Mashona Cattle Society February 2014

Greetings Mashona Cattle Lovers!!

Hope the rains have been plentiful and the cattle are fat and flourishing.

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1) AGM

The 63rd AGM of the Mashona Society was held at Borrowdale Vet Hospital on 15th November. There were 13 members present. The occasion was marked with us celebrating Carmen Stubbs 50 years as a Mashona Breeder.

2) Mashona Carcasses: Research by Mrs. Carmen Stubbs has revealed the following points

1. The present grading system for Meat carcasses in Zimbabwe discriminates against smaller breeds.
2. That 90% of all cattle are now in the smallholder sector & the average carcass weight is well below 190kg – so the grading system penalizes these carcasses.
3. Mashonas are early maturing & have early dentition. Ward HJ "eruption of 1st pair of permanent incisors occurred earlier in indigenous cattle"
4. Hammond 1932b "Small species & breeds of animals have smaller muscle bundles & finer grained meat than larger ones & so are usually preferred for meat purposes"
5. Hirzel 1936 "There is more marbling fat in early maturing animals."
6. Gregory NG "Systems tend to undervalue smaller (Sanga type carcasses). It has to be decided at what limits the Sanga's advantage in terms of proportionate leanness is offset by its slight of lean."
7. Gregory NG "Lean Meat Yield should benefit the meat consumers wanting it."
8. Hammond 1932b "Fat development – order of the parts in which fat is deposited. 1st caul & kidney fat, 2nd subcutaneous fat 3rd marbling.
9. Ossification – skeletal ossification indicates incapable of further growth. Beef animals grow in height, length & weight to 5years of age – after this ossification is said to have taken place.

10. Last 2 pairs of incisor teeth could be from animals 3years (early maturing) to 4.66years (late maturing). Cattle of same age can have 4, 6, 8permanent incisors.
11. Therefore age of carcass should be based on dentition and also degree of ossification of the spinal processes of the thoracic vertebrae. Stuart Kent, Meat Technologist, suggests judging age by condition, in his paper on a new simple system.
12. In practice the 8 incisors provide an adequate estimation of age, as they are set apart from the premolars by a large space (the diastema) & are easily observed by pulling down the animal's lower lip.
13. 8 tooth dentition ties in with ossification & the young animal category.
14. Vorster TH "The suitability of breeds to range condition is more important than the influence of breed on carcass grade."
15. ***In summary Mashona carcass undergrades because it is too short in length and their dentition can penalise it as it erupts earlier***

Any other points (preferably with traceable research) please send to Mrs. C .L. Stubbs.

3) Cost of keeping cattle:

1. Grazing (your area) 5 Ha for 1Livestock unit (LU at 450kgs)
2. Water 35-45l /day – pregnant or large bull +20l = 60l
3. Vaccines CA, QE, Anthrax. Others Lumpy skin, Rift valley etc(your area)
4. Dosing 2xyear , branding/ear tags @$1.00/tag
5. Labour: Wages, Housing, Protective clothing,
6. Transport & Vehicle(scotch cart) costs & depreciation
7. Winter Maintenance (your area) say 6months @300g per day.
8. Dipping 4l dip mix / head /dipping. Cost of Knapsack sprayer if no plunge dip.
9. Handling facilities & night kraals repair & Maintenance. Wire/pliers etc
10. Summer phosphates 5g/day again know your area.
11. Marketing & Sale costs – on farm/ sales/ slaughter
12. Bulling costs – running a bull will cost approx. $200.00/year (55c/day)
13. Other veterinary costs equipment, syringes, needles , medications, burdizzo, replacements
14. Mortality 4% good – usually higher
15. Subscriptions, licences, books etc
16. Recording births, deaths, feed, sales etc
17. Veld management & improvement(e.g. fencing , rotational grazing, legumes etc)
18. Bush fire control – firebreaks.

I am sure you can add to this list. The idea so many new farmers have that it costs nothing & they do not put their hands in their pockets for their cattle. Some care, attention and also spending & the cattle productivity will improve.(Thanks to Carmen for this article)

4) Results of Harare Show

The Harare Show saw much interest in the Mashona Cattle on display. Research Stations and Bluegums Farm had cattle on display.

Bluegums Stud : Champion female Mashona, Reserve Champion Female Mashona, Senior female 1st, Reserve Champion-Junior Female Interbreed. Junior Bull, Mashona 1st, Champion Bull, Mashona. Reserve Champion Senior Bull, Interbreed.

Grand Champion Reserve Interbreed. Reserve Bull Mashona. Champion Bull Mashona

Davidson …..Grand Champion Reserve Interbreed

5) Paper published by Mr. Dahwa (and others) from Makoholi Research Station

Influence of Grazing Intensity on Soil Properties and Shaping Herbaceous Plant Communities in Semi-Arid Dambo Wetlands of Zimbabwe

E. Dahwa, C. P. Mudzengi, T. Hungwe, M. D. Shoko, X. Poshiwa, S. Kativu, C. Murungweni

ABSTRACT

Key issues of concern regarding the environmental impacts of livestock on grazing land are their effects on soil, water quality, and biodiversity. This study was carried out to determine how grazing intensity influences soil physical and chemical properties and occurrence of herbaceous plant species in dambo wetlands. Three categories of grazing intensity were selected from communal, small scale commercial and large scale commercial land. Dambos from the large scale commercial land functioned as the control. Data analysis included ANOVA and multivariate tests from CANOCO. There were significantly negative changes to soil nutrient status in communal dambos though with a higher number of rare taxa. Sodium, phosphorous, pH and infiltration rate were significant determinants of plant species occurrence. Overgrazing is threatening the productivity, stability, and ecological functioning of dambo soils in communal Zimbabwe.

These dambos also require special conservation and management priorities as they contain a large number of rare plant species.

6) Inspections, its time to start thinking about having your cattle inspected. As well, lets us know if you would like to become a learner inspector.

APPLICATION FORM: INSPECTION OF MASHONA CATTLE

Name/Institution: Farm Name:

Telephone: Email:

Farm Directions: (Indicate mileage, time estimates and meeting place)

Date and starting time:

Number of cattle to be inspected:

WHAT YOU NEED TO HAVE ORGANIZED

1) All cattle at inspection area, clearly ear tagged, branded and records present.

2) Place cattle in age groups

3) Table and chairs for inspectors-animal comes through the race then needs to be viewed in a holding area by the inspectors, then the animal is moved out

4) Morning tea, lunch (confirm with inspectors)

5) Inspection cost is $1.00 per head

6) Mileage/fuel to be paid to inspectors

7) You will receive an inspection report which will include an overall comment on your cattle, handling facilities etc.

8) For an inspection you need to be a paid up member of the Mashona Society.

9) In due course inspected & passed animals will be individually branded as having passed the inspection. .

Forms to be emailed to the Senior Inspector, Carmen Stubbs clstubbs@zol.co.zw

and the Secretary of the Mashona Society, Maree Osborne osborne@zol.co.zw