



Thornham Farm

Conestoga Farming

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Thornham Birds

What a wonderful privilege to be able to be associated with and have the opportunity to farm this piece of land called Thornham!

The Adam grandchildren that run around Thornham are the fourth generation on the farm and many families regard this as their home from home!

The first day for us as guardians of Thornham was bitterly cold with sleet, snow on the mountains and icy cold winds. Then we saw the birds! 120 Crested Cranes! These are endangered and rare, so to see this many roaming freely is something special! This is a wandering flock, but we hope some of them may remain to breed! I also saw one of my favourite birds, a Ground Hornbill. Fantastic!

The photo at the top is of the cranes at Thornham with Mount Currie in the distance. The pic of the dancing cranes and the Hornbill are from Google

It is my opinion that East Griqualand is the most beautiful part of South Africa and that our farm is the most beautiful in EG! Marina King of the Neighboring farm Elsenham!

A Black Headed Oriole! Eileen Adam said that they were there and I finally saw one at the bottom house garden!



Thornham Farm

An Overview

Thornham Farm in farming terms is a peach of a farm with quality grasses for stock rearing, streams providing lots of water for irrigation and a well laid out farming setup! The amount of infrastructure that Rob Adam invested in Thornham is just awesome. The perimeter fencing as well as the internal fencing has all been replaced with top quality new barb wire and the gates are all well hung and new! Three centre pivots for irrigation have been erected with a three and a half year lease in place on them. This means that in roughly four years time Thornham can utilize these lands for its own production. Our maiden short term goal is then to survive and build up the farm until then. This requires a flexible, realistic business plan that can carry us through the first hard years. If looked at in perspective Thornham has not been a financially viable enterprise for many years now. We then face the challenge of making it so, with only a third of the original stock! This will require an out of the box approach and we will have to farm it remotely with an outside personal income until the stock numbers and operations are in full tilt! The distance from the Free State is 613km!



The Name Conestoga is from the famous American freight wagons used to haul up to eight tons. These were built a bit like a boat to keep the goods from falling out and to help traverse rivers.



A Beautiful Bokmakierie! This is one of the first birds that I successfully identified at Thornham! After the Hadedra of course.

Thornham Farm



Company Overview!

Mission Statement!

To Farm Thornham profitably, utilising all available resources, knowledge and the latest technology, to carefully nurture all the natural grazing and water so as to leave Thornham in a better condition for the next generation of the Adam family.

Goals and Objectives

Short Term.

To successfully take over the running of Thornham from a distance and marrying the Conestoga cattle and sheep flocks with the Thornham stock.

Survive financially.

Implementing an holistic grazing system to maintain and improve the natural grazing on Thornham.

Taking the distance involved and the stock numbers available we have asked Dr Dieter Nischk of the neighbouring farm Utopia to lease our extra grazing and he will also help look after the daily running of Thornham. He brings with him not only his veterinary knowledge but also a vast knowledge of the holistic grazing systems that we are already implementing at Thornham.

The cattle at Thornham will be run along the same programs that we run the stud cattle on, so as to ensure maximum profit per hectare. We will be using home bred Conestoga Simmentaler bulls in our cross breeding programs to ensure the best calves for sale. As we sell the calves and the weaker non producing cows we aim to source good quality in-calf cattle, so as to build up a quality commercial herd.

The Conestoga Simmentaler Stud herd are also now part of our Thornham farming group and will remain in the Free State to provide bulls for Thornham and also contribute to the financial running of Thornham.



Another picture of a Conestoga Wagon



A Jackal Buzzard! Dieter showed me this amazing predator bird on our first Thornham farm planning!.



Some of the Conestoga Simmentaler winter calves!
We just love cattle!

The first five two year old Conestoga bulls are prepped and ready to move to Thornham in November, for the summer breeding season! These bulls will work for us for this season and will then be sold as three year old bulls on our annual production sale. The next batch of bulls will then replace them!

The Thornham sheep flock, and the cattle for that matter were Rob Adams pride and joy, so we must preserve this and build and improve on all this stock!

Conestoga has a Dormer flock that will amalgamate with the Thornham Dohne Merino sheep.

We have purchased five pure bred Merino rams for the coming season from John Mahoud and Kippie Bryden. The Bryden sheep have always been bred from the best genetic stock by excellent shepherds and will improve our wool clip no end! The Merino is like the Simmentaler, a dual purpose breed producing fine wool and top mutton.

The available dry lands on Thornham will be analysed and carefully managed so as to build up the soil fertility and then provide top quality winter fodder for our live stock. Andre Schoeman who also leases the Thornham irrigation and centre pivots has kindly offered to plant and work our lands for us!

Thornham Farm



The Excelsus Simbra's: This is an indication of what we want the Thornham cattle to look like!



A Cape Long Claw or Orange Throated Long Claw! We get these in the Free State too!



One of my best cows! Her Great Grandfather is Intsizwa Baltic, one of Jack Bastards champion bulls.

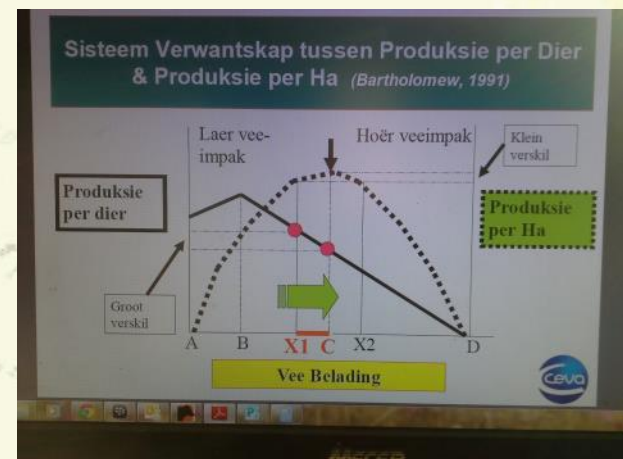
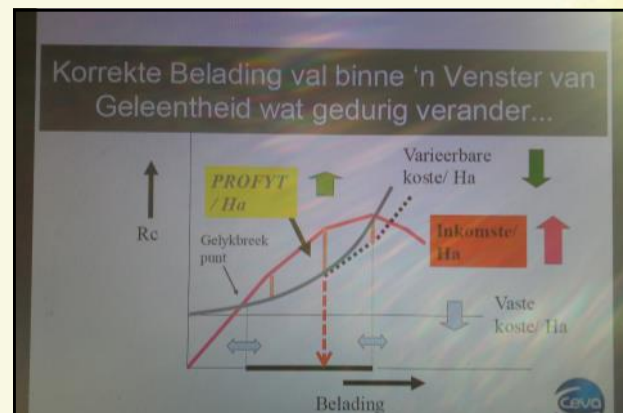
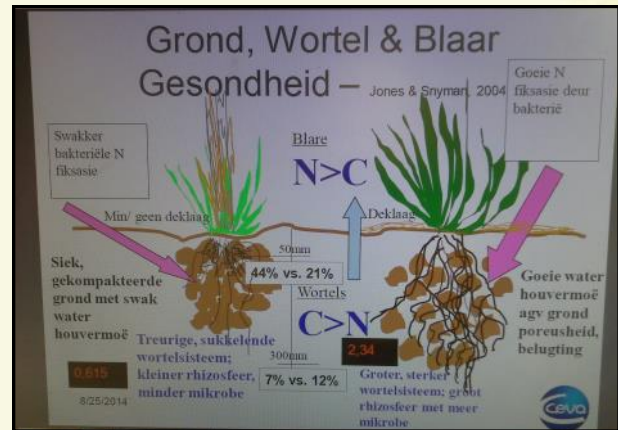
The principles of sound grazing management or the holistic approach is that it is better to overgraze a hectare of veldt for one day and then let it rest for the rest of the year. This then disallows selective grazing of the climax or palatable grasses. The roots then die back and provide fertilizer for the next growth spurt. The climax species will then begin to flourish and dominate. This is a graph from Dr Willem Shultheiss, a well known grassland scientist.

A graph showing the relationship between the stocking rate; costs per hectare; income per hectare and profit per hectare. The window of profit is the small gap shown by the yellow block and arrow. The minute you overstock, over capitalise or overspend you affect the profit per hectare.

The last graph is the relationship between a low, correct and too high a stocking rate and the production per hectare. Too high and too low a stocking rate have both got negative effects on the natural grazing.

Dr Dieter Nischk has been successfully using this system at Utopia for the last twenty years and has increased his veldt and stocking rates dramatically. If you think of the migrant wild herds in Africa they graze the grass totally flat and then move on, leaving it to regrow for the rest of the rainy season.

For the full lecture by Dr Willem Shultheiss go to our web site at www.excelsuslandgoed.co.za



Our Conestoga Brand! It is an Inverted G, a C and a smiley Face!



Thornham Farm



Thornham Farm: Hunting & veldt surfing!

