BEEF-BULLETIN

HEAR IT FROM THE BULL'S MOUTH

November 2026

"O What a Wonderful World", the well-known song that Louis Armstrong made famous around the world. Satchmo did it beautifully. Expectations of the perfect world were painted, a world that seems to be becoming increasingly less realistic. Unless you are content with the world in which you live, which may be your salvation.

In Israel, the election is finely balanced; the right-wing party is losing support, while the former military leader's party is gaining support. France is suffering through destructive protests. Why the destruction and damage to other people's property when you are unhappy about whatever it is that bothers you? Is it because they themselves have nothing to lose? Rent a place to stay, eat whatever comes your way, wander around, sniff something, smoke something, inject something, take something that does not belong to you. Temporary escape from reality, only to confront the same problem again – probably through another form of escape.

Strong opinions are criticised, posted on social media for analysis and possible criticism, often by individuals who themselves are simply drifting along in the slow current. These days, everyone is supposed to be "equal", what you can do, I can do... And so the whole lot carries on, creating an environment of little individuality. Drive past red cattle and you cannot help but wonder what is in the "mix". Difficult to distinguish, little individuality, genetic combinations, uncertain outcomes?

What a wonderful breed the Drakensberger is! A long and proud history, improved through genetic and phenotypic selection, with a sustained focus on the advancement of the breed itself. Proud breeders, proud owners, and often astonished first-time buyers. "I used multi-sire mating with my cattle, I cannot believe how many black calves I have." Who has not heard that before? All of us.

I want to farm with cattle that are unique, that are recognisable, that I can be proud of. Cattle that CAN raise a calf, known for being excellent cows for their calves. For that, good bulls are needed – bulls that are available and that achieve the prices they deserve. The Drakensberger's standing is rising; these animals can cope with climate change through the adaptability that is genetically embedded in them. This has often been used in marketing; now is the time to proclaim it loudly in the changed circumstances in which we find ourselves.

Farming with Drakensbergers is a proud South African privilege. Keep well.

J F



With thanks to Salomé Drakensbergers, our November sponsor



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Deadline for December Newsletter: 24 November 2026

News Snippets

Birthdays

Congratulations to everyone celebrating their birthday:

- 6 November – Jannie Jacobsz
- 8 November – Clift Frewen
- 9 November – Melissa Blom
- 19 November – Jean van der Merwe
- 23 November – Hannes Lombard
- 28 November – Neil Pienaar
- 28 November – Gerhard Maritz

Please share your news with us!
You are welcome to email our office:
drakensberger@studbook.co.za or
WhatsApp +27 71 283 9943

WHATSAPP GROUP:

Join our WhatsApp group. We share important news, but it is not a "spam" group or a chat group. Click on the link (on your mobile phone):
https://chat.whatsapp.com/LZrhtyvdjr42I0ATZ1tRCr

PHOTO FRIDAY

Do you have a beautiful photo of your Drakensbergers that you would like to share with us? Please send it to drakensberger@studbook.co.za
We would love to share Drakensberger photos on our social media every Friday. This beautiful photo was sent to us by Udo Beneke.



JOIN US ON OUR Social media

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Advertisements or opinions expressed in the newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Drakensberger Society.

Unistel DNA-tests

The Society was able to negotiate a special discount with Unistel for DNA tests on profiles and paternities. The prices are as follows:

Unistel DNA tests	Cost per animal for profile (VAT incl.)
Normal price for 2026 < 30	R 282.56
More than 30 (-5% discount)	R 268.43
More than 60 (-7.5% disc.)	R 261.36
More than 120 (-10% disc.)	R 254.30

Contact Unistel for more information, and remember to specify the breed for the special discount to apply.





2027 Diary & Planner

The 2027 diaries and planners will be available during the second half of November. Feel free to contact the office or your nearest council representative.
In the meantime, you can order a leather cover for your diary from our online store. The cover can be reused each year with a new diary.

SA Stud Book Genomic Service for Beef Cattle

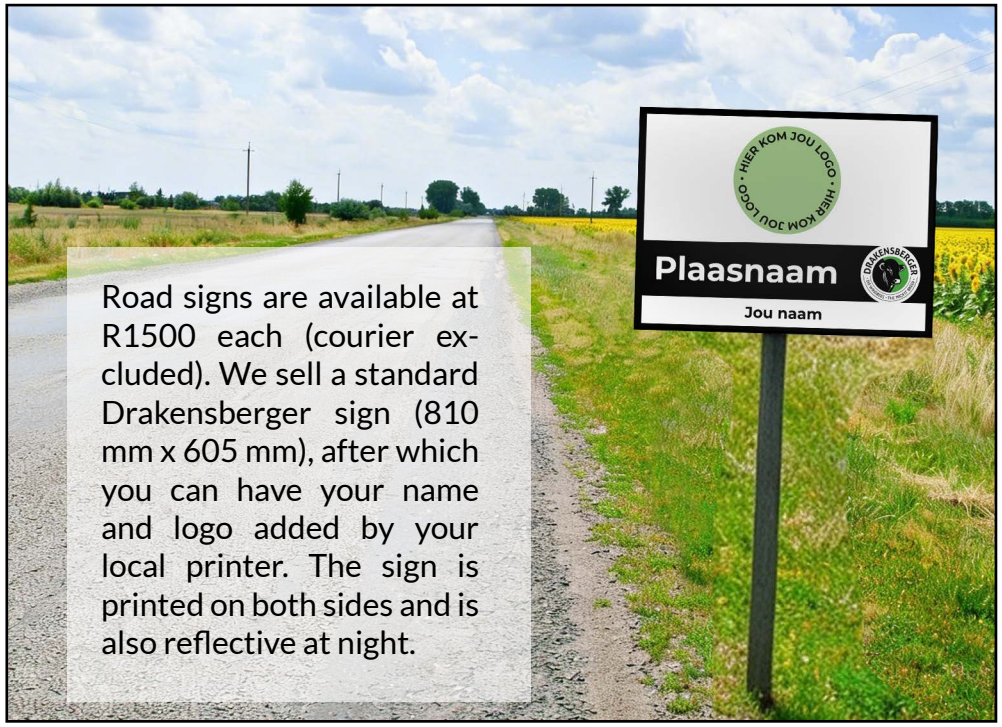
BGP2 funds for year 3 are approved and paid over by the funder. For the third and final year of BGP2, the funder will subsidise genomic tests with R420-00. SA Stud Book will subsidise an additional subsidy of R104-00 for SA Stud Book Breeders. Therefore, the total costs to the Breeder will be R549-00 excl. VAT. There are no deviations from the original BGP2 proposal as as approved at the start of the 3-year project. SA Stud Book is ready and awaits samples for year-3 of BGP2. Contact drakensberger@studbook.co.za.





We had two Afrikaans articles recorded, and they can be listened to on Spotify or YouTube.

Follow this link to Spotify:
https://tinyurl.com/yc4uktph
Follow this link to YouTube:
https://tinyurl.com/38cdhtus



Road signs are available at R1500 each (courier excluded). We sell a standard Drakensberger sign (810 mm x 605 mm), after which you can have your name and logo added by your local printer. The sign is printed on both sides and is also reflective at night.



Congratulations to our loyal members, especially those who are appearing on the leaderboard for the first time. These winners were recognised in the Logix Beef Cattle Herd of the Year 2026 awards.



No.	Name	Region
1	H.J. Van Staden	NW
2	P.J. Pienaar	NW
3	Sambesi	NW
4	Drakenkraal	FS
5	M. Esterhuizen	FS
6	S.P. Van Der Walt	Eastern Cape
7	Buffalo Valley Farms	Mpumalanga
8	Infracor Stud Breeders	Mpumalanga
9	J. Schutte	KwaZulu-Natal
10	U.F. Beneke	KwaZulu-Natal
11	J.J. Retief	NC



No.	Name	Region
1	MR. L.J. & W.J. Krynauw	Mpumalanga
2	A & E Deacon Trust	FS
3	Jacobsz Familie	Mpumalanga
4	L.C. Botha	FS
5	P.J. Taljaard	Mpumalanga
6	P.W.B. Uys	Mpumalanga



No.	Name	Award	Region
1	C.H. Nel		FS
2	D.F. Du Toit		FS
3	Delram Boerdery		FS
4	J.I.V.Z. Naudé		NC
5	Jesumar Drakensbergers		FS
6	L.A. Foster		FS
7	Moddervet Boerdery PTY LTD		FS
8	Theunissen Drakensbergers		FS
9	W.A. Du Randt		Eastern Cape
10	H.A. Schutte		KwaZulu-Natal
11	L.A. Neuman		FS
12	M & M Boerdery PTY LTD		Mpumalanga
13	Neuman Broers		FS


DRAKENSBERGER
DIE WINSBEES • THE PROFIT BREED
Congratulations
TO ALL THE DRAKENSBERGER
AWARD WINNERS
GOLD
1. Black Hills Drakensbergers
AWARD: Gold
REGION: NW
GOLD
2. A. Van Dyk
AWARD: Gold
REGION: Mpumalanga
GOLD
3. J & E Dhooge
AWARD: Gold
REGION: Gauteng


DRAKENSBERGER
DIE WINSBEES • THE PROFIT BREED
Congratulations
TO ALL THE DRAKENSBERGER
REGIONAL WINNERS
No. Name Award Region
1. I de Bruyn PLATINUM Mpumalanga
2. Rouxvus (PTY) LTD PLATINUM Western Free State (FS)



CATTLE FARMING – From Flanders to Heidelberg:

Jan Dhooge's Drakensberger Journey

Written by Charl van Rooyen for the Landbou Weekblad of 23 July 2026

As an agricultural engineer, Jan Dhooge's career has taken him through various industries. Alongside a career with a fixed salary, he also built up one of the leading stud herds of the indigenous Drakensberger cattle breed over several decades. Now he stands at a crossroads.



Only the best. Jan has been farming with the hardy Drakensberger breed since 1990 and selects strictly for animals that can perform on limited grazing.

He was born in Belgium, but his heart belongs to South Africa. Jan Dhooge's farming journey has been one of learning and contributing, genetic progress and precision nutrition. Until a farm attack in 2025 turned the future for him and his wife, Elna, upside down.

They were attacked in their home, seriously assaulted and, after the attackers left Jan for dead, he crawled through his own blood in the house calling for Elna.

"I thought she was dead. She thought they had shot me dead. When she answered, it was the most beautiful sound in my life," says Jan, a Drakensberger farmer from Heidelberg in Gauteng.

For the Dhooges, 28 October 2025 had been a good day on the farm. Jan had worked hard and injected all the cattle. That evening at nine o'clock, he was sitting in the living room after he and Elna had watched an Afrikaans programme on television. She was in the kitchen washing their coffee cups.

Then their Dutch Shepherd and Australian Cattle Dog started barking outside. Elna opened the kitchen door because she thought the dogs were barking at a snake. Five men stormed into the house.

"They dragged Elna around by her arm. She screamed. I shouted and rushed towards them with a stick. One man wanted to shoot me and I hit him on the nose with the stick. Then he shot me in the neck. I fell and lost consciousness," Jan recalls.

When he regained consciousness, he could hear the robbers were in the study with Elna. She told them they had shot her husband dead. Jan tried to get up, but could not. He remained lying in his blood on the floor.

Two of the attackers later stood on either side of him, kicked him and stepped on his hand. Jan pretended to be unconscious because he ex-

pected them to shoot him again.

Later, he could no longer hear anything from Elna and thought they had killed her. He could hear the robbers breaking open the wooden floor, presumably looking for a safe. In between, he repeatedly lost consciousness.

"I prayed desperately. Then it became completely quiet and I could only hear one dog growling and barking. I called out to Elna and she answered."

Crawled for 90 minutes over 30 metres

Jan crawled through his blood towards the passage. He was so weak from blood loss that it took him about 90 minutes to cover the 30 m to their bedroom. There he found Elna, with her hands tied behind her back and her feet bound with ropes. He remembered a pocketknife in a bedside table and cut her free.

Elna drove the bakkie to another house on the farm where people lived. They called the police and an ambulance.

The robbers had already left with the couple's bakkie. They stole Jan's grandmother's jewellery, the power inverter and the batteries from the solar panels. "Something must have frightened them," says Jan. They also smashed several pieces of furniture.

Jan and Elna were rushed to a hospital in Heidelberg. Jan was treated for the wound to his neck, while Elna's injuries were mainly to her face and head. They spent several days in hospital.

Although they did not suffer permanent physical injuries, Jan says the psychological impact has been significant. Elna no longer wants to stay there, but Jan does not yet know what to do.

"A quick decision is never a good decision, not at our age. It is a difficult decision, but eventually we will probably have to leave," he says.

"Who is going to buy my beautiful cattle? And at what price? I also don't want to leave the country. I played rugby here, did my military training here and performed border duty. This is my country. I love my country. I don't want to leave."

Adaptation and efficiency

Jan says his approach to farming was shaped by droughts. After two consecutive droughts at Mount Arabel No. 2, he realised how important adaptation and functional efficiency are to the survival of a livestock farmer.

"That is why I started selecting bulls with good feed conversion efficiency. They must also be functionally superior."

He says it takes years of work to bring the interaction between genotype and phenotype together. He therefore evaluates and identifies bulls that have the genes to perform under both intensive and extensive conditions.



Elna and Jan Dhooge with one of their loyal guard dogs, the Dutch Shepherd, Raka. They also have an Australian Cattle Dog, Reeza.

Jan was born 76 years ago in Flanders, in northern Belgium. His father, Andreas Dhooge, had a textile business. Jan was one year old when he moved to South Africa with his parents, Andreas and Odette, where his father established a textile factory.

After studying engineering at the former Technikon Pretoria (today the Tshwane University of Technology), Jan completed his practical training as an agricultural engineer at the Department of Agricultural Technical Services in Ladybrand and Ficksburg. He also completed horticultural practical training at Malan Seuns in Pretoria. He then worked at Agricura, where he conducted technical research in entomology.





The hardiness of the Drakensberger convinced Jan that this was the breed to farm with after becoming acquainted with his father-in-law, Isak Boshoff's, stud operation in Piet Retief.

Turns to Drakensbergers

In 1985, Jan started farming at Dargle in KwaZulu-Natal. He and his brother, Koen, operated a dairy for four years. They subsequently sold the land, after which Jan bought the farm near Heidelberg and moved there in 1989.

Here he became a crop farmer and started farming with Drakensbergers. In 1990, he bought his first cattle from well-known stud breeders such as Obie de Jager, John de Jager and Juli Triggle.

Jan had already taken notice of the Drakensberger while he was a student. He regularly read Landbouweekblad, and the articles about the breed stayed with him. He also saw Drakensbergers at the former Pretoria Show.

His father-in-law, Isak Boshoff, ran the Grootraam Drakensberger stud near Piet Retief.

"I saw how hardy his cattle were and then decided that this was the breed for me."

Jan joined the Drakensberger Breeders' Society in 1990 and registered his herd as the D'Hofstee Drakensberger Stud. D'Hofstee means main house or farmhouse in Flemish.

Testing the bulls

He recognised the value of bull testing early on. He therefore established his own Phase C testing centre on the farm and also sent the progeny of his first bulls to Irene in Pretoria, where they underwent Phase C tests.

One bull received a gold merit award at Irene in the first year and another a silver award. Jan used the gold merit bull, D'Hofstee 92-58, extensively in his herd. This bull was junior champion at the Drakensbergers' national championship show at the Rand Show one year and also produced good progeny.

In 2021, one of his bulls, AAD 18-47 Chaka, was the best Drakensberger bull in the SA Stud Book and Vleissentraal Elite Bull Growth Test class.

Expert helps with selection

Jan continued with the Phase C tests but struggled to sell bulls.

"They were not uniform enough and I therefore did not make good progress."

He was then advised to approach Dr Hannes Dreyer, the seasoned chief executive of Vrede and manager of Veldbul/Ram Southern Africa (VBRSA), for assistance.

"Since I involved him in my stud, my bulls have become more uniform and the conformation and best characteristics have improved, without interfering with the genetics."

Previously, Jan selected four bulls from approximately 20 bulls each year for his own use after they had undergone a Phase C test. Nowadays, he still conducts Phase C tests, but the best bulls are also tested on the veld according to VBRSA's guidelines.

He wants to use bulls that perform well in both tests. This indicates that they have genes for growth in both environments.



What is the right test?

Hannes says there are ongoing questions about the best way to evaluate beef cattle bulls. Some people argue that bulls tested intensively will produce progeny that perform well on the veld. Other animal scientists, in turn, believe that bulls that perform well on the veld will also produce calves that do well in a feedlot.

He explains that any test to which a bull is subjected directly after weaning, in which it receives ad libitum concentrate feed, can be regarded as an intensive test.

Examples include Phase C and some Phase D tests. The principle is that the environment should be optimal so that a particular trait can be expressed to its full potential.

Phase C is the only test in which individual animals' feed intake is measured and the efficiency of their feed conversion is calculated. Bull tests on roughage or veld follow the opposite principle: the animals are tested in the environment in which they will later have to produce.

According to Hannes, the latest research indicates that different genes are involved in growth under intensive and extensive conditions. Some bulls have the genes for growth in both environments.

Cattle are ruminants and can convert veld and roughage into milk and meat. Yet animals have been selected for decades to produce and reproduce under very different conditions.

"In the past, thousands of bulls were selected based on growth results under intensive conditions, and it was then expected that their progeny would perform on the veld," says Hannes.

Veld bull tests are currently conducted by SA Stud Book in the form of extensive Phase D tests, as well as through veld tests under the auspices of VBRSA. The biggest difference between the two tests is the traits that are measured. VBRSA focuses more on traits related to adaptability, such as condition, temperament and muscling. A value is assigned to each trait and expressed as an economic index.



Jan combines Phase C and veld tests, which is valuable for identifying bulls that can grow in different nutritional environments.

Vergelyking tussen veldtoetse en fase C-toetse (2024-'25)					
Veldtoets-rangorde			Fase C-rangorde		
Bulnommer	GDT-indeks	Rangorde	Bulnommer	GDT-indeks	Rangorde
38	156	1	34	128	1
27	136	2	21	117	2
37	129	3	27	115	3
41	129	4	20	112	4
59	115	5	78	106	5
33	111	6	6	105	6
34	104	7	33	102	8
21	90	8	37	102	9
20	82	9	76	98	9
78	65	10	38	96	10
6	51	11	41	94	11
76	31	12	59	87	12

Comparison between veld tests and Phase C tests (2024–25)





With only 685 ha at his disposal, Jan must make optimal use of the grazing on his farm to farm economically and sustainably. This means that he selects strictly to retain only the best animals.

Test results

Hannes says D'Hofstee Drakensberger Stud follows the Phase C tests on Jan's farm with a type of veld test for bulls that have already been through Phase C. The trends are important, even though there are not large numbers of bulls involved (see the TABLE on the previous page).

Some bulls perform better in the Phase C test than in the veld test, while the opposite is true for others. There are, however, bulls that perform well in both tests.

In the 2024–25 tests, the best bull on the veld was tenth in Phase C. Bull 27, which ranked second and third respectively, and Bull 33, which ranked sixth and seventh, should perform well in both environments.

The trend that the best performers in Phase C perform less well on the veld, and vice versa, has been repeated over the past five years. Every year, however, there have been a few bulls that performed well in both tests.

This year, Jan decided to change the procedure and conduct the veld test first, followed by the Phase C test. The results should provide new information about growth in different nutritional environments.

Strict selection for the best animals

Jan's farm covers only 685 ha, of which 178 ha is arable land. He therefore cannot keep a large herd and has space for only 140 to 150 animals. Nowadays, he leases out the arable land because he struggles with labour. Consequently, he has to make optimal use of his limited grazing to farm sustainably and economically. This means strict selection to retain only the best animals.

He practises corrective mating. In cows, he gives preference to frame, milk, fertility, calving ease and calf size. He then selects bulls that can improve these traits.

Uniformity in the herd is an important objective. Cows with good udders and femininity are given preference, as are bulls with strong legs. All the animals must have good hooves and broad muzzles. Broad muzzles are important for good feed intake and also indicate adaptability and the ability to live off veld grass. Such animals have lower maintenance requirements.

Jan says the cows must have good maternal traits and be able to care for themselves as well as their calves.

Willing to learn

He has already succeeded through selection in breeding out an old problem of rolled claws. The problem was introduced by a bull he bought many years ago and affected the animals' ability to walk.

Jan is also a senior selector and was a judge. He applies this knowledge through strict appraisal and selection.

"As in any industry, you must always be willing to learn. That is why I asked Hannes to help me."

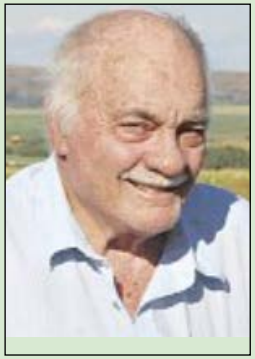
For Jan, everything revolves around the performance of his bull calves. Because performance in the feedlot does not always correlate with performance on the veld, his challenge is to identify animals that perform well in both environments. That is why he conducts both tests.

He previously kept a commercial herd to sell weaner calves, but now focuses on the stud and the sale of breeding animals. Animals that do not pass the selection process are sold as commercial animals or sent to feedlots as slaughter animals.

Enquiries: Jan Dhooge, 082 892 5762, email: jandhooge67@gmail.com; Hannes Dreyer: 082 823 1045, email: hannescjdreyer@gmail.com



LANDBOU WEEKBLAD ASKS … JAN DHOOGE



What technology is indispensable in your farming operation?
My Phase C testing centre, which is very valuable for bull testing.

Who was your mentor?
My father, Andreas Dhooge, and my father-in-law, Isak Boshoff. My father was a businessman and had a textile factory. I learnt a great deal about business from him. My father-in-law was a farmer in the Piet Retief area, and I learnt a great deal about farming techniques, breeding and stud farming from him. Both had a great deal of knowledge and, naturally, this brought a good balance to my training.

What are your biggest challenges?
Farming economically and surviving droughts.

How do you solve problems?
I think outside the box.

INFORMATION
Location: Heidelberg, Gauteng
Name: Mount Arabel No. 2
Branches: Drakensberger stud
Veld type: Sourveld
Average rainfall: 550 mm/year

IN SHORT

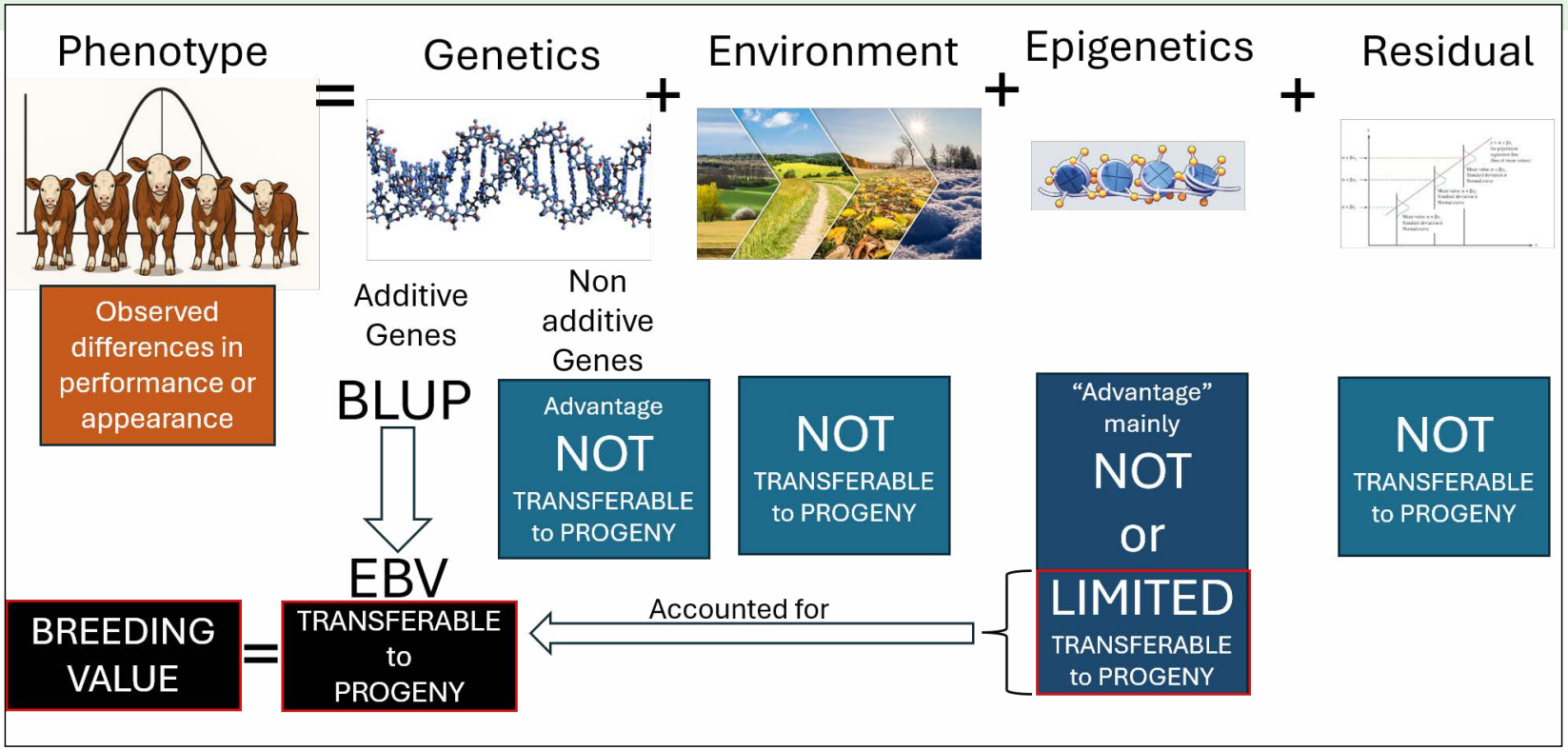
- Jan Dhooge breeds Drakensbergers that must be able to perform economically under both intensive and extensive conditions.
- By combining Phase C tests with veld tests, he identifies bulls with growth and adaptation traits for different nutritional environments.
- Following a violent farm attack, Jan and Elna Dhooge must now decide on their future on the farm where Jan has built up a sought-after stud.



A BALANCED VIEW ON EPIGENETICS IN LIVESTOCK:

Explaining the term, does it matter, and why BLUP breeding values still works beautifully when selecting your animals

Japie van der Westhuizen



1. Introduction

Epigenetics has become a buzzword in animal science, but it is often misunderstood.

While the mechanisms are complex, the practical message is simple: **Epigenetics influences how genes are expressed – not which genes animals carry.**

For breeders, this distinction is crucial. What is important and will be shown: the traditional and genomic BLUP systems already handle most (if not all) epigenetic effects exceptionally well, maintaining genetic accuracy even when environmental conditions distort an animal's phenotype (performance, reproduction or any other trait and expression).



2. What is Epigenetics?

Epigenetics describes any changes in how genes are "switched **on or off**", without changing the DNA sequence (the coding in the genome for genetic potential) itself (Nielsen & Godfrey, 2016; Zhang *et al*., 2020). These switches, respond (to some degree) to environmental factors such as:

- maternal nutrition
- stress
- heat (and other climatic stressors)
- disease exposure
- toxins and mycotoxins
- mineral deficiencies
- colostrum transfer
- pasture quality

Epigenetic changes are particularly active **during pregnancy** ("foetal programming") when organs, wool follicles, muscle fibres and the immune system are formed (Fleming *et al*., 2018; Reynolds *et al*., 2019). This is very crucial and are often overlooked, namely the treatment of the pregnant females in influencing the performance of their unborn calves, lambs or kids and even that of their grand-progeny in the cases where the foetuses were female.

3. Why epigenetics matters in Livestock Production

Epigenetics helps explain why two animals with similar genetics might perform differently when raised under different maternal or environmental conditions.

Examples supported by strong research:

Beef Cattle

Gestational nutrition affects muscle fibre formation, immunity, fertility and carcass traits (Du *et al*., 2010; Funston *et al*., 2010).

Dairy Cattle

Heat stress in late gestation permanently reduces a daughter's milk yield and immunity (Skibiel *et al*., 2018; Laporta *et al*., 2020).

Merino Wool

Mid-gestation nutrition affects lifetime wool follicle density (McCoard *et al*., 2000; Wuliji *et al*., 2003).

Mohair and Cashmere Goats

DNA methylation regulates secondary hair follicle cycling, affecting fibre quality (Du *et al*., 2019; Li *et al*., 2021).

Meat Goats

Maternal under-nutrition affects rumen development and growth (Sittiya *et al*., 2014); and epigenetic signatures support climate adaptation (Chen *et al*., 2018).

4. The Key Insight:

Epigenetics affects performance – Not the DNA that breeders base their selection on

Epigenetic effects:

- might **change performance**, in certain cases and sometimes dramatically
- but are mostly **not heritable beyond one or two generations** (Iqbal *et al*., 2015)
- and are driven largely by **environment, not genetics**

These facts are critical and the question to ask is:
"Does this threaten genetic selection and distort BLUP breeding values?"

5. Why BLUP and gBLUP automatically adjust for epigenetic effects

A common misunderstanding is that epigenetics undermines breeding values.

This is far from the truth as in reality:



The structure of BLUP is specifically designed to separate environmental noise (including epigenetics) from true genetic merit.

Even in during a time when epigenetics might be on the lips of many sceptics, this is the unsung strength of BLUP.

5.1 Contemporary group effects absorb possible epigenetic effects

The key to comparing the performance of animals remain their performance on equal ground against that of their peers, irrespective of the methodology used in the predictions. This concept therefore intercepts the performance of the animals based on the genes that are expressed in that specific environment.

It is therefore no surprise that BLUP EBVs are (and have always been) based on how animals perform **relative to their contemporaries**—same farm, same season, same management group (e.g. camp, supplement, feeding regime, etc.).

This is powerful because:

- If gestational nutrition was poor, this will be the case for all the calves/lambs/kids in the same group, and they are equally affected. BLUP treats this as an environmental effect, not genetics.
- If heat stress at lambing lead to depressed growth, the whole group shifts equally, but rankings within the group remain accurate.
- If a drought year reduces milk production, BLUP will subtract the group effect automatically. Similarly, the ranking within the group is what matters.

The extremely important concept is - Epigenetics mostly acts at the group level, and BLUP absorbs this effect cleanly.

5.2 Individual epigenetic effects are treated as "Environmental Noise"

Even when epigenetic differences occur **within** a contemporary group (different responses from individual animals):

- BLUP treats them like any other environmental deviation
- They do not distort breeding values unless they are repeated consistently across relatives. This means it only occurs within related animals (or genetic "lines").
- Any "once-off" effect is absorbed as residual variance (non-explained variance in performance).

BLUP focuses on repeatable family patterns, not temporary environmental variation.

5.3 BLUP tracks relatives and therefore gives a much more accurate picture of true genetic differences among animals based on genetic variation that are transferable across generations.

Even if a calf or lamb underperforms that might be due to epigenetic suppression (masking of its genes due to methylation):

- BLUP compares it to **parents, half-siblings, progeny, and extended relatives.** This should be understood very well as BLUP not only makes use of the relative performance of individuals, but also takes every related family member's performance in their respective contemporary groups into account.
- The system recognises when poor/strong performance is a one-time environmental result or only linked to one animal in the family and therefore not a genetic weakness/strength.

This is why: **A single weak calf from a good cow does not destroy her breeding value. Nor does a single outstanding calf suddenly make a poor cow a top breeder.**

The family signal remains intact because all relationships are considered and accounted for in BLUP breeding values.

5.4 gBLUP even goes beyond the strengths of conventional BLUP.

Genomic BLUP (gBLUP):

- measures true genetic relationships directly
- increases accuracy of predicting the true genetic merit in young animals
- therefore, captures genetic potential masked by environmental noise even better
- reduces bias from unequal management or variable maternal condi-



tions
- detects additive genetic merit even when epigenetics might suppress/emphasize phenotype

This makes gBLUP particularly powerful in herds with inconsistent management, drought stress, or varied nutritional conditions.

6. BLUP converts environmental noise, that might influence performance differences into fair Genetic Values

Epigenetics may mask genetic potential, but BLUP uncovers the genetic ranking by comparing animals fairly within their group.

Breeders worldwide, across dairy, beef, wool and mohair trust BLUP-based breeding values.

Given that the simple rules are followed, namely recording pedigrees and objective recordings of performance within properly defined contemporary groups, BLUP:

- adjusts for environmental effects causing performance differences
- adjusts for management interventions or adaptations
- adjusts for epigenetic differences that might cause performance differences
- tracks genetic merit through family connections
- finds the underlying genetic signal
- ranks animals accurately for selection

BLUP doesn't need to know why performance differs. It only needs to know when and where animals differ.

That simplicity is its power.

7. Practical Take-Home Messages for Livestock Breeders

7.1. Epigenetics is real and might be important to a variable degree.

Especially in:

- gestation
- wool and mohair follicle development
- early growth
- heat stress adaptation

7.2. Manage pregnant females carefully

Nutrition and stress avoidance pay off across the lifetime of offspring.

7.3. BLUP already protects your breeding program from epigenetic distortions

You can therefore select with confidence.

7.4. gBLUP strengthens accuracy even further

Especially in harsh climates, variable management conditions, or small contemporary groups.

7.5. Epigenetics explains biology but …

BLUP preserves genetics.

8. Key References

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WHILE YOU WAIT

You'll always know where things stand

RMIS send live order status updates to IDTrax. Farmer can check order status 24/7 on the IDTrax platform.
RMIS also send WhatsApp messages to the farmer directly as status on the order change. These statuses are:

- Order approved by the vet
- Payment confirmed — invoice ready
- Order shipped by DHL
- Arrived at your vet

Two systems, one smooth process

IDTrax

Where farmers place orders and keep their animals' vaccination records up to date.

RMIS

Where vets approve orders, send prescriptions to RMIS, and where everyone tracks delivery, scanning and sign-off.

Need help?

Email: helpdesk@idtrax.co.za

Phone: 051-410 0910

IDTrax

RMIS
RED MEAT INDUSTRY SERVICES

From Order to FMD Vaccination

A step-by-step guide to ordering, approving and tracking your animal FMD vaccines.

A GUIDE FOR FARMERS & VETS

STAGE 1

FMD Vaccine Order & Approval

1. Farmer place FMD vaccine order on **IDTrax**.
2. **IDTrax** send order request to the vet to confirm — the farmer can track progress on IDTrax.
3. The order appears on the vet's **RMIS** Portal; the vet gets a WhatsApp alert to review it.
4. The vet approves or declines the order on **RMIS**.
5. If approved, vet send prescription through his/her **RMIS** vet's Portal to **RMIS**.
6. **RMIS** Portal send an approval or decline back to **IDTrax**.
7. **Order status updates on IDTrax**.

Approved → RMIS notifies the farmer that payment can be made.

STAGE 2

Payment & Delivery

1. **RMIS** Portal will notify the farmer once the invoice are ready to be generated on the farmer's **RMIS** Portal.
2. Once payment reflects, **RMIS** approves the order for dispatch.
3. Approved orders go to **DHL** every Monday and Wednesday for packing.
4. **DHL** packs and delivers the order to vet — about 2 days.
5. WhatsApp keeps everyone posted: invoice prompt → "shipped" → "arrived at your vet."
6. **RMIS** Portal send live order status updates to **IDTrax**.
7. Farmer track order progress on **IDTrax**.

STAGE 3

FMD Vaccination & Sign-off

1. The vet scans the QR code on the vet's **RMIS Portal** when the vaccine is received at the practice.
2. The farmer scans the same QR code on their **RMIS App**.
3. The farmer record all animal vaccinations on **IDTrax**.
4. Once vaccination is complete, **IDTrax** send a detailed vaccination report with individual animal ID numbers to the vet.
5. The vet completes the declaration on the **RMIS** Portal.

IDTrax step · RMIS step · DHL / logistics

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Feedlot contact numbers

Here is a list of board members, successful breeders and sellers of Drakensberger weaners and feedlot buyers. Contact any of these individuals for advice or a second opinion or price.

NEAREST TOWN / REGION	DRAKENSBERGER FARMER / COUNCIL MEMBER	FEEDLOT BUYER / AGENT
FREE STATE		
Brandfort	Fanie van Dyk (Council member) 082 774 4952	Johan Botha - 082 856 4409 - Karan
Vrede	Rodney Neuman	Arend Munnick - 071 540 9913 - Various feedlots
Ficksburg	Henk Delport (Council member) 083 300 1131	Thys Fourie - 083 225 4146 -Beefmaster
Welkom	Christo Nel	Jan du Toit - 082 555 4221 - Marketer
Kroonstad	Gawie Roux	Michael Bezuidenhout - 073 370 7291
Harrismith	Jakob Tsabalala 083 974 9706	
Koppies		Pierre Boutser - 082 499 7997
Bethlehem		Dano van Zyl - 083 385 8285 - Vleissentraal marketer
MPUMALANGA		
Volksrust	Pikkie Uys (Council member) 082 857 5022	Arnold Durr – 082 902 3916 - Karan
Ermelo/Middelburg	Petrus Taljaard (Council member) 082 493 4137	Hein - 076 862 0797 - Buyer Karan David Harris 082 573 7979 – Buyer Rockdale Industrial (Pty) Ltd

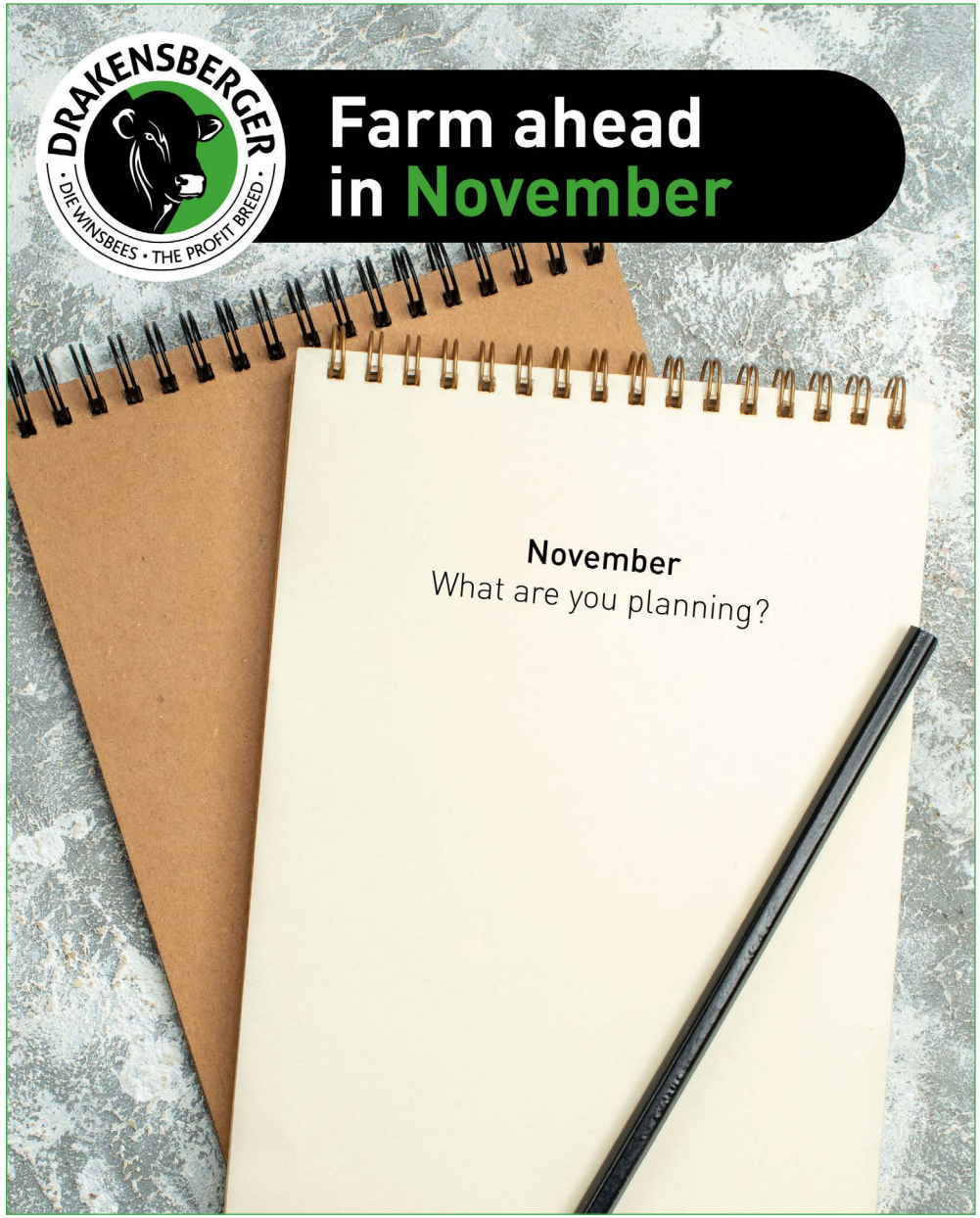
NEAREST TOWN / REGION	DRAKENSBERGER FARMER / COUNCIL MEMBER	FEEDLOT BUYER / AGENT
MPUMALANGA (continued)		
Amersfoort		Sakkie Fourie - 082 802 2125 - Various feedlots
Standerton		Pieter Swanepoel – 083 440 1423 - Chalmar and other Carel Davel - 082 331 1811 - BKB PM Swart - 083 948 3345 - OVK Gert du Preez - 082 449 5263
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Feedlot contact numbers
(continued)

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Louwna	Stuart Collen	
GAUTENG		
Potchefstroom	Jean vd Merwe (Council member) 082 719 7521	
Derby	Charlie van Schalkwyk	Barco van Niekerk - 072 384 9057 – Buyer & auctioneer Theo Coetzee - 082 600 8374
KAROO / SOUTHERN FREE STATE AND EASTERN CAPE		
Zastron	Liesel Foster (Council member) 082 373 2427	
Southern Free State & Eastern Cape		Pieter Klopper - 082 807 3752 - Karan Beef Kobus Barnard - 084 202 5205 - Pedriam Trust Blaine Dormehl - 081 889 9486 - Vleissentraal

If you have feedback about good prices, advice or good buyers, please contact us to add the names here, in order to equip our fellow farmers with the right advice and contacts.





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