

Dr. Joggie Briedenhann Speech

Mr Misika, Madam Director of Agriculture Research and Development, Invited Guests and Colleagues

I work extensively amongst all the different levels of farmers in Namibia - from the communal farmer all the way to the top stud breeders. I have noticed 2 points of importance - firstly the enthusiasm to breed and farm successfully is exactly the same, although the means to do so may differ and secondly the huge negative effects of constant inbreeding and the use of poor genetic material. In short, using bulls that are not performance tested and where the bull is used on his relatives mostly daughters and granddaughters. This has a direct impact on the economically important traits like weaning weight, post wean growth, fertility and many others. It is the cause of a huge drop in income for the farmer.

At Hartebeestloop, we have recognized the issue and decided to do something about it. Over many years of dedicated stud breeding and performance testing, we build up a large inventory of semen from the top performing Bonsmara bulls in Namibia and South Africa. Those bulls range in price from N\$ 100 000.00 to N\$ 800 000.00. They include a number of bulls that had the biggest influence on the Bonsmara breed world-wide. So – it is not just semen but rather tested and proven excellent genetic breeding material.

As part of the semen inventory, we documented the strong and weak traits for each bull (purely for those traits that will bring more money for the farmer), the production systems recommended for each bull – meaning if it should be used for weaner production, slaughter ox production or for the breeding and selling of replacement heifers. Furthermore, we indicated if the bull could be used as a calving ease bull to open heifers or if it should only be used on proven cows. If these recommendations are followed, success with the off-spring is guaranteed.

The semen inventory that we donate consists of about 4000 semen straws and we trust that it will make a significant contribution to the livestock industry in Namibia.

I thank the Permanent Secretary and the staff of the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry for their huge contribution to the Agriculture industry in Namibia and through Agriculture to the general well-being of all Namibians.

Thank you