



agriculture & rural development

Department:
Agriculture and Rural Development
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

More than half of South Africa's livestock reportedly occur in communal areas. Few of these animals make their way to the formal market. Livestock auctions are the lifeblood of the livestock farmers and owners in the province.

Excited about KwaZulu-Natal's third livestock sale (previous auction sales on 2014/05/30 as well as on 2015/04/01) and first in 2016, Amajuba Livestock Association & AMAFARMERSGRO took 153 cattle to the temporary sales yard at Madadeni and registered as a seller. A member of the Amajuba Livestock Association & AMAFARMERSGRO, Mr Remember Mthethwa decided to lead by example and encourage fellow cattle owners on the Amajuba communal land to sell their surplus animals as a form of income generation in this area of high unemployment and poverty.

The success of an auction depends on the participation of all role-players including the seller (farmer), the buyer (speculator, butchery owners, other farmers and community members).

The sale, arranged and facilitated by the KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (KZN DARD) Amajuba and auctioneering company, AAM Livestock Agents and Auctioneers, was a resounding success. Many communal livestock owners keep their animals as a symbol of wealth.

Livestock auctions are well established in the commercial farming sector and auctions are conducted at least once a month in the different farming areas whereas in the communal and rural areas of KZN, the livestock owners have only recently begun enjoying the benefits of livestock auctions in their areas. This has largely been due to a push from the KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to assist the communal farmers in becoming economically active and developing a mind-set of profiting from their livestock.

They do not realise the economic value of their animals and cannot understand that surplus animals can be sold and the core herd retained, which means that they have livestock and income.

Unplanned growth in herds and flocks, with occasional sales or slaughtering, creates overgrazing problems and keeps people poor. The auction in Madadeni, Gawan Farm has opened the eyes of many livestock owners here. The ones who watched but didn't sell could see what sellers made. Since the auction, many people have called to ask when the next auction will be.



Mr Mthethwa Chairperson of FARMERSGRO



Acting Senior District Manager Amajuba- Mr MJ Nhleko

Communal difficulties

One of the problems communal farmers face is lack of mating selection. Because animals range freely in large mixed flocks, with no separation, good cows from one owner's flock can be covered by poor quality bulls from another flock. Hiring a full-time herder is not cost-effective so most farmers rely on bulls to chase off inferior 'wannabe suitors', a method not guaranteed of success. In the initial stages of the livestock auctions in the communal farming community one of the areas of concern has been the expectation of livestock owners. Some farmers had unrealistically high expectations for their livestock and actually refused to sell their animals on the day.



Bull that was brought by farmers



Cattle that were brought by farmers



DARD staff members and Mr Nyembe Chairperson of Amajuba Livestock Association



Auctioneers, farmers, buyers and community

Market access

A recent livestock auction (13/4/2016) on the outskirts of Madadeni near Newcastle was well attended by both suppliers (emerging and communal farmers) and buyers (a mix of black and white). These auctions generated millions of rands in turnover, a percentage of which remains with the livestock association and also in the local economy through the support of local hawkers etc. The average price per kilogram on live animals was R12 for C Grades and R22 on weaners.

The table below gives an indication of the prices that were paid for the stock on offer.

PRICES REALISED AT AMAJUBA LIVESTOCK AUCTION 13/4/2016											
ANIMALS PRESENTED											
GENDER	NO. SOLD	TURNOVER	AVE PRICE/HD	HIGHEST PRICE	LOWEST PRICE	AVE R/KG	HIGHEST R/KG	LOWESTR/KG	AVE WT	HIGHEST WT	LOWEST WT
BULLS	17	R 133 150.00	R7 832.35	R11 000.00	R4 600.00	R14.78	R 16.55	R 12.14	537	750	278
OXEN	88	R 471 450.00	R5 357.38	R12 250.00	R3 150.00	R17.35	R22.15	R12.37	318	754	148
COWS	35	R 225 950.00	R6 455.71	R9 000.00	R4 750.00	R14.61	R19.08	R11.88	446	620	317
HEIFERS	9	R 47 000.00	R5 222.22	R6 800.00	R3 950.00	R20.83	R25.48	R17.75	257	355	157
COWS & CALF	2	R 12 700.00	R6 350.00	R6 400.00	R6 300.00	R16.38	R18.75	R14.00	397	457	336
TOTAL	151	R 890 250.00									
SUMMARY OF SELLERS											
No of Sellers	55										
Sellers >1 animal	35										
Highest No/seller	9										
Cattle not sold	2										

I want to encourage unemployed people especially youth in rural areas to do what other communal farmers are doing. They often complain that they have no work and no money, but they own cattle, goats, sheep and chickens. They must understand that they don't have to sell all their animals, but should breed them properly and sell the surplus on a continuous basis.

By SW Tshabalala (Senior Agric. Economist)

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