

Africa Report 2018

It is a privilege to report on the African region for the '17 /'18 year. Some African countries, including South Africa has been in the world news for the wrong reasons on the political and legislation front. Although this puts unwelcome pressure on the commercial farmers, most farmers are dealing with the threats and goes about business as usual.

2017 was a good year for the dairy farmers as lower feed costs and more favourable milk prices was common. In March 2018 the picture started changing quickly as producer prices plummeted. Main reason being huge "cheap" imports from mainly Poland, largely UHT milk, by supermarkets.

Above normal rainfall was experienced over the Eastern part of South Africa as well as neighbouring countries. The Western Cape region, where the 2014 WJCB conference was held is in dire straits, experiencing the worst drought in over 100 years. We are hopeful as this area is a winter rainfall area beginning this month.

South Africa proves to be the source of heifers for export into Africa. Countries and buyers requiring only registered heifers is welcomed. There are numerous projects running in Africa whereby the purchase of heifers are required. As I am a big supporter for the cause of these projects, I urge all organisers and connections sourcing heifers to get competitive quotes. Sadly, news of exorbitant prices for heifers landed in Africa has surfaced. As maximum outreach is the goal, I feel this needs to be addressed.

The RJA and HS Jersey Projects in Rwanda and Malawi are some of the well known projects. The people of these countries are truly grateful for the first world countries caring about their well being. The Bureau meetings is scheduled for June 2019 in Rwanda and Kenya. It would be the ideal opportunity for members who are keen to witness Africa and its people first hand.

Popularity of the Jersey breed continued, with just shy of 400 000 doses of semen imported by South Africa, this excludes local semen. It is clear that the portion of Jersey Cattle in the dairy sector has gained further field. The number of pedigree cattle has stabilised after declines over the past decade. The majority of jersey numbers are found in commercial herds.

The South African Dairy Genomics Programme has completed its second year with another 450 samples entered into the reference population. Jersey South Africa has also sponsored the testing of another 60 selected females for two reasons, one being able to find future brood cows and secondly adding to the reference population. It is still small numbers, but doing what is possible.

2018 marks the year for the National Show in South Africa. I would like to take this opportunity to invite our fellow African breeders from across our borders to come and enjoy this prestigious event with us. The show will take place in George on the South Coast of Africa and it's the ideal event for networking, taking place the last week of August 2018.

Proudly Jersey

Arno Theron