

CHAPTER 2: The administration of a Bonsmara stud

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1. EQUIPMENT REQUIRED

- 1.1. A spring balance (hanging spring scale) for weighing calves for birth weight.
- 1.2. A portable electronic scale for taking performance testing weights and other weights.
- 1.3. Tattoo pliers, ear marking pliers and dehorning cutter.

2. COMPUTER EQUIPMENT AND SOFTWARE

- 2.1. A desktop computer or laptop will do.
- 2.2. A management software program. There are several programs available, but BenguFarm (BeefPro) is recommended. You can obtain the software and all necessary information about the program from an agent of SA Studbook, the ARC or BeefPro, or from the website www.beefpro.net.
- 2.3. Internet connection.
- 2.4. Training is available for the use of these programs and it is recommended that you attend a course.
- 2.5. There are also professionals who can manage your administration on your behalf for a fee.

3. THE ADMINISTRATION PROCESS

3.1. MAKE CONTACT WITH THE MENTOR APPOINTED FOR YOU BY THE SOCIETY!

- 3.1.1. This person, or any other Bonsmara breeder who is willing to help, is extremely valuable to you.

3.2. IDENTIFICATION OF UPGRADING ANIMALS OR THE PURCHASE OF STUD ANIMALS

- 3.2.1. Contact the Bonsmara Society at 051 448 6084 or visit the Bonsmara website at www.bonsmara.co.za to obtain the necessary application forms for registration as a Bonsmara breeder, as well as information about the correct procedure for the route you want to follow. You should also join a Bonsmara Club in your geographical area; information will be provided to you by the Society.
- 3.2.2. If you decide to upgrade (if you want to upgrade purebred, commercial Bonsmara females), the Society will send two Bonsmara inspectors to you to do the inspection and they will send the necessary documentation to the Society.
- 3.2.3. Clear identification of these animals are needed, which should correspond with the inspection document.
- 3.2.4. These animals will be registered in your name at SA Studbook.
- 3.2.5. If you decide to purchase stud Bonsmara females, these animals will be transferred to your membership by SA Studbook once you have completed the necessary application.

3.3. THE REGISTRATION OF YOUR MEMBERSHIP AND ANIMALS

- 3.3.1. Registration of your membership and your animals should be done at Bonsmara SA as well as SA Studbook.
- 3.3.2. Contact SA Studbook at 051 4100 917 to register as a direct (electronic) trader/user, if you have an internet connection available. You can also register directly on the Internet by completing the electronic form at www.logix.org.za.
- 3.3.3. You will then receive a username and password that will give you access to your herd on SA Studbook's online system, Logix.
- 3.3.4. You will have access to your herd as it appears in the official database of SA Studbook via the website www.logix.org.za.
- 3.3.5. If you do not have an internet connection, there is also a paper route/manual option available for all actions. Details are available at Bonsmara SA.

3.4. SET UP THE HERD ON THE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

- 3.4.1. After the necessary steps have been taken to get all the registrations in place, the first step will be to import the data of all the animals that are officially in your herd, into your management program.
- 3.4.2. This is done online from BenguFarm (BeefPro), directly from Logix.
- 3.4.3. **From your BenguFarm (BeefPro) you will then import the official herd lists, take these to the kraal and verify that the identification numbers of the animals on the list match those on the list.**

3.5. MATING SEASONS AND MATING LISTS

- 3.5.1. It is important to remember that you may only use approved SP Bonsmara bulls on your stud animals.
- 3.5.2. If your upgrading animals are already pregnant when they are inspected, the calves can only be included in the Studbook Registry if you can identify the sire of the calf as an SP Bonsmara bull. If you did indeed use an SP Bonsmara bull and want to register the calves, you can determine the paternity through DNA testing on the animals; when the result is known, the calves will duly be recorded.
- 3.5.3. If not, the calves can be registered as commercial calves on the system for the dam's calving record. The female offspring may be presented at another inspection to be selected as basic (FO) animals.
- 3.5.4. Most stud herds are managed with two mating seasons. This means that the bulls join the cows and heifers only for a period of 90 days. A winter and a summer mating season can be used. The exact timeframes of these seasons will depend on the geographical location of your farm. You may also decide to use only a summer mating season.
- 3.5.5. You also have the choice of single-bull mating, where 25-35 female animals in a single herd are mated with only one bull. The advantage is that you only need to collect a sample of the bull's tail hair, put it in a Lidcat envelope (available from the Society) and send it to the Society. Your mating lists need to be complete and correct for each mating group (bull ID no., date in and date out). You calves will be recorded only on the basis of this information.
- 3.5.6. The other option is to do multiple-bull mating, where 3-4 males join a larger herd of females (\pm 120). The advantage is that you will need fewer camps during the mating season and the chance that you may lose calves due to a bull that fails you, is smaller. Your calves are recorded as "pending" and only after the DNA results are announced, the sires are recorded and dams are confirmed. This means that you have to send biological samples (tail hair) of every female animal (only once) and each bull you use to a laboratory (such as UNISTEL) to determine the parentage of the calf (of which a sample should be sent as well).
- 3.5.7. **Choose your mating season. Decide on your mating/pairing options. Identify your cows and bulls and mate the animals for 90 days. Make sure that you keep a precise record of the females and bull(s) in each herd. Check the mating lists at a later stage, and after the animals have been confirmed, it is recorded in BenguFarm (BeefPro) and sent electronically to SA Studbook..**

3.6. CALVING SEASON

- 3.6.1. You are excited and waiting for your cows to start calving.
- 3.6.2. As the cows near the end of pregnancy, it is advisable to bring them closer to home, the crush-pen and the scale. This makes the management much easier.
- 3.6.3. Make sure that either you or your manager can see these animals every day.
- 3.6.4. Calving Records
 - 3.6.4.1. Print your own list of females due to calve this season from BeefPro.
 - 3.6.4.2. Use a calving record book (Arthur, SA Studbook and ARC print such record books). Attached is an example of our own book. It is compiled in the exact order that is needed to enter the data in BeefPro.
 - 3.6.4.3. First, record the dam of the calf. Make sure the cow/heifer is on your list. If not, it might be that you are reading the number incorrectly or your mating list is not correct. Strike the cow's number on the list in order to prevent you from mistakenly recording a calf for the cow.
 - 3.6.4.4. When you register, you will receive a herd designation mark (HDM). This, together with the year and serial number part of the identification of the calf.
 - 3.6.4.5. The identification number for the first calf born for the specific year will be herd designation mark (HDM), year and sequence number, e.g. the ID number for the first calf of 2013 will be as follows: Your HDM, followed by 13 0001 e.g. ABC130001. Note that you record the calf as "1" in your calving book, the additional "000" is only to have the correct format for the ID number.

- 3.6.4.6. You have recorded the dam's ID number; the calf is now number 1. Record calves chronologically; this facilitates entering the data in your BenguFarm (BeefPro) program.
- 3.6.4.7. Record the calf's birth date, birth weight and sex.
- 3.6.4.8. If you dehorn calves at birth, record the horn status of the calf. The status of polled animals is confirmed by inspection, recorded on the inspection form and recorded as such in the system.
- 3.6.4.9. There is also a place to make a note of the status of the calf, as well as record remarks about the calf and the dam.
- 3.6.4.10. If the calf is stillborn or died after birth, you still need to record the calf (allocate sequence number as usual) with the necessary comment that the calf has died. The calf is still recorded for the dam's calving record.
- 3.6.4.11. The calf will now be marked. The necessary ear notches and tattoo are recorded for the number. Your calves may now be tattooed if you experience problems with theft. **Take note that calves should be tattooed before inspection.**
- 3.6.4.12. Recording the cow's weight at birth is not mandatory, but if you have the facility, it is good practice to take this weight. This allows you to determine the calf to cow birth weight ratio. The weight must be taken within 3 days; a few cows can thus be weighed together, e.g. twice per week.
- 3.6.4.13. If you are sure that the births are recorded correctly, it is entered on BenguFarm (BeefPro) and sent electronically to SA Studbook.
- 3.6.4.14. You may wait until the end of the calving season before submitting the data to SA Studbook to make sure that you do not have any mistakes. However, verify what the due date is or you may have to pay a late registration fee.
- 3.6.4.15. After you have sent the birth notices of calves to SA Studbook, you will receive an electronic file with the calves' computer numbers. In some cases, SA Studbook will send you a list of errors if there are any problems. Make sure that you correct these errors.
- 3.6.4.16. Import the calves' computer numbers into BenguFarm (BeefPro) and print a checklist to make sure that each calf is recorded in the system. If not, you should immediately make inquiries and correct the mistake, so that the calf can receive a computer number.
- 3.6.4.17. If you use a multiple-bull mating system, you have to collect the biological material of the calves, mark it clearly and send it to the relevant laboratory. The results of the sire parentage will be provided directly to SA Studbook (by Unistel) and your calves will be recorded with the correct sires. Make sure that you have entered the calves' sires and sections correctly in BenguFarm (BeefPro).

3.6.5. MATING THESE COWS

- 3.6.5.1. Once the calving season is completed, these cows should be mated again.
- 3.6.5.2. Determine how many bulls you will need.
- 3.6.5.3. Have a veterinarian evaluate the bulls for breeding competency.
- 3.6.5.4. Work out your matings (genotypically and phenotypically) and classify the cows with calves into various mating groups.
- 3.6.5.5. Collect and lidcat/store hair samples of all the bulls you use.
- 3.6.5.6. Record the mating groups.

3.6.6. PERFORMANCE TESTING

- 3.6.6.1. Performance testing consists of the following stages: a pre-wean and post-wean test (pre-wean tests include weights at 100 days and weaning at 205 days). Both heifer and bull calves are subjected to this. Post-wean tests include evaluation at 12 months and 18 months. It is compulsory for heifers to be subjected to either one or both the evaluations.
- 3.6.6.2. For post-weaning evaluation for bulls, one of the following options may be chosen: Post-wean tests where the bulls are kept on the veld with normal licks and weighed at 12 and 18 months of age; or growth tests, where the bulls are subjected to one of several types of growth tests, e.g. an extensive test, with or without supplementation on the veld. The test can also be performed semi-intensively, by enclosing bulls with feed for a shorter test duration. The length of this test varies and can be from 84 days to 140 days. The animals are weighed every fortnight (two weeks). The test is concluded by a field officer of SA Studbook, where the official final test weight and body measurements such as height, length, thickness of skin and scrotal circumference are obtained. Official data for these animals is received. The minimum number of animals for a Phase D test is 10. Phase C tests are similar to growth tests, with the difference that it has to be carried out at an official Phase C testing station. The owner will thus have to send his bull/bulls to one of the stations. This is an intensive growth test where the bull's feed intake will also be measured.

3.6.6.2.1. PRE-WEAN (100 DAYS) WEIGHING OF CALVES

- 3.6.6.2.1.1. This weighing is not required in the performance evaluation, but it is recommended.
- 3.6.6.2.1.2. If you want to follow the early weaning practice, this weighing is required.
- 3.6.6.2.1.3. Your cows and calves are still in mating herds during this time.
- 3.6.6.2.1.4. This is the perfect opportunity to weigh the calves, verify the sex of the calves and verify your mating lists.
- 3.6.6.2.1.5. Weighing lists are printed from BenguFarm (BeefPro) and the calves' weights are recorded.
- 3.6.6.2.1.6. The correct updated mating lists are captured in BenguFarm (BeefPro) and sent directly and electronically to SA Studbook.
- 3.6.6.2.1.7. The sex of the calves has to be updated if there were any mistakes and corrected at SA Studbook before the weights are entered in BenguFarm (BeefPro). Then the weights are sent directly to SA Studbook.
- 3.6.6.2.1.8. SA Studbook will process the weight data and you will receive an electronic file with the official post-wean indices of the animals.
- 3.6.6.2.1.9. Import this information into BenguFarm (BeefPro) or via "Direct Logix" into your BenguFarm (BeefPro) program.

3.6.6.2.2. THE END OF THE BREEDING SEASON

- 3.6.6.2.2.1. Remember that your mating season ends 90 days after it started.
- 3.6.6.2.2.2. Remove the bulls from the mating herds.

3.6.6.2.3. WEANING (205 DAYS) WEIGHING OF CALVES

- 3.6.6.2.3.1. **Recording the 205 day weights of calves is compulsory.**
- 3.6.6.2.3.2. **Recording the cow weight when the calf is 205 days old is not required, but it is **STRONGLY** recommended. This weight is used in the calculation of the weaner calf mass in relation to the cow mass.**
- 3.6.6.2.3.3. Print a weighing list from BenguFarm (BeefPro). The list provides for taking the dam's weight in the order of the cows.
- 3.6.6.2.3.4. This is also a good opportunity to test your cows for pregnancy.
- 3.6.6.2.3.5. Record the weights of your calves and check their sex.
- 3.6.6.2.3.6. Record the weights of the cows.
- 3.6.6.2.3.7. First do all changes regarding sex at SA Studbook.
- 3.6.6.2.3.8. Capture the weights in BenguFarm (BeefPro) and send the data electronically to SA Studbook with "Logix Direct".
- 3.6.6.2.3.9. Receive your official indices and import into BenguFarm (BeefPro) via "Direct Logix".
- 3.6.6.2.3.10. This is also a good opportunity to vaccinate your calves for standard anthrax, botulism and black quarter. Your heifers should also be injected with Strain 19 / RB51 before the age of 8 months; this is a good age to have them injected. This is also a good time, before the calves are physically weaned, to vaccinate them against respiratory illnesses that commonly occurs with weaning shock.
- 3.6.6.2.3.11. You can give your cows their annual anthrax, botulism and black quarter vaccinations. Four birds with one stone.
- 3.6.6.2.3.12. If you have tested your cows for pregnancy, the pregnancy status of the animals should be captured in BenguFarm (BeefPro).
- 3.6.6.2.3.13. Decide about on nonpregnant animals, and if you want to keep the animals, they should be mated with the animals of the next breeding season.

3.6.6.2.4. CLASSIFY WEANER CALVES

- 3.6.6.2.4.1. This action occurs according to phenotype and genotype.
- 3.6.6.2.4.2. Firstly, cull all the calves with an official weaning index of below 90. Remember to cancel all culled animals.
- 3.6.6.2.4.3. Secondly, determine the quantity of replacement animals that you need, and then evaluate the rest of the heifer calves and reserve the quantity you need.
- 3.6.6.2.4.4. Thirdly, determine which test your bull calves will be subjected to: ordinary post-wean or growth test. Make the necessary arrangements if you want to have the animals evaluated at a central testing station.
- 3.6.6.2.4.5. From an upgrade system you need to cull the A generation bull calves (calves of F0 cows). Only B and SP generation bulls may be inspected and sold.

- 3.6.6.2.4.6. Wean calves physically from their dams. Sell all cull calves.
- 3.6.6.2.4.7. Start the adjustment phase of the growth test once the calves have forgotten their dams. Separate the heifer and the bull calves if you decide to submit the bulls to a post-wean test.

3.6.6.2.5. THE CLASSIFYING OF COWS

- 3.6.6.2.5.1. Once you have received the official weaning indices of your calves, you can generate a report in BenguFarm (BeefPro) according to which your cows can be evaluated.
- 3.6.6.2.5.2. Cows that produce or reproduce poorly, or have poor conformation, can be identified and culled.
- 3.6.6.2.5.3. Cancel these animals on your system and send the data electronically via "Direct Logix" to SA Studbook.

3.6.6.2.6. POST-WEAN – HEIFERS

- 3.6.6.2.6.1. At the age of 12 months, the heifers are weighed to determine a year (365 days) index.
- 3.6.6.2.6.2. Print a weighing list in BenguFarm (BeefPro).
- 3.6.6.2.6.3. Record the weights, then capture it in BenguFarm (BeefPro), send the data electronically and receive the official indices from SA Studbook.
- 3.6.6.2.6.4. Import checklist to BenguFarm (BeefPro) to verify that all the heifers have official indices.
- 3.6.6.2.6.5. At the age of 18 months, the heifers are weighed to determine a 18 month (504 days) index.
- 3.6.6.2.6.6. Repeat the steps as for weighing at the age of 12 months.
- 3.6.6.2.6.7. The heifers have their annual inspection at this time. The heifers should have a weaning index and a 12 month and/or 18 month index in order to be selected.
- 3.6.6.2.6.8. Female animals (heifers) are selected only once a year and this forms part of the annual inspections organised by the Club in your area. The Society will send you the forms for requesting an inspection at the beginning of each year.
- 3.6.6.2.6.9. Please take note of the requirements for an inspection:
 - 3.6.6.2.6.9.1. Your animal identification should be clear.
 - 3.6.6.2.6.9.2. The animals should have official indices.
 - 3.6.6.2.6.9.3. The required inspection forms must be submitted to the inspectors.
 - 3.6.6.2.6.9.4. You need to have adequate management facilities so that the animals can be evaluated one by one.
 - 3.6.6.2.6.9.5. A head clamp should be available in order for the tattoos to be checked.
 - 3.6.6.2.6.9.6. Polled animals must be reported to the inspectors, and after the inspectors have confirmed the status, it is recorded as such on the inspection form.
 - 3.6.6.2.6.10. The results of the inspection is recorded in BenguFarm (BeefPro). Rejected animals are only removed from your system, but not cancelled by you. SA Studbook automatically cancel rejected animals.

3.6.6.2.7. POST-WEAN – Bulls

- 3.6.6.2.7.1. Follow the same steps for bulls as for heifers.
- 3.6.6.2.7.2. The only difference is that you have to request an official inspection for the bulls from the Society when the 12 and 18 month evaluations for the bulls are completed. Bulls need three indices for selection.
- 3.6.6.2.7.3. This inspection should be requested from the Society two weeks in advance..
- 3.6.6.2.7.4. The inspectors are appointed by the Society and the inspection is done.

3.6.6.2.8. GROWTH TESTS – BULLS

- 3.6.6.2.8.1. After the animals have been identified and physically weaned from their dams, they are brought to where you want to do the test.
- 3.6.6.2.8.2. The bulls then start a three-week adjustment to the ration or supplements on which you want to test them.
- 3.6.6.2.8.3. The bulls are weighed on the first day of the adjustment.
- 3.6.6.2.8.4. A weighing list is printed in BenguFarm (BeefPro).
- 3.6.6.2.8.5. Verify the bulls' identification numbers and the sex of the animals on your system.
- 3.6.6.2.8.6. After the three-week adjustment, the test begins. The animals are then weighed fortnightly.
- 3.6.6.2.8.7. This test is started in cooperation with a field officer of SA Studbook. Contact SA Studbook and find out who the officer in your area is. The officer will also assist you with the procedure.

- 3.6.6.2.8.8. The minimum number of bulls ending the test is 10. If you have a large group of bulls, they are divided into two or more tests, based on age and/or type.
- 3.6.6.2.8.9. The details of the growth test is given to your SA Studbook officer. It is advisable to contact him first to find a suitable date on his route planning.
- 3.6.6.2.8.10. Arrange a deadline for the conclusion in accordance with the Studbook officer and confirm it before the test can be concluded.
- 3.6.6.2.8.11. Weigh the bulls again on the day before the conclusion.
- 3.6.6.2.8.12. On the day of the test conclusion, the officer will weigh the bulls again and record the scrotum, skin thickness, height and length measurements of the bulls.
- 3.6.6.2.8.13. The officer will conclude the test and do the necessary administration. You will receive official indices for these animals from SA Studbook.
- 3.6.6.2.8.14. Once you have received the official data, you may apply to the Society for an inspection of these animals.
- 3.6.6.2.8.15. The Society will appoint the inspectors and the inspection is then completed.
- 3.6.6.2.8.16. The same requirements apply to this inspection as those for heifers.
- 3.6.6.2.8.17. **All rejected bulls have to be slaughtered or castrated and may not under any circumstances be sold as breeding animals.**
- 3.6.6.2.8.18. The selected bulls are branded with the "B" brand on the right shoulder. The Society will provide you with the branding iron. You may sell the approved bulls.

3.6.6.2.9. CENTRAL GROWTH TEST – Bulls

- 3.6.6.2.9.1. Contact a private testing centre or an ARC testing station in your area.
- 3.6.6.2.9.2. Familiarise yourself with the centre's intake dates and weight requirements for the animals. Also take note of the costs involved.
- 3.6.6.2.9.3. Verify your animals' identification numbers and arrange for the transport of the animals to the station.
- 3.6.6.2.9.4. The test stations handle the administration matters and conclusion of the test, as well as the arrangements for the official inspection.
- 3.6.6.2.9.5. The rejected animals should be treated as in the growth tests; the same with the selected animals.

3.6.7. MARKETING OF BULLS AND FEMALE ANIMALS

- 3.6.7.1. You can join an existing group in your area if they can accommodate you. Make sure that you have the same views on breeding as the group that you want to join. These groups provide a marketing arm for your bulls and females.
- 3.6.7.2. Clubs in certain areas offer Club auctions where your animals can be marketed if you are a Club member.
- 3.6.7.3. A National Bonsmara Auction is presented annually, where members of the Society may market their animals. Entries are limited.
- 3.6.7.4. Some areas offer all breed auctions where you can market your animals.
- 3.6.7.5. You may launch your own production auction. You can consult older breeders to gain their advice.
- 3.6.7.6. **ALL BONSMARAS THAT ARE OFFERED AS STUD ANIMALS ON ANY AUCTION MUST BE SUBJECTED TO AN OFFICIAL "SCREENING". CONTACT THE SOCIETY WHEN YOU ENTER ANIMALS FOR AN AUCTION.**
- 3.6.7.7. **If you want to export animals, they are subject to the consent of the Society, that will verify the data and arrange for the animals to have a screening. This also applies to commercial Bonsmaras.**