

Overview of the
Northern Cape IDC Nguni Cattle Development
Project
and the
Free State IDC Nguni Cattle Development Project



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Background

It is generally believed that universities can play a critical role in development projects. In this scenario, the professional contribution of the University of the Free State (UFS) to the success of the IDC Nguni Cattle Development Projects is widely recognised and appreciated.

The involvement of the UFS in these Projects dates back to 2004 when the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) and Prof. Jan Raats (University of Fort Hare) established contact with Prof. Herman van Schalkwyk (former Dean: Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, UFS). The IDC requested Prof. Raats to present the concept of the Eastern Cape IDC Nguni Cattle Project to staff of the UFS.

In retrospect, at that particular juncture most present at the presentation showed little appetite for such a venture. It might have been an unintentional oversight, but invitations were only extended to a small audience in the UFS's Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences. The initiative at the UFS almost died a certain death was it not for the visionary intervention by the late Dr. Luis Schwalbach.

In the middle of 2005, the author¹ was asked by the late Dr. Luis Schwalbach (a UFS colleague) to get involved with an initiative in the Free State. At that time the initiative was tentative and only a basic concept. At first the author was unwilling to become involved because of a high workload; historical factors associated with some involved might have explained some of the initial inertia.

Dr. Schwalbach was persistent and justified his request by alluding to the author's vast experience as a registered professional animal scientist and specifically his knowledge of the agricultural scene in the Free State, including the staff of the department of agriculture; key elements needed to manage the envisaged project. After further consideration, the author decided to accept the challenge.

In June 2005 the two colleagues paid a visit to the IDC HQ in Sandton. The exploratory meeting was very productive and focussed on justifying why such a project would be viable in the Free State and also Northern Cape Province. It was stressed that success would only be possible in these two provinces provided the Eastern Cape model, which is based on communal property rights and land use, was adapted to take cognisance of the well-established commercial livestock production sectors on farms with title deeds and legal ownership for farmers.

Realising the wider application of the envisaged project, an effort was also made to convince the IDC about the wisdom to extend the number of beef cattle breeds to be included, but the IDC was adamant that their focus would only be on the Nguni cattle breed.

Following the meeting in June 2005 at the IDC in Sandton, things started to roll. During the latter part of 2005 and from 2006 onwards, progress in the Free State Province to accept the concept was very slow. In retrospect, the initial inertia in the Free State may be attributed to transitions in the management of the department. The situation was different in the Northern Cape; right from the start, at the beginning of 2006, the Northern Cape Province showed keen interest to start a project.

After the initial contact and communication by e-mail, the IDC asked the designated project management team (the author & the late Dr. Schwalbach) to expand the envisaged Free State project

¹ *HO de Waal – Project Manager of both Projects – acknowledging the intellectual input by the late Dr. Luis Schwalbach.*

and initiate a similar project for the Northern Cape Province. The IDC's request expressed its confidence in the vision, commitment, competence and ability of the designated Project Management to conceptualise, adapt, implement and manage the two development projects on vast tracts (about 45% of the land area) of rural South Africa.

The designated project management team drafted the revised and adapted legal documents², namely the respective **Trust Deeds** and the **Grant and Loan Facility Agreements**, which formed the legal basis to found and constitute the two IDC Nguni Cattle Development Trusts and the two Projects in the Free State and Northern Cape Provinces.

The Northern Cape Trust was constituted on 19 September 2006 in Kimberley and comprises three partners, namely the IDC, the Northern Cape Department of Agriculture and Land Reform (NCDALR) and the UFS. The Free State Trust was constituted on 6 October 2008 in Bloemfontein and comprises four partners, namely the IDC, the Free State Department of Agriculture (FSDOA), the Central University of Technology (CUT) and the UFS.

The Projects

In the context of the Grant Loan Facility Agreements, the Projects broadly envisaged *“the establishment of nucleus registered Nguni herds of cattle in the various Communities over a period of 5 (five) years, and the number of such cattle shall be determined by the lender and the borrower as well as the upgrading of any cattle in the Northern Cape (or Free State) Province to Nguni Status, the re-introduction of indigenous livestock to the communal farming areas of the Province through the upgrading of non-descript cattle to Nguni Status and the implementation of the Project over a period of 5 (five) years for the purchase of the Nguni cattle, the processing of the Nguni cattle prior to placement, the payment of the Project Manager and the provision of animal health care.”*

The specific role of the UFS in the two IDC Nguni Cattle Development Projects

As agreed by the constituting partners, the UFS provides management skills through the Project Manager (the author; a registered professional Animal Scientist employed by the UFS) and the alternate to the Project Manager (the late Dr. Luis Schwalbach; a veterinarian who was employed by the UFS). They were granted letters of appointment by the UFS to perform these duties in the Free State and Northern Cape Provinces. As an additional spin-off, the two colleagues brought lifetimes of skills and experience to the two Projects. Furthermore, the success of knowledge transfer and skills development of staff and the beneficiary farmers depend on the ability of the Project Management to engage competent professionals and University staff in the intensive training programmes as well as meeting the technical needs in the two provinces.

In retrospect the latter activity proved to be more of a challenge than appreciated by most. It was an elusive dream because many individuals were simply not yet ready, willing or committed to engage in these types of activities. Simply stated, not many experienced scientists at Universities are keen or willing to engage in development projects because “there is nothing in it for them to publish.”

Conceptualization of the IDC Nguni Cattle Development Projects

The original concept, namely the “Eastern Cape Nguni Project” put forward by the University of Fort Hare, was intended to be implemented in a communal setup such as the Eastern Cape Province. Communal livestock farming is characterised by a sharing of natural resources (veld) and it is notoriously challenging to manage communal-resource-based development projects. Therefore, from the outset (June 2005) the two colleagues were successful in convincing the IDC of the wisdom to adapt the revised concept of a commercial orientation for implementation in the Free State and

² Detail on the composition of the trusts and the goals of the projects are available in the respective documents.

Northern Cape Provinces. These provinces have well-established commercial livestock production sectors on farms with title deeds and legal ownership.

The IDC accepted the recommendations and it was included in the agreements for implementation of the Nguni Cattle Projects in both provinces. The revised concept for the Free State and Northern Cape Provinces was apparently also adopted elsewhere in South Africa with further revision and changes.

Selection of the beneficiating farmers according to selection criteria

Procedures have been developed to recruit and select prospective farmers in strict accordance with selection criteria, namely:

(1) In the Northern Cape the farmers are nominated by extension and support staff of the NCDALR. A Technical Committee, chaired by the NCDALR at Vaalharts Research Station, evaluates new nominations on a regular basis. The Technical Committee comprises a core group of specialists from the Project Management and the Department. Selection criteria³ were developed and include aspects such as legal access to farming land (five-year period), condition of the veld on the farm, long-term commitment of farmers as landowners or leasers of land, presence and condition of fences and facilities, competence as livestock farmers shown by owning cattle or small livestock, and the age, gender and size of groups. The farmers/farmer groups selected by the Technical Committee are recommended by the Project Manager to the Board of Trustees for approval.

(2) In the Free State a similar process is followed. However, for the time being the Technical Committee is chaired by the Project Manager.

In the Northern Cape Province, the 65 farmers/farmer groups have each been provided with 10 pregnant, registered Nguni females (total 651 females) and two registered Nguni bulls (total 130 bulls). In the Free State Province, the 15 farmers/farmer groups have each been provided with 10 pregnant, registered breeding Nguni females (total 155 females) and two (or one) registered Nguni bulls (total 23 bulls). In both provinces large numbers of calves have been borne, culled animals sold and in the Northern Cape Province five (5) farms have already participated in the process of Passing of the Gift (detail provided later). A census will be conducted (2014) in each of the provinces to confirm the exact numbers for the cattle and beneficiaries.

The beneficiaries have the capacity to develop and become commercial Nguni cattle farmers. They have access to farming land, with reasonable infrastructure and the potential to develop sufficient basic skills during the five-year period of participating in the Projects, specifically because the farmers selected have been subjected to stringent nomination and evaluation. However, success will also depend on whether the training programme can transfer appropriate knowledge and develop skills over the five-year period to the extension staff and also to the beneficiary farmers. Furthermore, success will also depend on the absorptive capacity of the beneficiary farmers to apply the acquired skills and knowledge at the farm level. Obviously, the continued support and aftercare provided to the farmers by the departmental support services, primarily extension and animal health services, are assumed and thus form crucial components in reaching success by the envisaged by the Projects.

In the context of the Nguni Cattle Projects, “commercial Nguni cattle farmers” mean stud breeders. It would have been wiser to develop the farmers along a conventional commercial orientation. It is simply not conceivable or practical to think that all the farmers participating in the Projects will eventually become Nguni cattle stud breeders. There are already too many established Nguni cattle stud breeders in South Africa. Only the best farmers with quality animal genetics will eventually

³ *Detail on the selection criteria is available on request.*

migrate to the pinnacle of the typical hierarchical pyramid structure of such beef cattle operations. If this limiting condition could be changed to work with commercial Nguni cattle instead, the aims of the Projects are more realistically achievable.

Strengths in the design of the IDC Nguni Cattle Development Projects

The funding provided by the IDC is a major strength. The IDC is an important partner in the Projects and the cooperation between the participating institutions in the Northern Cape and the Free State Provinces. The bulk of the funds provided by the IDC are used to buy registered breeding Nguni cattle which are given as a loan to the farmers and which are later refunded as a “payment in kind” by the beneficiary farmers. The same number and type of Nguni cattle will be returned by the farmers to the Project (“Passing of the Gift”) after a five-year period. The IDC also provides funds as “payment for the Project Manager”. The remainder of the funding by the IDC is provided as a non-repayable grant and is used to process the Nguni cattle and manage the Project.

The two departments, namely the NCDALR and the FSDOA, are also bringing a wealth of resources to the projects by participating according to their public mandates; they are promoting and developing the agricultural industries in the provinces and provide appropriate specialised services to farmers.

The UFS, and in the Free State also the CUT, are also important partners. They are not making funds available, but their commitment to the initiatives is in kind by allowing the staff to participate in the Projects.

Weaknesses in the design of the IDC Nguni Cattle Development Projects

As could have been expected there are some weaknesses. Only some weaknesses are listed, namely:

(1) Based on the conceptualization of the Eastern Cape Project, the IDC was advised that only registered Nguni cattle should form the basis for this initiative in order to “return the indigenous Nguni cattle breed to rural South Africa.” Registration of Nguni cattle with SA Studbook simply means their pedigree is certified and the offspring of registered parents that conform to the minimum Nguni cattle breed standards are eligible to be registered. However, the Projects are obliged to purchase more expensive animals; registered cattle are more expensive than commercial cattle and the implementation of similar IDC projects in other provinces fuels an inflationary trend in market prices. There is also an additional financial cost involved when restricted to comply with the process of registering animals with the Nguni Cattle Breeders’ Society and the SA Studbook. Notice of calf births have to be given, breed inspections are required and annual fees levied. Until ownership of the Nguni cattle is transferred to the farmers (having successfully participated for five years in the Nguni Cattle Projects) the respective Trusts are the owners of the Nguni cattle and therefore the Projects have to pay these fees. In a nutshell, registered animals are not necessarily more productive or better than non-registered commercial cattle. If allowed to buy Nguni cattle without necessarily being registered or allowing registration with SA Studbook to lapse and concentrate only on production characteristics, the same and maybe even better results may have been produced by the Projects.

(2) The need for a major training initiative to transfer knowledge and develop skills of staff and beneficiaries was foreseen. However, the extent of the need was not fully appreciated during conceptualization of the two Nguni Cattle Projects. It was also assumed that most staff in the provinces has the knowledge, experience and skills to ensure the rapid and smooth implementation of the Nguni Cattle Projects. In practice it was very soon realised that initial expectations regarding the levels of skills and knowledge were generally too high. Therefore it was realised that for these Projects to be successful there was an urgent need for training of staff and capacity building, which taxed resources and required unforeseen time, effort and costs.

Both weaknesses have been addressed. Given the preference expressed by the IDC to procure only registered cattle, little could be done to change the requirement. The Northern Cape Trust has since accepted the recommendation by the Technical Committee and the Project Manager to waive part of the proviso: registered Nguni cattle will be purchased, but then the registration with the SA Studbook will not be continued. This important decision freed up time and capacity, by all involved, to focus on the real aims of the Projects, namely to promote rural development by means of the Nguni cattle.

The Northern Cape Trust has also ratified a recommendation by the Project Manager (advised by the Technical Committee) that 12 animals of weaning age (both sexes and at least seven months old) be accepted as the “Passing of the Gift” instead of the original proviso that it must be older registered animals. This decision reduced the cost and logistical burden imposed by the original proviso in the Northern Cape. A similar recommendation has still to be considered by the Free State Trust.

Training is focusing on both the staff and the participating farmers. However, additional funds are needed by both Projects to facilitate the much needed dedicated training and developing the skills of the staff and farmers.

Clarity about the roles and responsibilities of the various project partners

In general there is sufficient understanding of the roles and responsibilities by all involved. However, at times it would appear that some individuals representing the partners in the Nguni Cattle Projects have difficulty in comprehending aspects of their roles. It appears to be difficult for some to accept that the Trusts are independent legal entities and that the Projects do not “belong” to any of the constituting institutions. This is especially applicable to the Free State. Suffice to say it became the responsibility of the Project Manager to convey this message in subtle terms where and when appropriate. It underscores the wisdom to have a Project Manager who is seen to be impartial and professional, yet with sufficient authority to stay focused while pursuing the goals of the Projects.

The capacity of the IDC Nguni Cattle Development Projects to achieve their objectives

The capacity of the Projects to achieve their objectives can be divided in three major components, namely:

(1) Sufficient funding is provided by the IDC to purchase animals and cover the activities initially planned. Complementary funding is also provided by the provinces for specific aspects. In the Northern Cape the Department is also contributing funds to buy registered Nguni cattle which are distributed by the Nguni Cattle Project. The Free State Department has not stepped up to the plate yet in this regard. The UFS is contributing mainly through skills and intellectual capital. The Project Manager has to use a considerable part of the funds intended as “payment for the Project Manager” to run the Projects (i.e. paying to travel over vast distances in the two provinces and the concomitant accommodation costs). A need for dedicated training has subsequently been identified. Additional funds provided by the IDC or the NCDALR to buy Nguni cattle mean that more beneficiaries are involved; thus increasing associated costs of transport and processing of cattle. Therefore, expansion of the Projects urgently requires more funds for management. It has been stated previously that the huge need for effective training and skills transfer at different levels has initially not been fully appreciated and adequately incorporated in the funding structure of the Projects.

(2) There is sufficient human capital potential in the provinces, but the development of skills of most individuals require substantial development through appropriate training and mentoring. This applies to the staff and the farmers. The Northern Cape Department is contributing substantial resources to train staff and farmers under the guidance of the Project Management. At the request of the Project Manager the Northern Cape Department has also availed experienced extension staff to

conduct some higher level training. As an interim, but necessary arrangement in the Free State, the Project Management had to intervene and carry some of the cost incurred to conduct training.

(3) The synergy among partners is developed at all levels through active fostering of goodwill, cultivation of cooperation and forging of partnerships. This is a long-term investment that will only bear fruit after a couple of years and may hopefully cascade to other areas and projects in the provinces. In the Northern Cape great advances have already been made in this regard. The same process has yet to begin in the Free State.

The genetic base and procurement of the Nguni cattle in the Projects

It is important to ensure functional efficiency of the livestock and maintain a wide genetic base in the Nguni herds of the Projects. The Nguni cattle are collectively managed as a mega-herd in each province until the ownership is transferred to the beneficiary farmers at the end of the five-year period. Registered Nguni cattle are procured through close cooperation with the regional Nguni clubs, namely the Central Nguni Club in the Free State and the Kalahari Nguni Club in the Northern Cape. The registered Nguni cattle have been inspected by the Nguni Cattle Breeders' Society, thus conforming to the minimum breed standards prior to being registered with the SA Studbook.

When new batches of registered Nguni cattle are needed, the Project Manager consults with the Club managements in setting requirements regarding numbers of females and bulls. This also includes suggesting a price range for pregnant females and bulls in accordance with current market prices at that time in the provinces as well as animal health requirements. The Clubs then communicate the detail to their members, requesting them to consider offering Nguni cattle for sale to the Projects. The stud breeders are requested to offer more cattle than actually needed by the Project. Thus the Project Manager can exercise a limited choice in being able to select from the animals offered at the different farms. All females must be free of TB and CA; bulls must also be certified sound for breeding and free from venereal diseases (Vibriosis and Trichomoniasis).

Although the procedure for procurement of registered Nguni cattle may not be the most desirable, it does ensure that quality animals are purchased and offers reasonable protection against malpractices. There is little chance for individuals to manipulate prices; it is an open and transparent process to procure animals. However, a downside is that it limits the scope by the Project Manager for negotiating better prices for specific animals. The option for buying direct at auctions has been considered by the Project Management, but the restrictions posed by among others the proviso to pay within seven days and then having to remove the animals immediately after the auction are too prohibitive for the Projects to comply. In the Northern Cape, the department has assisted the Project by buying some Nguni cattle directly at official Nguni auctions.

Provincial Nguni Mega-herds

As stated previously, the small Nguni herds on the farms in each province are treated collectively as a single mega-herd. The Project Manager is responsible to manage the laborious process of registering the Nguni cattle in the mega-herds. This also means that Nguni bulls used on the different farms can be exchanged between farms after a few years to prevent inbreeding and to save on bull costs. Procedures have been initiated to conduct beef cattle performance testing for some Nguni herds participating in the Projects. In the Northern Cape bull calves from different farms have participated at Koopmansfontein in an official veld bull performance test. A group of young bulls have passed the test and were bought by the Project Management and distributed to new farms. The young bull calves were still the property of the Trust; therefore, it was costly for the Project Management to transport them over several hundreds of kilometres, to the performance testing facility at Koopmansfontein. It will not be repeated.

The mega-herds are managed according to conventional beef cattle production practices in central South Africa. Pregnant females are bought from Nguni stud cattle breeders where various mating seasons are practiced. When the Nguni females are diagnosed pregnant (PD's) on the stud farms, those with the smallest range of projected calving dates are selected and also as close as possible to the recommended spring calving season in the Free State and Northern Cape Provinces. This narrows down their first calving season on the farms of the recipient beneficiaries.

When the females are on the beneficiary farms and ready to be mated again, the mating seasons are changed progressively over a couple of years to the recommended time of the year. Experience and research results have shown that it is more appropriate (in the Free State and Northern Cape Provinces) to join beef cows with bulls from about the middle of December to the end of February. The mating season of 75-90 days (three ovulation cycles for cows) allows females to calve from the end of September or beginning of October. Heifers are put to the bull for the first time at the age of about two years from 15 November for a period of 63-90 days. From their second mating season the first calvers are joined with the mature cows and mated from the middle of December.

Animal health

The Projects only work with Nguni cattle which are free of diseases as regulated by the Animal Diseases Act, 1984 (Act 35 of 1984). Only registered Nguni cattle are procured which have been certified by a veterinarian to be free of TB and CA. In addition, bulls also have to be certified by a veterinarian to be free of venereal diseases, namely Trichomoniasis and Vibriosis. The veterinary health programmes for vaccinations (brucellosis for heifers between 5 to 7 months, annual vaccination for anthrax, quarter evil and botulism), as well as control of internal and external parasites prescribed by the animal health divisions for the Free State and Northern Cape are strictly adhered to. Depending on regional veterinary advice, three-day stiffness disease and lumpy skin disease may also be included in the respective vaccination programmes.

Supplementary feeding

Based on long-term experience and research results, routine supplementation involves providing a conventional salt/phosphate lick during the year and strategic protein supplementation when required during winter months. However, it is normal practice for most beef cattle farmers to devise supplementary feeding programmes. Provided they carry the costs themselves and it is not in contradiction with scientific principles, the farmers are allowed to take some initiative in this regard.

Meeting the goals of the Projects

The Nguni Cattle Projects are achieving their goals, but the process is slow and laborious. It may take longer to achieve some of the medium to long-term goals during the envisaged relatively short five-year period when the Nguni Project was conceptualized. An "oversight" is the demand for training and the burden placed by the demand for skills development on human capacity and resources.

Measures have been implemented to enhance the effectiveness of the Projects. Training has been accelerated and expanded to increase the absorptive capacity of staff and farmers. However, it is no easy task to find suitable dates for training sessions amid the normal routine activities and commitments of staff; more so in the Free State.

Based on interactions during training of staff and farmers it became evident that the training of farmers in non-agricultural skills (literacy, marketing, basic book keeping, farm management, etc.) must also be attended to as a priority by linking training needs in these Projects to ongoing training activities within the provincial departments of agriculture.

These are important focus areas where resources and capacity must be directed in the future.

Specific areas where intervention may be needed

There are external factors that need intervention to reach the goals and objectives of the Nguni cattle projects. Definite limiting factors are the slow process of “land reform”, lack of funds for development, cumbersome administrative processes to access funds for farm “improvements” and much needed infrastructure, as well as the lack of technical capacity and skills in the departments.

On the positive side, especially in the Northern Cape, there is the commitment at the senior management level to assist the Project Manager in meeting most reasonable requests to ensure success of the Project implementation.

The negative effect of some of the external factors can be mitigated by promoting better integration between the Nguni Projects and other projects implemented by the provincial departments of agriculture. However, the inevitable competition for attention and scarce resources must be avoided by coordination and liaison.

The role of the agricultural staff is very important in achieving success. The support staff, specifically agricultural extension officers and animal health technicians, is crucial for the successful implementation of development projects. Extension officers are primarily responsible in identifying the prospective beneficiary farmers in their extension wards and in assisting the individuals with their applications to the Technical Committees in the provinces. They are then responsible to provide extension and general aftercare to the farmers under the broad guidance of the Project Management. However, as discussed previously, the level of skills and knowledge of this group of staff needs urgent attention and should be a primary focus of the departments in both provinces.

The extension officers are not always able to provide sufficient support to farmers, because many lack important technical skills - both soft and hard skills. The informal training programmes in both the Free State and Northern Cape are focusing on the support staff, specifically the agricultural extension officers and animal health technicians, and the beneficiary Nguni cattle farmers. However, the pace and content of training must be increased as a high priority. Well-trained staff is crucial in the successful implementation of this type of development project.

Impact of the Projects

It is inevitable that the cost benefits of Projects must be justified. This aspect is mostly not made public for development projects, ostensibly because often the advantages or impact cannot be measured directly. Therefore, it is difficult to make comparisons with similar initiatives. However, the cost per beneficiary is reasonable in these two Projects. As stated previously some of the costs can be reduced if commercial Nguni cattle could be used or if more beef cattle breeds could be considered.

An important goal of the Projects was to impact positively on the lives of the beneficiaries, their families and the community. The lives of more than 300 beneficiaries (without counting dependants) in the Northern Cape and Free State have been improved as a result of the two Nguni Cattle Projects. It is too early to assess the long-term impact of these Projects. However, preliminary indications of impact are that the beneficiaries received a valuable package of productive Nguni cows and are receiving training to improve their skills in beef cattle farming. The most important benefits will only come later as the Projects mature.

During August 2009 Mr. Willem Ellis⁴ held a series of consultative discussions with the farmers and staff in the Northern Cape; first at Upington in the West and then at Vaalharts in the East.

⁴ Report by Mr. Willem Ellis - detail is contained in a confidential internal report.

On a personal note, subtle and more pronounced changes have been observed in the beneficiaries' outlook on life due to their involvement in the Projects. The farmers have also become more confident since they have realised they are the proud owners of Nguni cattle. Previously, many farmers only had access to land but no cattle or in many cases non-descript cattle without access to adequate or sufficient grazing.

What now?

There are key issues that need to be addressed to assist emerging farmers to move or migrate from subsistence farming to a commercial orientation. The Projects were designed for the specific circumstances prevailing in the Free State and Northern Cape Provinces, namely a predominant commercial orientation in livestock production. However, despite this approach, there is a long cultural heritage and customs among African farmers enticing them to migrate easily to common practises synonymous with communal farming such as cattle holding instead of progressive beef cattle production. The training endeavours in these Projects to address some aspects. It needs to be demonstrated that cattle are more than just a "living bank on hooves" and can generate much more than just interest on capital to improve the living conditions of farmers, alleviate poverty and to improve food security.

The first Nguni cattle were only placed in the Northern Cape Province on 23 October 2007 and on 24 July 2009 in the Free State. Therefore, the farmers only became eligible to start the process of "returning of the loan" or "Passing of the Gift" in 2013 in the Northern Cape and about two years later for the Free State. The presence and participation of the IDC and the UFS in the Projects are major assets and should remain in this capacity as long as feasible.

The responsibility to assist the farmers to become sustainable is primarily that of the provincial departments of agriculture. Acceptance of responsibilities (mainly funding and management) and a slow, but progressive taking over of responsibilities and provision of aftercare for the Projects must come from the provincial departments of agriculture.

External evaluation should focus on the progress of implementation of planned activities rather than on impact; it is too early to evaluate the latter. Performance of animals (high conception rates of the females distributed to the first beneficiaries and low mortality rates) can be assessed, but it is still too early to evaluate real impact. It will take many years before full impact can be realistically evaluated.

It is a privilege to be associated with the Northern Cape IDC Nguni Cattle Development Project and the Free State IDC Nguni Cattle Development Project.



Photo credit – Thinus Jonker