



Conestoga Farming

Summer News Letter

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Conestoga Simmentaler and Simbra Cattle Studs

Conestoga Massey Ferguson with his dam
Conestoga Avon Lee.



In 2018 we had the awesome opportunity to move our fledgling studs to Thornham farms in Kokstad. This amazing farm has been the home of the Bob and Craig Adam family for three generations and many distant relatives still consider it home away from home. Thornham now is raising the fourth generation of Adam, cousins, many friends and is now hosting our two cattle studs.

Thornham is where our original Conestoga wagon can be found and where our family began. The old wagon belonged to Willie Adam from Waterloo farm where Margi and I lived and worked breeding cattle and sheep for the Intsizwa Simmentaler stud of Jack Bastards.

Eileen bought the wagon on a sale and after many coats of paint we used it as our wedding vehicle complete with six oxen. The wagon has since been our mascot and hence the name Conestoga.

The Conestoga wagon was the wagon of choice for the American pioneers and was built like a boat so as to ford rivers and to keep their goods safely in the hold. It could carry up to eight tons.

We felt that we needed to name our farming enterprise after a vehicle that could weather storms and cross the rivers.

Thornham is now the home of the Conestoga Farming operation.

A quick Blast from the Past.

To effectively plan for the future one must clearly see where you are in the present, take stock of all your strengths, identify your weaknesses, and know where you have been in your past.

Our family has been farming for different farming operations and studs for generations and have worked with many wonderful cattle and people.

It never occurred to me that we would have the opportunity to breed and farm on our own and the thought is still frightening and humbling.

I have a few bloodlines that date back to the Syrilla Simmentaler studs where I started farming back in 2000. We also have some from the old Regent and Arabella studs that my Dad was involved with.

I wish we had more but I never at the time thought that we would have this opportunity and I wonder where all those cattle are now.

At Syrilla we had the most beautiful stud cows imported directly from Germany. Cow like Lamela, Laika and Lynette, the Embryo triplets Flora, Fauna and Fortune.

I remember Swaarbou Flocke and a host of Vlekke Simmentaler cows like Vlekke Alida Sellie and Halloween. Bulls like Dorsim Marius, Vlekke Peet and Syrilla Hughie, Merchant and Noah.

What a stud to work in.

Jack Bastard's stud was no less impressive and was also built originally from imported German females. Bulls like Intsizwa Billy, Simlee Medger, Bulk en Brul Marloe etc.

The finest moments there I think were numerous Royal show champs, a first place at the Nationals in Pretoria with an Intsizwa Billy progeny group and a Royal Show Gold cup with Billy himself. My Hostess line in both Simbra and Simmentaler carry Marloe and Billy blood in them.

My Dads old stud Sanjika Simmentalers also had a Royal Show Gold Cup winner with Sanjika Fuhrer and a Pretoria Res Grand Champ in Sanjika Radar.

My favourite bull to be bred there was Sanjika Wenner that happened to be Ian Jnrs first show bull. He was also a Royal Show Grand Champion.

They bred many fine animals with the Amanda and Music female lines been amongst the finest there.



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Conestoga Simmentaler Stud

East Griqualand is having one of the best spring and summer rains yet. Yes we have had the odd hail storm and tornado but Thornham seems to have dodged all malady's for once. Our hay crop turned out to be a bumper crop, the cattle and sheep are looking super and we have a smart looking maize crop.

Our Simmentalers are finally coming to the party after two horrendous adaptation years. Our stud sires look to have done the business and we have a crop of young heifers being bulled this year and a better looking young year old heifers.

Our initial aim this last year was just to get all of them calving and to wean a decent calf from all the females. I think we have done that and now to take all of them to the next level via artificial insemination and by using our ace stud bull Odensim Brussouw as a chief herd sire and also as a back-up bull. He has bred some beautiful calves especially heifers that are broad of body and have that short strong head of his. Look out for Conestoga Niara, Anjou, Halle and Alma.

We have also managed to breed a bunch of up and coming young bulls that will lead the way for us next year with Conestoga Rocket pencilled in to work with the heifer in June 2021. Rocket is an imported LRX HP Rocket 23Y son bred from Devon-Bank Erica.

We also have a handful of Sky-Sim Abdul weaners that look pretty pleasing and will carry the Mike Debrosky name on here at Thornham.



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Excelsus Simbra

Our Simbra herd lies very close to our hearts and to work with that herd is more therapeutic than labour. We spent a very happy eighteen odd years at Excelsus Simbra stud in the Free State building a wonderful herd of carefully bred and selected cattle. A number of studs greatly influenced our time there. The Metsibra Stud of Diethelm Metsker and his father gave us the two great bulls that started the whole ball rolling in the Metsibra UDM9453B and Metsibra Tingeling. The Taudicus and Zamugo herds also gave us a huge jump start with many great bulls and females. My Georgie bloodline is from Taudicus. Zamugo gave us Wisp Will Enos bred by Lewellen Angus, Maratana Langman from the Van Zyl families, Zamugo Zorro AZ0442B that was Pretoria Grand Champ and SA record seller in his day. Two great bulls in Zamugo Socrates and Plato. Many females also pushed our efforts considerably. Our sister stud in Namibia the Diana's Simbra stud of the late Otto Herrigel gave us the Diana's Gugi bull that we used to great effect breeding our Galen bloodlines. Our own Conestoga Galen is a Gugi great grandson. Our American sister stud the Pine Ridge Simbrah stud of Bill and Jane Travis really propelled us forward with many great cattle being bred from that program. Bulls like PRR Prevail and Pioneer that went on to have a huge impact in the whole Simbra industry. They bred bulls like Excelsus Pioneer, Penzance, Prairie 1 and 2, Pacific, Prodigy, El Paso, Pilgrim, Palace and Photon. We had an F1 program that we used to create new genetics using Simmentaler cows crossed with the best Brahman bulls available. Excelsus Chris came from that program and was a Junior National Champion for us.

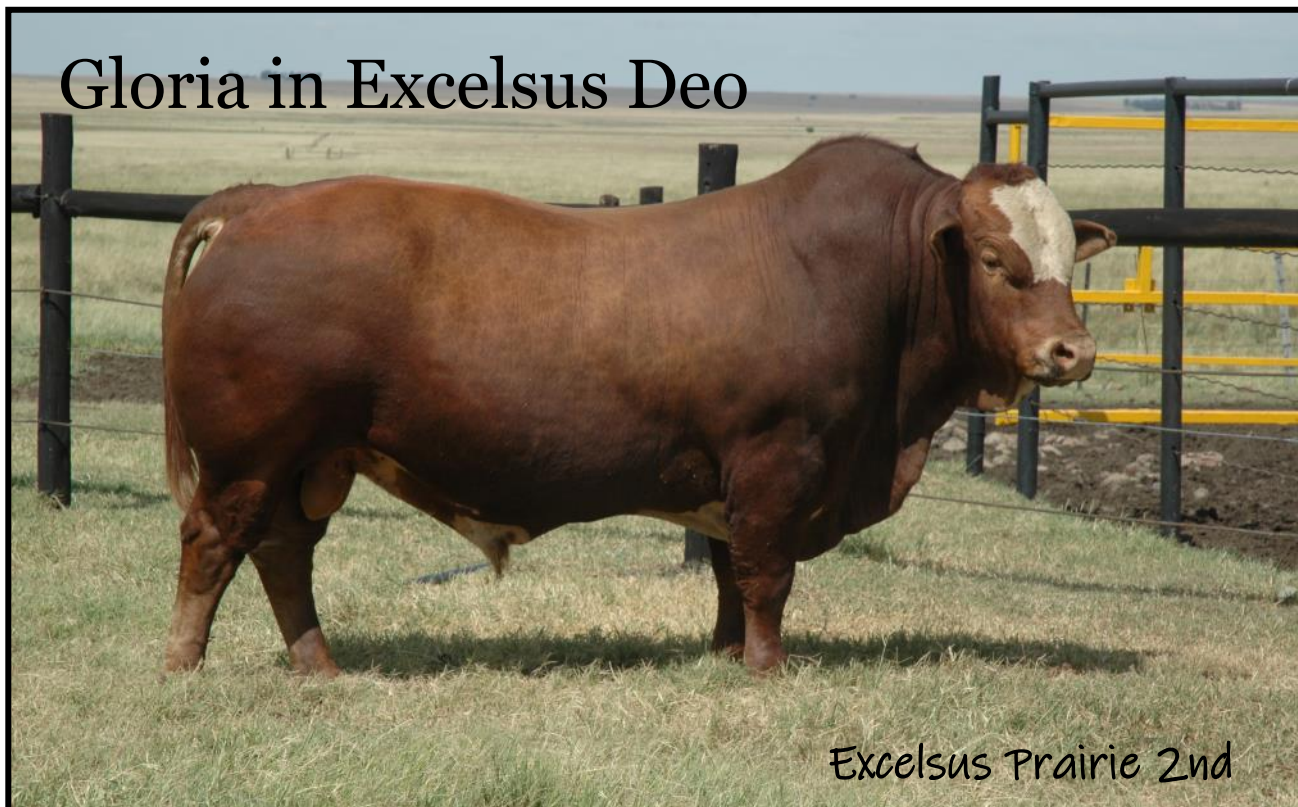
We as an Excelsus team created something special, culminating in a wonderful dispersal sale. I think the end result wound up being Excelsus Prairie 2nd and Excelsus Pink and her calf Excelsus Pinky. These were the two top sellers on their sales. These three animals I think were exactly what we were trying to achieve. Prairie's son Richter Prairie was bred from a Galen daughter bought at this dispersal sale and is now our National record best seller. To achieve a record price like that is a combination of great genetics, a top stud program and marketing strategy and the Chris Richter should be commended for this achievement.



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Gloria in Excelsus Deo



Excelsus Prairie 2nd

Excelsus Ikeja and Excelsus Dr Dazzle



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Conestoga Simbras

On this colourful tapestry of personality's, genetics and sometimes blood sweat and tears we find ourselves in the present.

The studs are our passion and we live for the next bunch of calves that arrive here at Thornham.

I have the Galen bloodlines in the two beautiful Excelsus bred cows Brook and Irish with Conestoga Galen daughters Comfrey, Chervil and Yarrow been bulled in June this year.

The Metsibra UDM9453B bloodlines run on in the Dijon family.

PRR Prevail lives on here through the Prairie sons Conestoga Payton, Pioneer and Paco with my only Prevail daughter Babsie 1st breeding very well. The Babsie bloodline is emerging as a strong line stemming from the PRR Scout daughter Excelsus Babasie. She stands with a handy Galen bull calf and her two daughters have produced a heifer each that will be retained in our herd this summer. Excelsus Clara is an Excelsus Penzance daughter and has a stunning Excelsus Aco heifer retained in our herd.

Pioneer lives on through grandsons Conestoga Pioneer and Peyton and daughters Lace and Rona.

Conestoga Bridgit Bardot is directly from the Diana's stud as is Conestoga Galen who has Diana's Dynamite in his Pedigree.

Our chief stud bull Excelsus Aco epitomises our breeding philosophy and has a mixture of international genetics with LMC Full House, RX Platinum, Rumba and some fancy South African blue blood running through his veins. Look out for his sons Conestoga Agrico and Massey Ferguson and top heifers such as Chervil, Coco, Clara, Chives and Irish.



Building and concentrating on your female bloodlines is like building your house on a good rock foundation.



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Conestoga Simbras Herd Sires



The three wise men!

Top left is Tauro Timbuktu that we have kindly been loaned from Tito and Desiree Voster of the Delft Simbra stud. Timbuktu is a PRR Prevail grandson with Stefmar Kamab and old Shubra genetics present.

Above is Excelsus Aco who has been the dominant bull at Conestoga these last three odd years. This is a Quatro-Pro Quinton son bred from an Excelsus Professional daughter.

Left is Conestoga Galen that now works at Guy Payne's farming operation. Galen is a polled Excelsus Galen grandson and has left a huge mark on our young stud.



Conestoga Patrol with his dam
Conestoga Avon Lee



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Conestoga hosts our first open day



It was with great excitement and trepidation that we hosted our first open day here at Thornham.

We were advised by our marketers the Farmers Livestock Auctioneers or FLA to try and market our stud and sale bulls for the up coming East Griqualand annual bull sale.

We showed all our bulls for sale and also a selected bunch of Simbra cows with calves to introduce FLA and our clients to the type of animal that we are trying to breed.

We had only about twenty people in total with the main comment being that our cattle were more medium framed than they imagined.

Perception is a funny and powerful thing. The Simbra beef breed here in EG is regarded with trepidation and we are told that it will never sell well. They so far are right and we had a tough EG Bull sale. Never the less we got all our bulls sold and I would like to thank all our old and new clients for all their support and kind words.

The bottom line is that while we have been in the stud game for what would be the third family generation we are a very young stud and must build up a solid client base using an unpopular breed locally from the ground up.

We need to breed better and have more depth in quality of sale animals.

We need to feed better so that the sale animals look better and therefore compete better at an all breed bull sale.

We need to build up our female bloodlines so that we have a fertile, feminine, typical true to Conestoga type of cow herd that breeds more quality more often.

Rome wasn't built in a day.

I would like to thank our Lord in heaven that has given us the wonderful opportunity to farm in such a beautiful place and with such amazing animals.