

Black farmers now active bidders at sale

THE farmers' turnout at the annual Bonsmara cattle auction sale on Friday, organised by the Up George cattle farm in Wasbank, exceeded expectations.

Organisers said they were happy about the turnout of farmers from South Africa and neighbouring countries such as Namibia and Botswana.

The auction, held for the 17th consecutive year, attracted emerging and established commercial cattle farmers, according to a statement from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

The organisers said scores of black farmers were seen to be developing an interest in the auction.

"We are seeing a change of mind and attitude from the entrant farmers as they are no longer just spectators, but are becoming active buyers in the auction," the statement said.

This new trend was inconceivable back in the day when the auction was founded by Lawrence Ralfe in the mid-'90s.

KwaZulu-Natal Agriculture and Rural Development MEC Cyril Xaba said he was impressed the auction also attracted mayors and parliamentarians. He said the department had committed to support the annual farmers' day at the farm,



KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development Cyril Xaba (seated second from right in front) with Mnambithi Local Municipality mayor Vincent Madlala during the Up George cattle auction in Wasbank. The auction this year attracted a wide spectrum of well-established commercial and emerging farmers. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

to spur conversation between emerging and commercial farmers.

More than 70 Bonsmara bulls went under the hammer in the auction, including 50 heifers in-calf.

The price range for Bonsmara was R21 000 to R24 000 each, depending on quality, lifespan and the age of the beasts.

The auction collected more than R5 million in total sales and more would have been earned had some cattle not been withdrawn due to certain quality issues. The Bonsmara are big, breed well and are suitable for all weather conditions in the country.

The next auction will be held in the first week of July next year. — BE.