

Conestoga Farming



THORNHAM FARM SEPTEMBER 2015



The first Thornham Simmentaler cross Calves arrive!

Great excitement as the first of our self bred calves arrived in August! This has been a whole year in the planning with the bulls arriving from the Free State having undergone a strict inoculation regime to combat the EG Red Water and Gall sickness diseases! The bulls were the Conestoga 2012 calf crop and were then eighteen month old bulls. They handled themselves alright with one casualty due to Gall Sickness. The other bulls then achieved seventy five pregnancies from the hundred cows. It must be remembered that we had around 25 C Team cows that did not reconceive as we expected!

The resulting calves are beyond even my imagination!

We market the Simmentaler breed as the crossbred king bringing hybrid vigour, milk, high growth and heavy weaning weights! Here we will see if that's true and judging by the calves we will be in with a shout.

Consider this! Last year we weaned our calves at 217kg and sold them at R21 per kg. That's R4557 per calf. If the Simmentaler cross puts on an extra 20 kg at R21 that will mean R420 more income per calf. At a 100 calves that's an extra R42000 per year on the bottom line from the same females on the same feeding regime!



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Conestoga Simmentalers

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Lot 22 HDL125 Herahe

Herahe is an outstanding polled Kyksim Honeymoon son showing good masculinity, dark red colour, strong hindquarter and pigmentation. Herahe is bred from Anroda Herahe who had a ICP of 379 with a Simdex of 97. His immediate ancestors boast bulls such as AI AI Morris, Olinjie Bosluis and Balaton.

Brth	200	400	600	Mat	Milk
1.2	15	20	20	24	3



Lot 23 INA1210 Sanjika Cosmo

Cosmo seems to be a complete package with great constitution, balance, masculinity and presence. This would have been our show bull. Cosmo has a pedigree packed with super stars such as Buschbrun Bobby, Wisp Will Mandrake and Mont-Beau Hannibal. His Dam has an ICP of 358 and a Simdex of 94

Brth	200	400	600	Mat	Milk
1.3	14	19	25	29	4



Lot 23 INA1126 Sanjika Hanyani

Hanyani is another strong Kyksim Honeymoon son bred from the Bulk en Brul Marloe lines. We used all four of these bulls on our commercial herd in Kokstad with great success with Hanyani been the principal bull. Hanyani is well muscled, with smooth hair quality and moves exceptionally well.

Brth	200	400	600	Mat	Milk
2.1	12	17	15	22	2



Lot 23 INA1215 Sanjika Conga

Conga is a Sanjika Wenner son from a top Asner Cow. Wenner was a Royal Show Grand Champion. Conga is broad, well muscled with good capacity. He handled himself well in a large commercial herd as an eighteen month old bull and has developed into a good looking young sire.

Brth	200	400	600	Mat	Milk
1.4	13	21	28	27	5

These are the Conestoga young blue bloods that served us so well at Thornham!

These are sons of the champion bulls Kyksim Honeymoon and Sanjika Wenner.



Kyksim Honeymoon



Sanjika Wenner

The pamphlet on the left is electronic advertisement on our web sites and on our face book pages.

The bulls were sold on the Excel-sus Production sale in the Free State and we averaged R32000 per bull with all bulls offered sold!

The Conestoga 2013 bulls are already at Thornham ready for the next breeding season in November!

Simmentaler! The Crossbred King

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HDL125 Excelsus Herahe sold for our all time record price of R49000 to Stansim Simmentalers of Werner Stander from George in the Eastern Cape! Herahe was purchased along with his dam when we took over all the Excelsus Simmentalers from Hennie De Lange. These cows ran with our own simmentalers for around two years.



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We have had an amazing sheep year at Thornham that began purchasing five Merino rams from the Bryden flock and letting them loose on our Thornham ewes. Added to that was the addition of some Bryden ewes. This was not the best investment as the ewes arrived in a poor condition and subsequently lost a lot of their lambs. Then these ewes got onto the good Thornham food and management and this then caused a break in their wool. This is called tender wool and receives a lower price.

We have an old friend Danie Schoeman helping us with our sheep. Danie and I played tennis against each other back in the day and he is the foremost sheep and wool expert in EG. He saw our sheep for the first time in two years and couldn't get over how well they looked and how well the farm in general is looking! Hats off to Eileen and the Thornham team with their Monday sheep clinics. It makes a huge impression on people that visit a lot of farms when the stock is looking great and all the gates painted and working!

We weaned 211 lambs from 218 Ewes!

This is fantastic!



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Thornham Farm Improvements

Improvements on a farm are always directly tied to cash flow and spare cash. The profit margins on a working self standing farm are very small but there is money to be made.

So far the improvements to Thornham have been a major tidy up, a reaping and burning of most of the plastic bags etc., the rooting out of mountains of weeds and cockle bur, the extraction of a mountain of old bark from the cattle sheds and kraals, the painting inside and the outside of the top house and the painting of the inside of the main house.

We have also started spreading the bark/compost with the help of William Gerrard onto our lands. We did the analysis of the bark through Omnia Fertiliser company and Rollo Woodhead and found the bark to be great food for building up the soils.

We also erected two small fences around the bales stockpile and also around the silage pit. These were also fitted with re-conditioned gates.

Bruce Harris is also helping eradicate the last of the Wattle which is an invasive species.

The grass management follows Dieter Niechts grass program using the more unpalatable thatch grasses when its still young and after it has been burnt for the early part of spring and summer, the sourer hill camps in the middle part of summer and then the sweeter and more palatable grasses towards the end of summer and through the winter. Camps are carefully managed so that the stock use them at just the right times and to guard against overgrazing.

We hope to plant sirecia grass in the least productive lands this year. This is called poor mans Lucerne and fixes Nitrogen naturally into the soil. We hope also to plant more trees up the roads and the avenues this year!

Exciting Times!