



Agriculture & Rural Development

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Event	:	Farmers' Study Group Training Day
Presenter	:	Mr N.P. Bareki
Presentation title	:	Frame Size, Management And Profitability
Location	:	Ipopeng, Amalia in Mamusa
Date	:	18 May 2021
Requesting Agric advisor	:	Mr A.C. Mallo
Aim	:	Training of selected study group farmers farmers
Purpose	:	To enhance farmers' understanding of the different beef cattle frame sizes, their management requirements and profitability.

FRAME SIZE, MANAGEMENT AND PROFITABILITY

Ipopeng Livestock Farmer Study Groups 18 May 2021

INTRODUCTION

An opportunity is only an opportunity when it is grasped by those to whom it applies. In the past beef was produced and marketed in the presence of a safety net in the form of the floor price. In general the farmer produced and another marketed and the weaned calf system is not much different. The current agricultural environment has challenged that approach and the beef producer should consider engaging the market directly themselves and compete for the best possible price to maximise income.

Farming regions differ from one another and large parts of South Africa are ideal, or even exclusively suited to, extensive livestock production (70%+). Climatological limitations, particularly low and erratic rainfall and high temperature, are the most important reasons for this. Periodic and seasonal droughts are the rule rather than the exception, especially in the more western parts of the country and the climate appears to be changing. In order to optimize livestock production in these areas the choice of cattle breed, relating specifically frame size, is of utmost importance because the feed production potential of the veld is limited. To ensure production the cattle have to be adapted to the environment in which they are to be managed. The big, late carcass-maturing breeds developed in Europe where climate, in terms of rainfall (plentiful and well distributed) and temperature (mild) ensure good grazing, is optimal. Large frame animals thrive in such conditions but when fodder becomes a limitation and where temperatures are high the large frame animal tends to be less able to cope because a larger amount of the ingested feed is required for maintenance and the control of the internal environment. In countries and regions, such as parts of the Asian and African continents, where climate tends to limit feed production (quantities limited by drought, quality compromised by temperature), the adapted cattle breeds tend to be smaller and have

early-maturing carcasses as these adaptations allows them to limit maintenance requirements, leaving more nutrients for the production function.

In the more arid areas fodder quality is often very good, even during winter, but quantity is a limitation, resulting in carrying capacities ranging from 8 to 18 ha LSU.

Animals are adapted when they are able to maintain high levels of reproduction and production in a harsh environment, without additional inputs. When we say that present opportunities must be used we must first be convinced that there are opportunities to be had. My take is an unambiguous "yes". There are various opportunities to be considered but this presentation is focusing on frame size, management and profitability in the production of "organic beef".

BEEF PRODUCTION

Global trends, consumer preferences and disease outbreaks are all outside the control of the individual farmer while there are a number of beef production aspects that are controllable. The beef producer must make sure that the controllable elements of the enterprise on the farm are in order before tackling the greater issues that need collective endeavours. In beef production three main aspects are under the control of the farmer, namely:

- Productivity: linked directly to reproduction that receives a lot of attention.
- Animal health: increasingly under the farmer's control and responsibility – don't try to save here and keep record of all that is done.
- Marketing: primarily determines the production system to be implemented which is, in turn, dependant on the following inter-related factors:
 - Environment (climate/risk)
 - Frame size (suitability)

- Nutrition (quantity/quality)
- Lick supplements (nutrient deficiencies)
- Input costs (contained)

Decisions taken in a beef production enterprise have some medium term consequences but mainly long-term consequences. Production systems cannot be changed within a short period of time.