmaker

	Target Mass (kg)	Maize Price (R/t)		
		165	190	210
Feed cost: 0-6 months	200	148	158	166
6-15 months	350	192	204	213
15-18 months	500	170	192	208
Other costs		150	150	150
Total Costs		R660	R704	R737
Returns		Margin (R)		
500 kg at 55% at:				
R2-20 = R605		-55	-99	-132
2-40 = R660		0	-44	-77
2-60 = R715		55	11	-22

These figures indicate that:

- (i) the only profitable way of using Friesland calves for beef is to feed them intensively from the start;
- (ii) it is essential to get good grades at slaughter (Super A and A1);
- (iii) at a maize price of R210/t, the selling price must average R2-60 to give a reasonable profit.

in using growth stimulant implants for growth rates of this order. However results of other trials do not agree with this. In general it can be accepted that implants can be justified where the growth rate exceeds 0,5 kg/day.

FEEDER/WEANER COMPETITION

The South African Feedlot Association will be holding a Feeder/Weaner Competition in conjunction with the Nottingham Road Feeder/Weaner Sale on 3 May 1984.

Class A

Lots of 20 weaned male calves $\pm 7-11$ months that have recovered from weaning shock. Minimum of 180 kg.

Weight suitability:

180-200 kg — 20 points
201-210 kg — 22 points
211-240 kg — 25 points
240 and over — 22 points

Class B

Lots of 20 store oxen with a minimum weight of 260 kg of $\pm 11-16$ months that have not cut any permanent incisors.

Weight suitability:

260-270 kg — 16 points
271-280 kg — 18 points
281 and over — 20 points

Points in both Classes for castration, dehorning, general health and preparation, weight uniformity, breed uniformity, temperament.

The competition is open to all beef farmers in **Natal** and

members are encouraged to support and prepare for this competition.

The competition is well sponsored and prizes very rewarding.

Full particulars from:

Stock Owners — Pietermaritzburg.

Nottingham Road Farmers Association

South African Feedlot Association — Telephone: (Johannesburg 392080, Mr Scholtz).

N.B: Further full particulars will appear in the March edition of "Stockowners' News."

NEW INSURANCE COVER

The Meat Board insurance scheme changes on 3 January 1984 to include compensation for pigs and calves in addition to the present coverage of cattle, sheep and goats.

An Insurance levy of 1,110 and 0,948 cent per kilogram cold dressed mass of respectively calves and pigs will be payable to the Meat Board.

Compensation will be at the rate of 80% of the floor price.

No compensation will apply in respect of offal from condemned carcasses.

It is noteworthy that **compensation will not apply** to all carcasses condemned.

Non-compensatable diseases/conditions include inter alia: Anaplasmosis, Bruising, Emancipation, Fever, Gangrene, Mastitis, Quarter evil, Tuberculosis and Mange.

NORMANDIEN CONQUERORS

On Sunday 11 December 1983 the Annual Cricket Match between **Stock Owners** and the Normandien farmers took place. The conditions were ideal for entertaining cricket — long grass, a bumpy outfield and a pitch suited to the West Indies fast attack.

The farmers were first to bat and were in trouble at 6 runs for 5 wickets, but some resolute batting by Mark Phillips turned the tide and they were all out for 120 runs. The **Stock Owners** batsmen fared little better and only Johan von Wielligh and Theunis van Rensburg managed to overcome the bowling and put some respectability into the **Stock**

Owners innings, which totalled 92 runs.

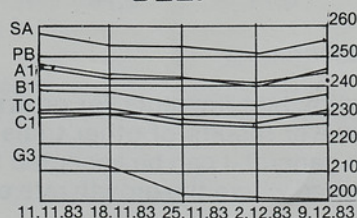
A pleasant braai lunch and refreshments was enjoyed after the game.

"Stockowners' News" is published and printed by the proprietor, **Stock Owners Co-op Co Ltd**, 539 Smith Street, Durban, 4001.

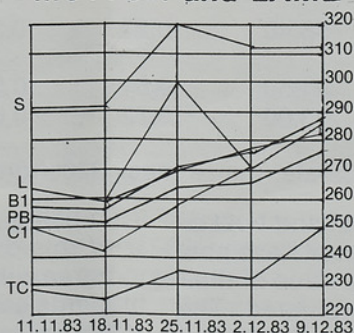
Although **Stock Owners** does not hold itself liable for these articles it endeavours to ensure that the information is accurate and from reliable sources. Items in **Stockowners' News** may be reprinted with acknowledgement.

Prices to Producers

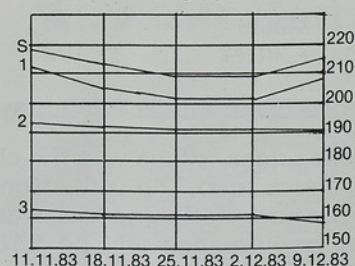
BEEF



MUTTON and LAMB



PORK





FORTHCOMING SALES

Breeders Bulletin

JANUARY AND EARLY FEBRUARY

QUALITY FRIESLANDS SALES:

26 JANUARY 1984

DONNYBROOK DAIRY SALE

200 Outstanding Mated Heifers

Unequalled production & health backing

27 JANUARY 1984

T J M MÜLLER —

Dispersal Sale — Kokstad

150 Cows and Heifers from
East Griqualand's **HIGHEST**
producing herd in 1981/82

9 FEBRUARY 1984

KOKSTAD DAIRY SALE

110 Selected females
from East Griqualand's top herds

THE VALUE OF ANY BULL LIES SOLELY

IN THE QUALITY OF HIS PROGENY

DISPERSAL SALES

13 JANUARY 1984 at 11h00

VORWILL & COMPANY

Swartfolozi Saleyards

Cattle: 9 bulls; 425 cows; 38 heifers

Motor Vehicles and Implements

Cattle are of outstanding quality

25 JANUARY 1984

G CROSS on Farm "Avenmore", Dundee
(Farms, town properties, vehicles, furniture,
livestock and implements).

27 JANUARY 1984
A A BURE

30 JANUARY 1984 — at 11h00

J S WILLEMSE Volksrust

Cattle: 250 Cows and Heifers, 8 Bulls
Merino Sheep: 850 Ewes, 670 Lambs, 33 Rams
Tractors and Implements

The lease of the farm — "Die Valle"

1 FEBRUARY 1984

Estate H A POTGIETER

10 FEBRUARY 1984

WASBANK-BOERDERY

Sales Diary (Country Auctions)

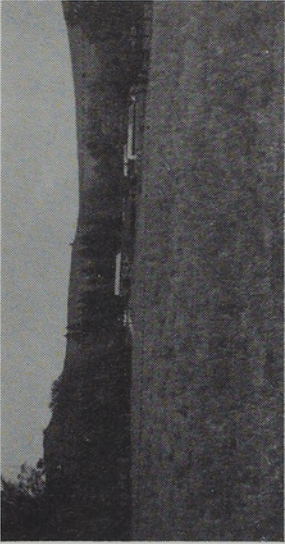
January 1984

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 11 Estcourt, Paulpietersburg, Mkuze. | 20 Lions River, Vryheid. |
| 12 Donnybrook, Ladysmith, Utrecht. | 23 Blood River. |
| 13 Weenen. | 24 Babanango, Kokstad, Winterton. |
| 16 Ingogo. | 25 Bothas Pass, Braksloot, Lowlands. |
| 17 Cedarville, Elandslaagte. | 26 Dundee, Greytown. |
| 18 Magudu, Normandien, Nottingham Road. | 27 Wasbank. |
| 19 Dannhauser, Geluksburg, Richmond, Stylrand. | 30 De Jagersdrift. |
| | 31 Broederust, Kamberg. |

February 1984

- 1 Biala, Mooi River.
- 2 Creighton, Van Reenen, Vryheid.
- 3 Mooi River — Goats, Saamloop/New Amalfi.
- 6 Rietvlei.
- 7 Bergville, Newcastle, Ntonjaneni, Underberg.
- 8 Estcourt, Paulpietersburg.
- 9 Elandskop, Ladysmith, Utrecht.

Selected Farms for Sale



FRANKLIN

Buy today for tomorrow's capital growth!! Balanced mixed farm of 1 052 ha. 242 ha Dundee, Avalon, Hutton and Longlands soil under cultivation. 12 ha established lucern. 800 ha well preserved mixed grazing, camped, with permanent watering points. Graced with a modern dwelling, numerous outbuildings, shear-ing shed with sheep pens, bull and horse stables, underroof feedlot and cattle handling facilities. ESCOM power distribution at low line charge. **Contact Mr Ken Rosewall, P O Box 167, Kokstad, Telephone 0372/2038, after hours 0372/2679.**

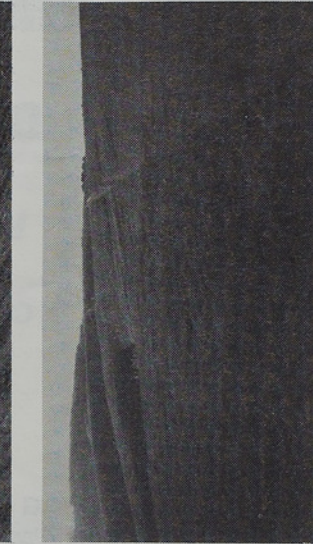
R470 000



PAULPIETERSBURG

Nou is die tyd om te koop!! Akkerbou/besproeiingsplaas van 537 ha. 130 ha onder spilpunt- en swaaibalkbesproeiing. Oorwegend Avalon-grond. Smutsvinger- en Kikoejoe weilande. Goete woonhuis en skure. EVKOM-krag. **Nader Mnr Steve du Toit, Posbus 135, Vryheid, Telefoon 0381/4901, na-ure 0381/5629.**

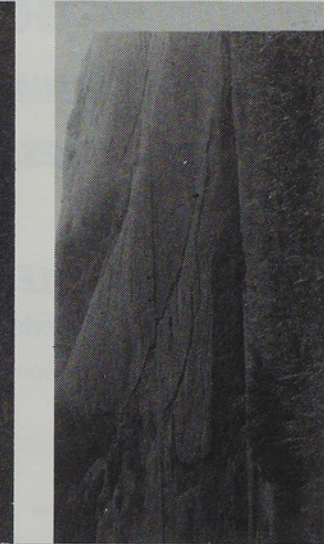
R775 000



HIGHFLATS

New on the market. 142 ha, close to tar road and town. Water from 3 dams and spring. High rainfall area. Kikuyu pastures. Large 5 bedroom dwelling m.e.s., wired for ESCOM power, which is close at hand. Set in peaceful surroundings with ex-pansive lawns and large trees. Only one hour from the sea. An extremely promising investment. **Contact Mr Roger Stott, P O Box 181, Pietermaritzburg, Telephone 0331/51227, after hours 0331/62049.**

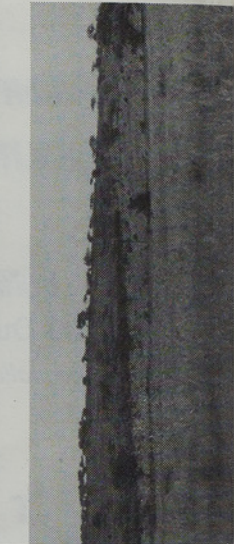
R85 000



NTUMENI

Suiker- en bosbouplaas van 362 ha. 8 km vanaf suikermole. Sukrose-kwota van 983 ton geproduseer van 175 ha geregistreerde lande. Sitrusboord van 4 600 jong bome onder Mikro-besproeiing. Resterende gedeelte geskik vir bosbou, waarvan 50 ha reeds beplant. Moderne 4-slaapkamer woonhuis met swembad, jonkmanshuis en menige plaasgeboue, insluitende werkersbehuising. Volle reeks werktuie by koop ingesluit. **Nader Mnr Steve Maritz, Posbus 181, Pietermaritzburg, Telefoon 0331/28751, na-ure 0331/26815.**

R630 000



THORNVILLE

Just far enough from city. 1 011 ha cane and stock farm. 202 ha registered quota land with sucrose quota of 1 000 tonnes, the rest is excellent well watered sweetveld grazing. Older model dwelling completely modernised, with 4 bedrooms m.e.s., magnificent shedding and cattle handling facilities. Electric supply from Pietermaritzburg city. A very economic unit. **Contact Mr Steve Maritz, P O Box 181, Pietermaritzburg,**

Stock Owners Agencies (Pty) Ltd
Veeboere Agentskappe (Edms) Bpk

Auctioneers & Estate Agents
Afslaers en Eiendomsagente



Uitgesoekte Plase te Koop

Byvoegsel tot Veeboere se Nuus, Januarie 1984

Een van die mees strategies geleë saaiplase in hierdie prima saaiestreek van Natal. Groot 648 ha, binne enkele km van massasilos. 348 ha bewerkte lande, verdere 100 ha ontwikkel vir spilpunt-besproeiing. EVKOM-krag reeds aangelê. Groot dam beplan en goedgekeur deur Waterwese op Sandspruit. Alle drade nuut opgerig. Moderne woonhuis en plaasgeboue. Ware lus vir die oog. **Nader Mnr Con Clarence, Posbus 152, Ladysmith, Telefoon 0361/26704, na-ure 0361/22639.**

R850 000

DUNDEE

Public auction sale, offering tempting investment opportunity. The farm "Avenmore" measuring 697 ha. Planned and fenced for stock farming. 130 ha high potential cultivated lands. Water from reliable sources. Geological surveys and boreholes indicate coal reserves in excess of 3 million tonnes. Large modernised dwelling, cottage and farm buildings with ESCOM power. Farm to be sold inclusive of minerals. Conditions of sale available from the auctioneers. Auction to be held on the farm "Avenmore", 8 km from Dundee on **25 January 1984 at 10h30. Contact Mr Gert Veldman, P O Box 199, Dundee, Telephone 0341/21171, after hours 0341/22461.**

GELUKSBURG

Boedelverreë van 46 woonerwe wat wissel in grootte van 929 tot 3 716 m². Tans nog belastingvry. Sal afsonderlik asook in groepe aangebied word. 313 ha onverbeterde gemengde plaas. Grens aan dorp. Volop water. Veiling woorde in Geluksburg Boerevereniging-saal gehou op **1 Februarie 1984 om 10h30. Nader Mnr John Fourie, Posbus 152, Ladysmith, Telefoon 0361/26704, na-ure 0361/26412.**

ESTCOURT

The first to see this 261 ha farm will be the last!! 187 ha dry lands mostly Avalon soils, 35 ha established pastures under irrigation. The sweetveld grazing is camped into 15 camps, all with water. Large modern dwelling, usual farm buildings, piggery and byre. ESCOM power. Irrigation equipment, milking machine and bulk tank included in sale. **Contact Mr Con Clarence, P O Box 152, Ladysmith, Telephone 0361/26704, after hours 0361/22639.**

R250 000

WINTERTON

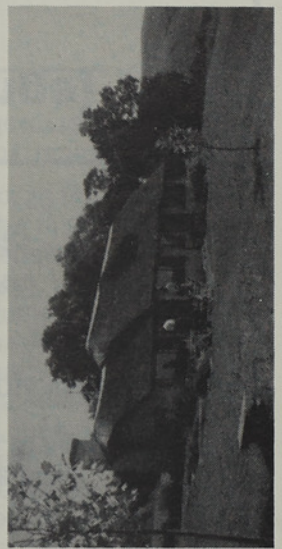
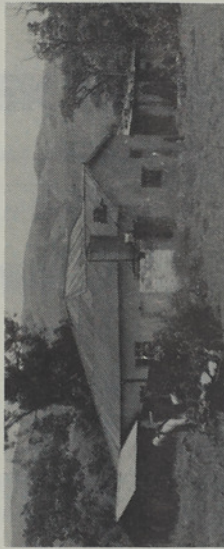
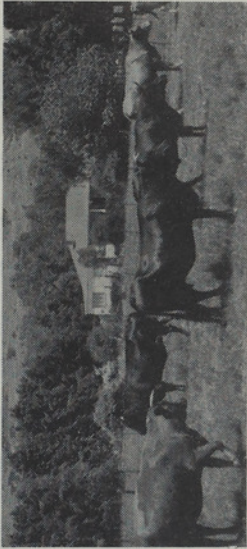
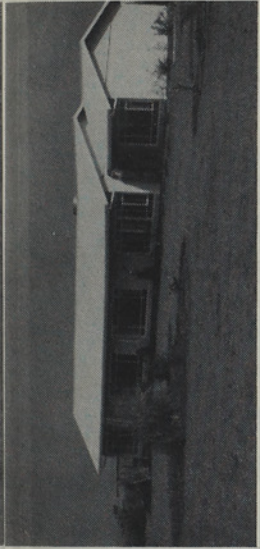
Wonderlike belegging. 121 ha Drakensberg-plasie. Beplanning van groot dam reeds goedgekeur en toestemming verkry vir die oprigting van minstens 6 chalets. Bestaande verbeterings: 4-slaapkamer woonhuis en gastehuis. Bied uitstekende moontlikhede om as vakansie-oord ontwikkel te word. Omgewing wel bekend as ontspanningsgebied. Goeie redes vir verkoop. **Nader Mnr Con Clarence, Posbus 152, Ladysmith, Telefoon 0361/26704, na-ure 0361/22639.**

R300 000



Stock Owners Agencies (Pty) Ltd
Veeboere Agentskappe (Edms) Bpk

Auctioneers & Estate Agents
Afslaers en Eiendomsagente





Sheep Talk

Presented by
MR HORACE DAINTY

The main object of the Shepherds Club organisation is to improve management, production and profit of sheep farming enterprises — through mutual exchange of information and techniques; through the gathering and dissemination of data on all aspects from experts; by participating in research projects where possible and convenient, and to foster fellowship between members.

Comments, short articles, hints and kinks or even printable shepherds jokes will be welcomed. Address items to the Editor, Sheep Talk, P O Box 260, Howick 3290. If you would like to join the Shepherds Club, please write to this same address, phone 03321-2058/9, or contact your nearest STOCK OWNERS office.

Blue Tongue — Rift Valley Fever — Wesselsbron Disease — again! This subject has been dealt with in the last two issues, but a Departmental release via NAU gives further information which should be followed. "Sheep farmers are advised to vaccinate sheep against blue tongue as soon as possible if this has not been done already. Rift Valley Fever vaccinations should also be given. A single vaccination gives life long immunity. Pregnant ewes can be vaccinated with the **inactivated** vaccine. Vaccination for Wesselsbron disease can be done simultaneously. Pregnant ewes should not be vaccinated. This vaccine will also confer a lifelong immunity. Farmers are advised to contact their nearest State Veterinarian for further details."

PS — Wouldn't it be nice to have a full record of vaccinations (and other details) when buying in sheep?

Intensive Fat Lamb Production in Natal — (J Grobbelaar & W A Botha). This is the 1983 up date on the previous publication, published and available from the Department of Agriculture — Natal Region — Cedara at a post free price of R1,30. I take this opportunity of congratulating the Department for yet another top class publication. This particular book is an absolute "must" for every Natal farmer. It is well printed, easy to read and well illustrated. It includes many summaries and charts and is ideal for the practical farmer. Johan Grobbelaar has moved from Cedara, but Willem Botha is still there, and quite often attends our Shepherds Club meetings. Don't delay, send in your cheque to Cedara for a publication which you won't put down until you have read it through, and which will undoubtedly remain at your elbow for ready reference.

Crossbreeding. This was a subject presented (as a first of a series) by Dr Alistair Paterson at our last Midlands meeting. Dr Paterson's own summary of his lecture:-

The biological value of crossbreeding, in terms of increased kilograms of lambs weaned per ewe exposed to breeding is a well established fact. The economic value of crossbreeding in the applied context is not so well established.

- (i) To exploit hybrid vigour a complex breeding structure, beyond the resources of most producers, must be implemented and maintained.
- (ii) Efficiency of feed conversion is a major component of the total economic efficiency of the flock. Hybrid vigour for efficiency of feed conversion is nil.

Answer:

- (i) Purchase suitable first cross maiden ewes (at a reasonable price) cross with a third breed (ensuring that the product is marketable) and sell **all** progeny. Replace all culled F₁ ewes with new purchased F₁ ewes.
- (ii) Implement a sound breeding and selection programme in a suitable straight bred flock.

NB:

- (i) Selecting on size at any stage results in selecting for maturity type and not efficient growth.
- (ii) Selecting on growth rate at any one stage results in selecting for not only growth efficiency but also maturity type.

There are some very important statements made above which require considerable thought. The value of crossbreeding is emphasised, but the method employed to achieve proper results is far more complex than many realise. Follow this up at your next Shepherds Club meeting.

Lambing. Autumn lambing is not far away. Now is a good time to review procedures, to train your shepherds and helpers, and to resolve to reduced lamb mortalities — most of which stem from starvation.

LAMB MORTALITIES — John Ronald

The death of lambs is a major cause of lowered production from sheep flocks. Apart from the direct loss of the dead lambs themselves, there is also the lowered selection potential caused by having fewer ewe lambs at weaning, and fewer 2 toothed from which to choose flock replacements.

Many commercial farmers find it difficult to measure their lamb mortality accurately. Although they may have accurate tallies at docking and weaning, they rarely record number of lambs born.

Causes of Lamb Mortality

- * Most lambs die at birth or between 1-3 days of age.
- * Twins have a higher mortality than singles.
- * Within birth ranks, the most frequent causes of death are dystocia (difficult birth) among singles and starvation — exposure among twins.
- * Dystocia increases as birth mass increases, and starvation — exposure increases as birth mass decreases.
- * Maiden ewes have the highest lamb mortality of all ages.
- * Male lambs have a slightly higher mortality than female.
- * There are large differences in lamb mortality between years, caused by seasonal effect.
- * Birth mass is a critical factor in survival. The best survival is by lambs that weighted from 3,5–5,5 kg at birth, regardless of whether they were singles or twins.

Environmental Solutions

Control of Feed:

Feeding in the last 6 weeks of gestation has been shown to have a strong effect on the birth weight of the lamb. Farmers must try to control birth mass by feeding in late pregnancy. However, it is difficult to achieve this consistently every year because of all the complex factors concerned.

Knowing the lambing date is probably the only practical solution at present to avoid overfeeding (causing bearing troubles and dystocia). Knowing the date of lambing of each ewe within 7-10 days allows greater management control.

Predicted lambing dates can be obtained from udder inspection — pulling out the big udder ewes at regular intervals, or from mating dates obtained with ram harnesses and crayons.

Shepherding — avoid disturbance:

Again, recent studies have shown the effect of disturbance, especially by the dog on the bonding between ewe and lamb. This disturbance causes movement away from the birth site where all the smell and fluids are, and subsequent mismothering and death.

Only well controlled, quiet dogs are acceptable for the lambing paddock. Avoiding disturbance however is not possible in recording situations where lambs have to be tagged. Managers seem to disagree on whether intensive shepherding is economic. Some say that saving 2 lambs per day pays the shepherd's wages. Others strongly disagree and take the "easy-care" attitude. Research has no information on this problem.

A Happy and Prosperous New Year to you.