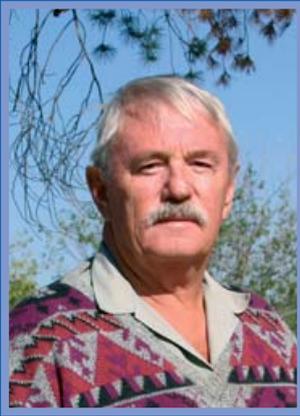




Experimental Farm



Mr Cobus van Dyk

Paradys Experimental Farm

Overview

The Paradys Experimental Farm, situated outside Bloemfontein on the Reddersburg road, underwent substantial upgrading in 2007. The upgrades included an office in the milking-shed, palisade fencing around the feed stores, a new thatched roof for the lapa, deeper silage furrows to enable the storage of larger quantities of silage, and a security fence around the weather station used by the Department of Soil, Crop and Climate Sciences.

Numerous compliments on the upgrades were received from institutions and farmers who visit the farm regularly. In addition, a system to supply water to all the grazing camps has also been installed. The water supply on the farm was previously generated by windmills.

The experimental farm achieved exceptional success recently when the Afrikaner stud was recently identified by the Afrikaner Cattle Breeders' Society as being above breed average.

The Afrikaner core herd, established on the farm in 2006, has in general shown excellent progress. The herd includes 60 stud cows with 14 herd-replacement heifers, 24 young heifers, 31 young bulls, and 40 grade cows used for crossing with Angus bulls.

An important focus area for the farm is student training. Several departments in the faculty use the farm for research purposes and for the practical training of undergraduate and postgraduate students. For instance, Mr Strauss Boshoff conducted a highly successful nutrition and digestion programme during the year as part of his studies.

Several agricultural organisations have made use of the farm for their experiments. Meadows, for example, successfully tested their latest nutrition programme for dairy cows on the farm.

The farm has grown in popularity, and it is especially used for farmers' days, training, and the introduction of farming equipment. Various school groups in the area have also paid visits to the farm.

Dairy Belle hosted a farmers' day at which the Dairy Farmer of the Year was announced and Coopers, a pest-control company that assists with pest control on the experimental farm, held an information day to introduce its latest products.

The experimental farm has been supplying milk to Dairy Belle for the past few years. This agreement has succeeded in

boosting the farm's income considerably. In 2006 the farm's income stood at approximately R27,000 per month – and in 2007 it grew to approximately R100,000 per month. This exceptional growth was achieved with a herd of only 53 cows in milk.

The cultivation of crops on the farm has been tremendously successful. Of the 160 hectares of maize, 70 hectares of silage was produced and stored in the silage furrows. The remaining hectares were harvested, yielding an estimated 3 to 3.5 tons per hectare. In addition, 14 hectares have been planted with teff and 40 hectares with feed sorghum. Of the 160 hectares of maize, 50 hectares are used for the infield rainwater harvesting project of the Department of Soil, Crop and Climate Sciences. Pannar donated R35 000 worth of yellow-maize seed.



Mr E.J. King, student assistant on the farm, shown here stamping down silage in silage furrows with the McCormick tractor.



Information sessions on a wide range of topics are presented during farmers' days held on the farm.

Staff

Farm Manager: Mr Cobus van Dyk

Administrative Manager: Ms Amanda Smith

Student Assistants: Messrs Jannie Myburgh, E.J. King

Farm Workers: Mss Anna Sebonyane, Elizabeth Sebonyane, Messrs Thabo Khubeka, Vinie Khubeka, Piet Lekaje, Jeremia Lelaka, Isaac Nkotshana, Christiaan Olivier, Daniel Somi, Paulus Somi, Hendrick Tsabo, Ismael Tukula, Abram Tsolo

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Mr Jannie Myburgh, student assistant, with one of the newborn calves.



The annual conference of the South African Agricultural Teachers Association (SAATA) was held on the experimental farm and was attended by the principals and deputy principals of agricultural schools across the country. Here are, from the left: Messrs Gerrit Viljoen, chairperson of SAATA, Jannie van den Heever, representative from Limpopo, Bennie Trollip, Department of Education, Free State, and prof. Herman van Schalkwyk, Dean: Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences at the UFS. The faculty also held talks with SAATA.



One of the farm workers, Mr Abram Tsolo, using the hammer-mill to grind maize for silage.



A farm worker, Mr Hendrik Tsabo, shredding maize for silage.

Activities on the farm

