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~ superior genetics ~

DATA RECORDING REQUIREMENTS OF THE STUD SHEEP FARMER

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INTRODUCTION

With the opening up of the world markets to the South African Stud Sheep Farmer and having to compete in the future for this market, we farmers realize that a concerted effort will have to be made to scientifically evaluate our Sheep so as to prove their superiority over existing Sheep Breeds in other countries. And more importantly to stay ahead with the improvement of our genetics now finding its way to all corners of the Globe, so that we do not find some other country being able to lay claim to the fact that they might someday have scientific proof of having the superior South African genetics.

TO BUILD A STRUCTURE THAT WILL KEEP US AHEAD OF THE REST OF THE WORLD'S SHEEP BREEDERS, WE NEED THE FOLLOWING IN SOUTH AFRICA:

- (a) The best Sheep and animal scientists.
- (b) Progressive open-minded Sheep Farmers.
- (c) A state and private veterinary structure that can assure us of prolonged international market participation by upholding standards that will keep protocols open.
- (d) We will need the will and determination of all concerned to work and plan together to achieve our aims.

I am convinced that the record proves that with the first two points we have no problem. We have of the World's best. Regarding the third point we have had problems but we have managed to work together in solving them and have put structures in place to try and make sure that we do not make mistakes again. I would like to be frank and say that to my mind concerning the fourth point we are failing dismally and if this continues we have lost the battle. I see too much professional jealousy between our animal Scientists. A lack of communication or the will to really work together between bodies such as the S.A. Stud Book and the ARC. I see distrust of the motives of the S.A. Studbook by the Breed Societies and also of Studbook distrusting the motives of the Breed Societies.

Breed Society Directors, Presidents of Breed Societies and their council Members are inclined to often protect their own ego and put self interest above the interest of the S.A. Stud industry and its long term survival. Yes we are all guilty and not one can point a finger at the other and I am sure you all know what I am talking about. If we can muster the guts to all forget short term self interest and the personal little empires we are trying to build around ourselves, and get focused on something much bigger that we can achieve together to the benefit of the entire S.A. Stud Sheep industry, then I believe we can win the battle and even control Stud Sheep breeding in the world especially concerning our own genetics.



MY VISION OF A DATA BASE

I am convinced that it is not necessary for me to convince anyone present today or any Breed Society that it is vitally important if progress is to be made with the improvement of your Breed that there has to be data capturing. Pedigree and performance data must be captured and then when reliable calculations have been made and analyzed, it must be made available to the Breeders. This we know but what is important to us is the following:

- (a) Can data be gathered, calculated, analyzed and sent back to Breed Societies and their Breeders in such a manner that each Breed Society can maintain it's own standard as required without one Breed Society dictating to another what the various standards should be?
- (b) Can Breed Societies continue laying down their own norms for Membership of their Society and what is necessary to record or not?
- (c) Most importantly can it be made affordable for all Breeders and Societies?

I BELIEVE ALL THIS CAN BE ACHIEVED IN THE FOLLOWING MANNER

We must realize that the electronic medium is the future and to be able to achieve our aims Breeders, Breed Societies and data capturing authorities will all have to be willing to make use only of the electronic medium methods of communication and data transfer.

The Intergest 2000 Program is capable of storing and making available all information that will be required by Breeders or Breed Societies. Apart from the important pedigree and performance information other services can be rendered such as sale catalogue information, show entry information, Sheep for sale section and many more. The important thing here is to have the ultimate available for Breed Societies and for Breeders and to leave it up to them what they want to use or utilize.

Programs for Breed Societies to pass on information and receive information can and must be developed. There will be Breeders in areas that cannot link up electronically. Their data must be captured by the Breed Societies and then sent in electronically.

If private Sheep programs like Stud Master etc are not able to keep up to date and remain compatible with the Stud Book programs or the A.R.C. programs, programs must be developed for the Stud Breeders that will make this possible.



EACH SOCIETY MUST BE ALLOWED TO DECIDE FOR ITSELF ON MATTERS SUCH AS:

- (a) What data must all be sent in by Members for capturing.
- (b) Electronic reports to be sent to Members and to Societies.
- (c) The methods for calculating selection indexes etc.
- (d) Who may be Members of the Society e.g. a Society may decide to have Members with records and Members without records. This should be their decision.

THE WHOLE SCHEME MUST BE MADE AFFORDABLE BY:

- (a) Getting all Breed Societies to participate.
- (b) By only allowing the sending and receiving of data to be done electronically. Breed Societies with Members not being able to transfer data themselves will have to do it for their Members and let them pay for it.
- (c) The programs must have all the blockages built in so that only correct data can be accepted when sent in.
- (d) Data must be made available to Sheep Breeders locally and internationally and sold at a price. Breeder's Institutions and Breed Societies must have to pay for all information they require from the system. There must be an absolute minimum charge for the receiving and storing of the data. In the future money needed to pay for the scheme must be made and generated by having such valuable information available for the Stud Sheep industry that Breeders will be prepared to buy it to improve their Studs or see what genetics is available internationally.
- (e) International participation must be catered for. With the spreading of our South African genetics throughout the world we are finding more and more people wanting to know how they can manage their South African Sheep Breed industries successfully. By joining the South African based Breed Society these international Members can then all be served and catered for within the whole scheme as well. By doing this we can exercise full control and render a service to all persons involved with the breeding of South African Sheep Breeds throughout the World.



SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

By starting immediately it will be possible to achieve these aims on a global basis because as far as Sheep Breeds is concerned very little has been done as yet.

What the South African Stud Sheep Farmer needs directly, or through his Breed Society, is the availability of the maximum amount of information supplied by S.A. Studbook and the A.R.C. Giving each society or farmer the choice or opportunity to utilize whatever of that information he needs to. Allow the Stud industry and especially the Membership of Societies to be as free and as diverse as what the various Breed Societies choose for them to be. But the system and information available must be so good that no Stud Breeder hoping to compete nationally or wanting to participate in international trade can afford not to join up.

Gear the entire system electronically to do away with as much labour as possible; putting the responsibility onto the Stud Breeder to feed in correct information, thus cutting costs drastically. Open it all up to international participation and then the South African Stud Sheep industry could lead the world. It is vital that dynamic Breed Societies like the Dhonie's come aboard and help us to set the trend.

I am totally convinced that it can be made to work. The question is have we all got the vision and if we have, is there the will and the guts to work together and make it happen or will we continue building our own little empires and allow our entire Stud Industry to collapse in ruins.