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## PANNAR'S INCOMPARABLE GRAIN SORGHUM PACKAGE:

Harnessing the Potential of  
PAN 8625 and PAN 8816 Varieties

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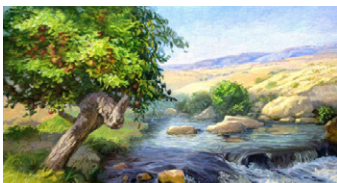
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**SCRIPTURE**



But I will bless the person who puts his trust in me. He is like a tree growing near a stream and sending out roots to the water. It is not afraid when hot weather comes, because its leaves stay green; it has no worries when there is no rain; it keeps on bearing fruit. – Jeremiah 17:7-8

**NUFARMER Africa**

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**FROM NUFARMER’S PEN**

Agriculture is a wonderful activity to be engaged in. It globally brings nations together through technology, business, exports and obviously food production expertise. Agriculture has its multitude of benefits, but (somehow, we are always confronted with ‘but’) it takes first, a deep-rooted heart and love for land and animals, the ‘wow’ experience to see your plants grow and bear fruit. Furthermore, the inner feeling of joy to know you are part of a sector who feed people and nations. But, on the downside, it takes courage these days to survive in agriculture; we are confronted with many obstacles, and it becomes a real hurdle race to get to the winning line at the end of every season! In our publication, our objective is to inform farmers (or producers, if you will) on current affairs such as movements in current international trading agreements regarding agricultural produce, local situations we have to either contend with, but preferably execute force on the powers to be to improve market relations internationally, rectify current governmental overseen internal financial ‘misshaps’, at local level see to improved municipal and provincial service delivery, and so the list goes on. Are we as agriculturists scared of taking a step forward to protect our own? By heavens, no; otherwise, we should not be farmers! Blessed and productive season to all our readers. Ed.





# 100 YEARS OF PEOPLE, PIONEERING AND 'MOVING FORWARD'

Rijk Zwaan, an international fruit and vegetable breeding company, is celebrating its first centenary. Since its foundation in 1924, Rijk Zwaan has grown into a global player active in more than 100 countries. The centenary celebrations kicked off on 1 July, the exact date that the company was originally founded. During the festivities, the King's Commissioner made an impressive announcement: Rijk Zwaan has been granted the Dutch honorary royal title 'Koninklijk'.

**"A**fter 100 years of entrepreneurship and innovation, one can say that Rijk Zwaan is of great importance for the future of humanity", says Jaap Smit, the King's Commissioner, during the festive kick-off of the breeding company's Centenary Celebration.

Ben Tax, one of Rijk Zwaan's board members, commented: "We are delighted to receive this title. It is a symbol of societal appreciation and underlines the longevity of our company. This is

the ultimate recognition of the efforts of everyone involved. Because, above all, people are the heart and soul of Rijk Zwaan."

### History shaped by growth

The company's rich history began when the founder, Mr Rijk Zwaan himself, opened a seed shop in Rotterdam in 1924. His focus on quality and innovation proved to be a recipe for success. For the first four decades, the emphasis was on the horticultural market in the Netherlands, but exports to neighbouring countries gradually increased.

In 1964, the first subsidiary was opened in Germany. This was followed by Rijk Zwaan France in 1982. From the 1990s onwards, the company expanded faster than anyone could have imagined. Today, Rijk Zwaan employs 4,000 people. The company is represented in over 100 countries through more than 30 subsidiaries in all four corners of the globe. The head office is in the Netherlands.

### Positive social impact

Due to the growing world population, especially in Africa and Asia, the demand for fruits and vegetables will continue to rise. Rijk Zwaan is staying ahead of this trend by developing fruit and vegetable varieties that are adapted to local climates, cultivation methods and consumer preferences.

In Tanzania, for example, the company has been breeding specifically for the African market for 15 years, and is now also increasingly focusing on the



**RIJK ZWAAN**  
100 YEARS

southeast Asian market from its facility in Vietnam. Board member Marco van Leeuwen explains: "By breeding improved local varieties, we aim to offer growers opportunities to obtain higher yields. Then, to boost their sales, we connect them with processing companies and retailers. Ultimately, this gives more people access to fresh and healthy fruits and vegetables. Seeds are not only the starting point for successful crops, but also for broader opportunities and possibilities."

### Continuous innovation

Every day, millions of people eat fruits and vegetables grown from Rijk Zwaan's seeds. That responsibility inspires the company to focus on the future and continue innovating for its customers and value chain partners. "Recently, we've expanded into breeding tropical crops. At our breeding facility in Brazil, we select fruit and vegetable varieties that thrive in a hot and humid climate with the occasional heavy rain shower," says board member Kees Reinink.

Additionally, earlier this year, Rijk Zwaan opened a new breeding facility in the Netherlands for berries: strawberries, blackberries and raspberries. Kees Reinink: "That's another example of how we continue pioneering and breaking new ground."

### The first day of the next century

The motto of 'moving forward' is firmly embedded in Rijk Zwaan's DNA. With its focus on innovation and progress, the company will continue to pursue a pioneering approach. The board members are grateful to all employees, customers and value chain partners for their contribution to the success so far, and are looking forward to many more fruitful years of collaboration and growth in the coming century.

**For more information contact:**  
**061 120 3082**







# Celebrating 100 years of Rijk Zwaan

It is a history filled with the stories of our people who developed an initial idea, made a change, or planted the very first seed that led to the innovations of Rijk Zwaan today. The motto of Rijk Zwaan, 'moving forward,' is ingrained in the company's DNA. With an eye for innovation and progress, Rijk Zwaan continues to pioneer and breaking new grounds.

We are very grateful for the contributions of employees, customers, and partners to its success and looks forward to many fruitful years of collaboration and growth. This is the first day of our new centenary!

Join us in celebrating our centenary!  
#rijkszwaan100years | [www.rijkszwaan.com/100years](http://www.rijkszwaan.com/100years)

**100 years of people, pioneering and moving forward**







# PANNAR'S INCOMPARABLE GRAIN SORGHUM PACKAGE:

## HARNESSING THE POTENTIAL OF PAN 8625 AND PAN 8816 HYBRID



Grain sorghum is a staple crop that stands resilient against harsh environmental conditions, offering a reliable yield where other crops might falter. For farmers looking to maximize their return on investment while maintaining flexibility across different growing conditions, Pannar's grain sorghum package offers a truly unparalleled solution. With a focus on innovation and adaptation, Pannar's sorghum hybrid, particularly the PAN 8625 and PAN 8816, represent the gold standard in modern agriculture.

### The Pannar Legacy: A Tradition of Excellence in Sorghum Breeding

Pannar sorghum breeding programme has been running since 1978 and is one of the oldest in the world. This legacy is built on a foundation of rigorous research, tapping into a vast pool of diverse genetic resources to create hybrids that are not only high-yielding but also adapted to the specific challenges of local environments. Pannar's sorghum breeding programme is a testament to our commitment to agricultural excellence, ensuring that our hybrids are engineered to deliver under various climatic conditions.

### PAN 8625: A Hybrid that Excels in Adaptation and Yield Performance

The PAN 8625 variety is a standout in Pannar's grain sorghum portfolio. This hybrid is widely adapted, meaning it performs exceptionally well across a range of environmental conditions, making it a versatile choice for farmers throughout South Africa.

#### Key Features of PAN 8625:

**Outstanding Yield Performance:** PAN 8625 consistently delivers high yields, making it a reliable option for farmers seeking to maximize productivity.

**Bitter Grain Type:** Classified as GH, this hybrid is known for its bitter grain, which has the added advantage of being bird-resistant – a significant benefit in regions where birds can cause substantial crop losses.

**Good Malt Quality:** Despite its bitterness, PAN 8625 offers good malt quality, making it a versatile choice for different markets.

#### Medium Plant Height with Good Standability:

This hybrid boasts a medium plant height, which contributes to its excellent standability – a critical factor in ensuring that the plants remain upright and are easy to harvest.

**Tolerance to Head Smut:** PAN 8625 has been bred with good tolerance to head smut, a common and often devastating sorghum disease, ensuring the crop's health and vitality throughout the growing season.

### PAN 8816: The hybrid for yield potential and stability

For farmers who prioritise yield potential and stability

across varying conditions, PAN 8816 is an excellent choice. This variety embodies the qualities that have made Pannar a trusted name in sorghum production.

#### Key Features of PAN 8816:

**Excellent Yield Potential and Stability:** PAN 8816 is designed to perform consistently across different environments, offering farmers peace of mind that their investment will pay off.

**Uniform Growth Habit and Good Standability:** This hybrid is not only productive but also aesthetically pleasing; with a uniform growth habit that ensures ease of management and harvesting.

**Large-Seeded Grain with High Bushel Weight:** The large, dense seeds of PAN 8816 contribute to its high bushel weight, making it a valuable addition to any grain production programme.

**Good General Leaf Disease Tolerance:** PAN 8816 has been developed with a strong tolerance to general leaf diseases, reducing the risk of crop loss and ensuring a healthy yield.

**Good Head Smut Tolerance:** Just like PAN 8625, PAN 8816 has been bred to resist head smut, making it an ideal choice for regions where this disease is prevalent.

**Open Head (Panicle) Design:** The open head characteristic of PAN 8816 facilitates effective spraying, ensuring that any necessary treatments are applied efficiently and thoroughly.

### A Grain Sorghum Package Tailored for Success

Pannar's grain sorghum package is not just about

>>> Continued on page 8



"I have always farmed sorghum.  
Pannar has good hybrids  
and is always consistent."



# MAKE OUR GRAIN SORGHUM A PART OF YOUR SUCCESS STORY

Pannar's sorghum hybrids offer excellent yield potential, wide area adaptability and environmental stability. The agronomically-balanced package offers sweet and bitter grain types, with good malt quality. Here's what Dawie Smallberger has to say about it: "Pannar has good hybrids with consistently stable yields. We know our Pannar sales representatives, and they do the very best for us. If we have a problem on the farm, they come to us. They give us good service."

**FARMER:** Dawie Smallberger

**FARMING ENTITY:** Allendale

**AREA:** Koppies, Free State

**CROP:**  
Grain Sorghum

**PANNAR HYBRID USED:**  
PAN 8625 (Grain Sorghum)

**PANNAR REPRESENTATIVE:**

Nelia Louw  
083 455 6909  
Parys/Sasolburg



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providing high-quality seeds; it's about offering a comprehensive agronomic solution that maximizes yield and stability while adapting to the unique challenges of different growing environments. The PAN 8625 and PAN 8816 hybrids exemplify this approach, each bringing a suite of benefits that can be tailored to the specific needs of the farmer.

**Agronomic Best Practices with Pannar's Sorghum Hybrids**

To get the most out of PAN 8625 and PAN 8816, it's crucial to adhere to some key agronomic practices. For instance, phosphorus application should be carefully managed. Generally, phosphorus is applied in a band, but if the required quantity exceeds the amount typically applied in a fertiliser mixture, adjustments should be made. Optimal phosphorus concentration is approximately 17 mg P kg<sup>-1</sup> when applying between 5 and 11 kg P ha<sup>-1</sup> at planting. Depending on the soil's clay content, you may need to adjust phosphorus application to maintain soil health and crop performance.

Potassium management is another critical aspect. In sandy soils with less than 10% clay, potassium requirements should be calculated according to crop needs (4 kg K ton<sup>-1</sup>).

For medium-textured soils, aiming for a concentration of at least 80 mg K kg<sup>-1</sup> is recommended. Potassium is typically placed in the band using fertiliser mixtures, but care should be taken not to exceed recommended levels to prevent nutrient imbalances.

Weed control is vital, particularly during the early growth stages of sorghum, where the plants are most vulnerable. Pannar's hybrids, with their robust growth and disease tolerance, give farmers a head start, but maintaining a clean field through mechanical or chemical weed control methods is essential to ensure optimal crop development.



**Pest and Disease Management: Safeguarding Your Investment**

Grain sorghum, like all crops, is susceptible to pests and diseases. However, Pannar's hybrids are bred with disease resistance in mind, significantly reducing the risk of major infestations. For instance, both PAN 8625 and PAN 8816 offer good tolerance to head smut – a disease that can devastate sorghum crops if left unchecked. Additionally, PAN 8816's good general leaf disease tolerance helps to protect against common sorghum diseases such as leaf spot and rust.

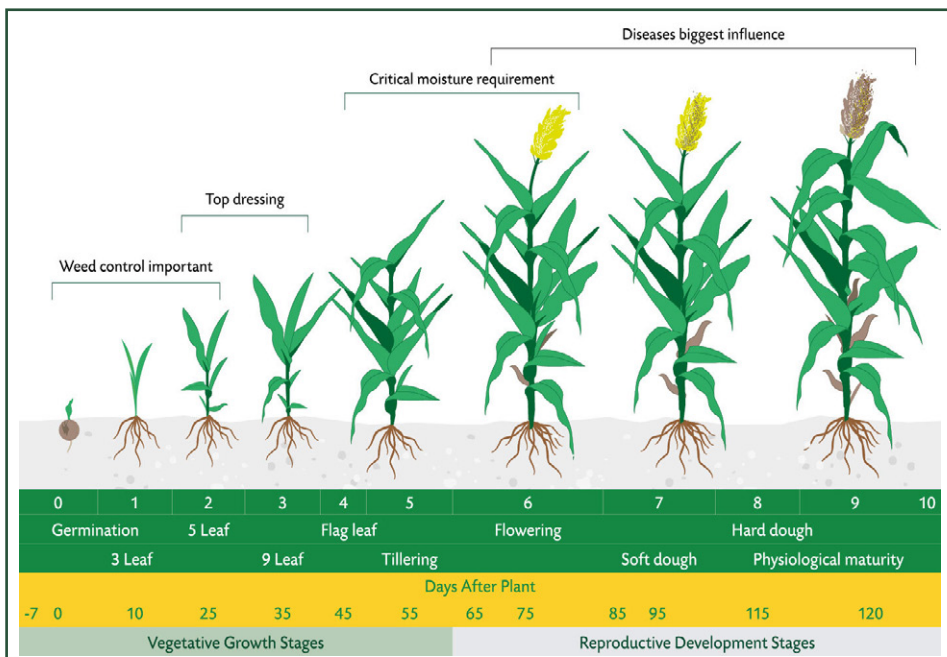
In terms of pest control, vigilance is key. Sorghum midge, aphids, and stalk borers are some of the primary pests that can affect grain sorghum. Regular monitoring and timely application of insecticides, as per the manufacturer's instructions, will help keep these pests under control.

**Harvesting and Post-Harvest Management**

When it comes to harvesting, mechanical combining is the method of choice for grain sorghum. The robust standability of Pannar's hybrids ensures that the plants remain upright, making the harvesting process more efficient and reducing the risk of grain loss.

After harvesting, grading and marketing are the final steps in the production process. Pannar's sorghum hybrid, with their good malt quality and high bushel weight, are well-regarded in the market, ensuring a good return on your investment.

For more information contact Pannar on [www.pannar.com](http://www.pannar.com)



**PANNAR'S COMMITMENT TO AGRICULTURAL SUCCESS**

At the heart of Pannar's grain sorghum package is a commitment to excellence in every aspect of crop production. From the careful selection and breeding of our hybrids to the comprehensive support provided to farmers, Pannar ensures that you have everything you need to achieve outstanding results. Pannar sources their germplasm from a broad pool of diverse genetics and then test it rigorously in their local evaluation programme to ensure it suits local growing conditions. The Pannar® brand grain sorghum package maintains an excellent record of performance. The PAN 8625 and PAN 8816 hybrids are more than just seeds – they are the culmination of decades of research, innovation, and a deep understanding of what it takes to succeed in agriculture.

By choosing Pannar, you are not just planting a crop; you are investing in a future of agricultural success, supported by a partner who understands the unique challenges and opportunities of South African farming.





# WHICH VEGETABLES TO PLANT, WHEN?



**T**hink before you plan to grow vegetables. It is essential to plan your vegetable production so that you will know which crop to plant and which actions to perform at specific times.

One form of good planning is to determine what your market or community preferences and needs are before you decide what to plant in a specific season. Make a list of all the vegetables that you can produce and market effectively. This will help you decide which vegetables to plant and how much of each crop.

On the other hand, some vegetables are not so easy to grow. Cucumber, for instance, easily attracts pests and diseases and is also generally more difficult to grow successfully. Other vegetables are easier to grow as they attract less pests and diseases, like spinach or marog. Therefore, establish which pests are often found on vegetables and fruit in your area.

For the communal or home gardener, plan before the time which vegetables you are going to plant in each bed. Make notes of when each vegetable is to be sown and the number of sowings of each. Mark the rows you wish to assign for each vegetable, for example: One row of tomatoes, 40 cm apart; one row of peas, 40 cm apart; one row of beetroot, 20 cm apart; one row of carrots, 30 cm apart; two rows of onions, 20 cm apart; two rows of spinach, 20 cm apart.

If you know what you are going to plant, you won't have to guess which seeds to buy when you arrive at the store.

Another key point of planning is the height that the plants will grow. To maximise the exposure to sunlight and air flow, it is best to plant the smallest vegetables in the front, the medium in the middle and the tallest at the back.

In your planning you must make provision for the time that the seedlings will have to grow in the seed trays before it can be transplanted. For most

vegetables you will have to sow the seeds about six weeks before they are to be planted outdoors.

Another issue in your planning and designing is to determine the harvesting dates of the different plants. A critical period in planning is when the seasons overlap – harvesting of one season's crops and planting of the next. Delays may cause breaks in continuity.

You also must estimate how many packets (or kilograms for the large vegetable producer) of seed or seedlings you will need and know how to select the most suitable cultivar or type of vegetable.

Consult your seedling grower. But, everything you need to know to guide you in your planning can be found on the seed packet. The seed packets of the different seed companies will help you to determine all the necessary information on the seed packet. On the front side of the packet you will get the company name, a picture of the type of vegetable and the cultivar. If you turn the packet around, you will get all the necessary information to help you in planning what to plant when and how. It will tell you whether you can sow directly or make use of seed trays or a seedbed, as well as the sowing depth and the distance between plants and between rows. It also gives information about moisture of the seedlings as well as after transplanting, days to harvest, and how big the vegetable must be before harvesting.

From the seed packets you can thus gather all the information that you need to draw up a planting guide to help you in the planting process. Free sowing guides are also available from nurseries.

When your planting guide has been prepared, you will not have to worry about remembering when you should perform the various tasks.

Plan ahead! Good planning of your garden will help

that you do not use all the beds in your vegetable garden at the same time to sow or plant a single crop. It is better to have smaller crops of different vegetables every now and then instead of big crops of a single vegetable occasionally. Careful planning will avoid this.

In your efforts to maintain continuity in the production of vegetables throughout the year, it is very important to realise that there must be a balance between harvesting existing crops on the one hand and planting new vegetables on the other. Your plan should allow for staggered sowings of fast-growing and short-term vegetables such as lettuce, bush beans, carrot, beetroot, cabbage and salad.

Also consider crops with a long growing season and plan accordingly. These include some cauliflower cultivars, spinach, onion, pumpkin, some squash cultivars, Swiss chard and tomatoes.

Note the average time between sowing and germination, then add them to the estimated growing period through to the completion to the harvest to get a reasonably accurate idea of when beds will be ready for the following crops. You will then have a good idea of how long a specific vegetable crop will be occupying a bed in your garden. This information can then be used in future planning.

After two or three years of recording the location of various vegetable cultivars, it will simplify crop rotation. Good planning will also help you to avoid gaps in your production where you don't have anything to harvest. Good planning will save you money, time and labour in producing crops throughout the year.

Now that your plan is ready, it is time to stop dreaming and begin with the next step in the management of your vegetable garden, namely implementing your plan. **Source: Growing Vegetables: W T Nell and D M Du Plessis (UFS).**





The ideal weaning age appears to be approximately 12 weeks, provided the weaning mass is around 45 percent to the mature ewe's mass at mating.

# TAKE CARE WHEN WEANING LAMBS

In addition to lambs being divided according to sex they must also be divided into two groups according to mass. The lightest can be given better grazing or supplementary feed. This is more cost efficient than feeding the whole lot according to the needs of the weakest lamb.

At weaning, dung samples should be taken from about 10 lambs in a flock (mark these lambs with a spot on their heads) to determine whether dosing is necessary or not. If dosing is required, dose with a broad-spectrum worm remedy and take second dung samples from the marked group of lambs 10 days later to do a dung egg reduction test to establish whether the dosing remedy was effective. Weigh the marked group regularly to ensure that the required growth rate is maintained (approximately 150 – 200 g/lamb/day). If not, then a low level of supplementary feed may be provided.

### Dosing

Strategic summer dosing using an effective remedy must be done when animals are moved to stubble lands in December (winter rainfall areas) to limit the spread of parasites to the grazing, and possibly also in February (decide, on the strength of dung egg count). It will help to limit parasite infestation later in the year.



Dung samples from all marked groups in all flocks should be taken four weeks after the first rains when conditions are most suitable for the hatching of parasite eggs in order that the level of parasite contamination can be monitored.

Approximately 50 percent of diarrhoea problems are caused by infection of the digestive system, especially bacterial infection. There is a suspicion that diarrhoea, particularly in the rainy months when grazing is actively growing, sometimes is caused by allergic reaction or infection due to larvae in the digestive system.

These animals can even have a low egg count (below 100). It is recommended that a few of the infected animals be dosed with an effective worm remedy, and if the diarrhoea stops, then the whole flock. The new capsules are particularly effective in killing the larvae. There is evidence that many of the sheep that have diarrhoea one year will get it again the following year and there is perhaps merit in these animals being culled.

The efficiency of various remedies is greatly increased if the animals are starved for 12 to 24 hours before dosing. Ewes in late pregnancy and lactating ewes should not be starved. These animals should be grazed on poor grazing for 36 hours before dosing and 36 hours after dosing. This will reduce feed intake by 50 percent. Sheep should not be dosed directly off succulent grazing as the high water content of this grazing makes the remedy flow through the digestive system too quickly for it to react properly.

It seems as though in 30 percent of sheep dosed the remedy goes directly into the abomasums and not into the rumen due to closing of the oesophageal groove, particularly when large volumes are dosed. The effectiveness of the remedy is thus considerably

reduced. In 30 percent of the other sheep, a portion of the remedy lands up in the abomasums.

To prevent the groove closing the tip of the dosing gun should be placed behind the bridge of the sheep's tongue so that the remedy is dispensed directly into the throat. The use of highly concentrated remedies helps avoid losses due to the lower volumes involved. It should also be considered to divide large volumes into two, by adjusting the dose gun to about 10 ml and giving two 10-ml doses one after the other, instead of one 20-ml dose.

This will also avoid loss of the remedy from the corner of the mouth of the sheep and ensure easier swallowing of the remedy. **Source: Voermol/BKB.**





# EASTERN CAPE COMMUNAL SHEEP FARMERS EXCELL

A very successful inter-regional flock competition was held by the National Wool Growers' Association of SA (NWGA) in Tarkastad recently. The enthusiasm and proud display of animals showcased the passion and commitment of communal farmers toward their development and progress.



The selected animals, chosen from regional flock levels, were indeed of the best quality that the communal areas of the Eastern Cape have to offer. A similar number of entries as in previous years were received, totalling 102, divided into 24 entries per ewe category and 30 in the ram category. According to judges Kleintjie Pienaar and Charl van der Merwe from BKB, these animals showed vast improvement compared to last year.

## Results

### Ewe Lambs:

The lamb category was dominated by Mount Fletcher, who took 1st, 2nd, and 5th places. Sterkspruit took 3rd place, and NWGA national vice chairman, Mr. Zolani Tsheko's lamb stood tall in 4th place.

- Winner:** Nkosana Kambi, Mount Fletcher (Reg. 24)
- Runner up & 5th place:** VMB Shearing Shed, Mount Fletcher (Reg. 24)
- 3rd place:** K Khayingana, Sterkspruit (Reg. 25)
- 4th place:** Zolani Tsheko, Ntabathemba (Reg. 23)

### Two-tooth Ewes

Sterkspruit proudly presented their two-tooth ewes and reaped the rewards for 1st, 2nd, and 4th places in this category. Lady Frere achieved 3rd place and Peddie 5th place.

- Winner:** V Hashtag, Sterkspruit (Reg. 25)
- Runner up & 4th place:** M Tshewula, Sterkspruit (Reg. 25)
- 3rd place:** M Manqola, Lady Frere (Reg. 23)
- 5th place:** V Maxhwane, Peddie (Reg. 21)

### 4-8-tooth Ewes

The ewe category showcased animals in the 4-year age range, drawing 24 entries. The judges were impressed with the winning animals, predominantly from Mount Fletcher, which achieved 1st, 2nd, 4th, and 5th places, while Lady Frere took 3rd place.

- Winner:** T Tsoananyana, Mount Fletcher (Reg. 24)
- Runner up & 4th place:** Duba, Mount Fletcher (Reg. 24)
- 3rd place:** A Siwela, Lady Frere (Reg. 23)
- 5th place:** VMB Shearing Shed, Mount Fletcher (Reg. 24)

### Rams

The ram category, which had the most entries, displayed animals of good quality and conformity. The winning ram, as in previous years, came from Sterkspruit, with newcomer Bolotwa (Queenstown) taking 2nd, 3rd, and 5th places. Mount Fletcher secured 4th place in this category.

- Winner:** TS Lekhula, Sterkspruit (Reg. 25)
- Runner up, 3rd, and 5th places:** G Soga, Bolotwa, Queenstown (Reg. 23)

### 4th place:

Jukuda, Mount Fletcher (Reg. 24)  
The organisers of the event congratulated Mount Fletcher and Sterkspruit, who have consistently produced higher-quality animals and won numerous awards.

With the 2nd and 5th placements in the lamb category and another 5th place in the four-to-eight tooth ewes' category, VMB Shearing Shed from Mount Fletcher was announced as the overall winner.

The four-to-eight tooth ewe belonging to Mr. T Tsoananyana was selected as the sheep of the day, clearly demonstrating why she won the overall competition. **Source: NWGA**



Judge Kleintjie Pienaar looking at wool quality of 2-tooth ewe

Sheep of the day - belongs to Mr. Dominique Tsoananyana, Mount Fletcher



4-6 tooth ewe on display during the competition



5 top rams



5 top ewe lambs





# BECOME MORE SUCCESSFUL WITH BEEF: PERFORMANCE TESTING AND DATA UNLOCK

What makes one producer more successful than another? In any business, there are always those that are more successful than others, and this also applies to farming and in particular beef production. Fact of the matter is there is often no straightforward answer to this question since there may be several factors that play a role when it comes to successful beef production.



**Dr Ben Greyling, ARC Irene**

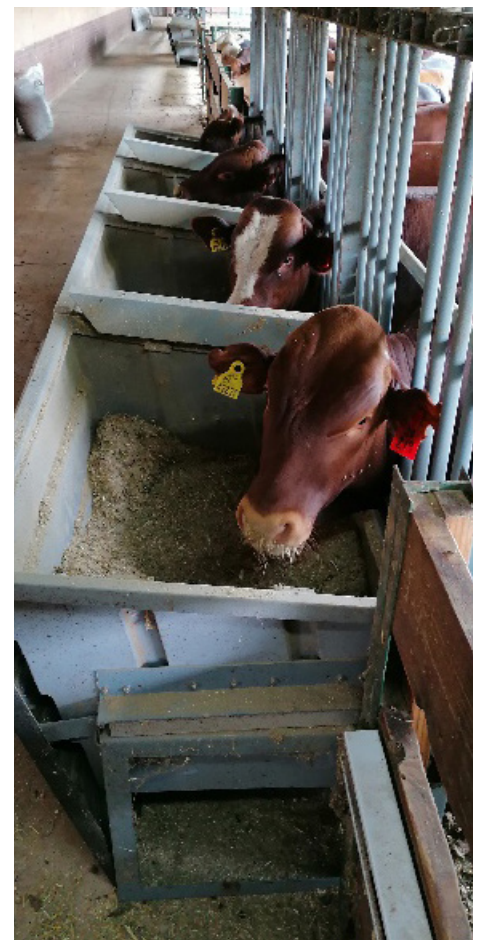
### SA producers

In South Africa producers are faced by many challenges, including limited resources, animal diseases, escalating input costs and fluctuating market prices, to name but a few.

Successful producers will often tell you that you need to separate the opportunities from the challenges and one of our biggest opportunities is the fact that the demand for beef is increasing largely because of the ever-increasing expansion of our population and our affluent consumer market.

Beef producers thus must be ingenious and pull all the tricks from the hat to ensure they are profitable, stay competitive and sustainable under this scenario.

Studies have shown that the local commercial sector is competitive despite the challenges faced by the industry and one of the factors that contribute to this is our rich and diverse gene pools. It is also a fact that there are huge disparities in the production figures which poses enormous potential for improvement.





Improvement through performance testing is one of the technologies, often very basic and simple, that can address these disparities and enhance sustainability, profitability and stability within the beef production industry. The best approach is to start with the basics, which includes focusing on the reproduction efficiency of our herds, applying the optimum production system for the environment and keeping in mind the required infrastructure and equipment necessary.

#### Back to the Basics

The key concept here is the fact that one cannot “see” performance, it must be measured and once measured, only then will you know whether an animal or herd, is performing well or not.

Even more so, you will not know whether you are making money or losing it! This can be applied for a whole range of performance/production traits, including birth- and weaning weight of a calve, inter-calving period of his dam (reproduction rate one of the most important traits), age at first calving etc.

Once these figures are available, the information can be used to select the superior performing animals, which are the ones that will also be more profitable. The market also tends to pay more for performance-tested animals and in this regard, performance testing also serves as a value-adding marketing instrument.

#### Breeding goals

A successful breeding plan with goals can be described as one that provides for the breeding, identification and utilization of genetically superior animals in order to improve the production and performance of animals. These goals should also be in line with the requirements of the market he serves, the environment and available resources. The producers should know what is expected from him in view of the above and his goals should also be in line with his market requirements.

A breeding goal will even include the breed to be farmed with. Over many decades, systems and technologies have been developed to assess the performance of animals and to generate useful information, which, if correctly applied, will assist the producer to enhance his profitability and thus sustainability.

Research has shown the positive return on investment around the world and South Africa is no exception. Production and efficiency figures have been shown to increase over many years for a range of different breeds, whilst efficiency of improvement have also been shown to differ among breeds.

#### Benefits of animal recording

Ideally, the entire beef production value chain should benefit from animal improvement through recording, from the consumer, the farmer, communities and even government.

Some of the primary indicators of the successful application of animal improvement includes more and better-quality animal products at reduced cost; increased production and profit margins for the producer and eventually the entire industry; increased market access and stability; development of our rural communities; job creation and sustainable development and last but not the least, enhanced food security.

This can only be achieved if all the major stakeholders of industry interact and cooperate. The Agricultural Research Council (ARC) is one of the major stakeholders of this industry and has been mandated by government to operate and manage the Performance Recording and Improvement Schemes to the benefit of all sectors of animal production.

To this effect, the National Beef Cattle Recording and Improvement Scheme has extensive experience in this field, having started over six decades ago to assist our country’s farmers to excel in their enterprises.

The main aim of the Scheme is to assist producers to enhance their production efficiency and eventually profitability, a goal that should benefit the entire industry.

**By: Dr Ben Greyling, Animal Production, ARC, Irene, [ben@arc.agri.za](mailto:ben@arc.agri.za)**





# SOURCING ONLY CAGE-FREE EGGS IN GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN



**Poultry in a cage – a horrendous sight!**

The company, which sources approximately a quarter of a billion shell eggs worldwide per year, will partner with Humane Society International and other animal protection organizations, including Compassion in World Farming and The Humane League, to implement this new animal welfare and corporate social responsibility policy. HSI applauds Sodexo for this significant step forward.

Chetana Mirle, director of HSI Farm Animals, said: “Consumers around the globe care about the way animals are treated in food production and we praise Sodexo for taking these concerns seriously by committing to transitioning to a 100 percent cage-free egg supply chain. With its reach in 80 countries, Sodexo’s egg policy will improve the lives of millions of animals and sends a clear message to the global egg industry that cage-free production systems are the way forward. We look forward to working with more companies on similar policies.”

Michel Francheschi, Group SVP Supply Management at Sodexo, said: “Our objective is to work collaboratively with our partners to support and contribute to the progressive transformation of the whole industry. We will gather all the actors around the table in order to accompany the conversion and the evolution of the local industry so that by 2025, we will be able to source cage free eggs from local producers in each country where we operate.”

Egg-laying hens are often confined for their whole lives in wire battery cages, so small that they cannot even fully stretch their wings. The use of conventional battery cages for laying hens is banned or being phased out under laws or regulations throughout the EU, five U.S. states, New Zealand and Bhutan. The majority of states in

India, the world’s third largest egg producer, have declared that the use of battery cages violates the country’s animal welfare legislation, and the country is debating a national ban.

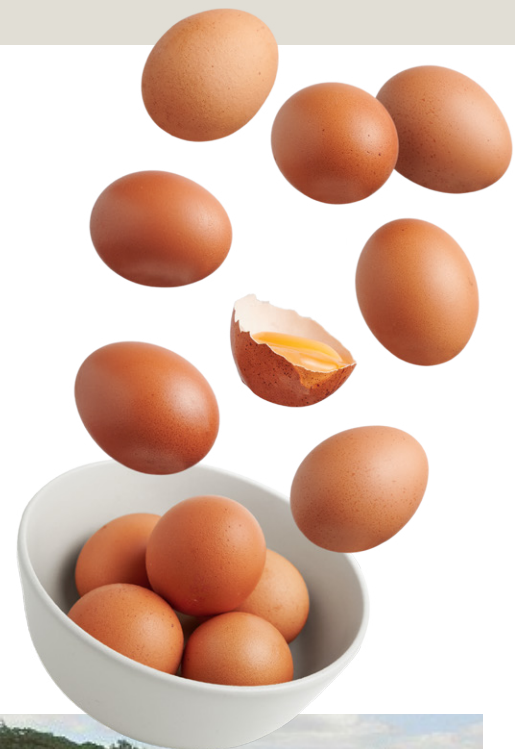
A growing number of companies that have also committed to sourcing only cage-free eggs in their global supply chains, including Unilever, Grupo Bimbo and Nestlé are joined by Sodexo. More than 60 food companies - including McDonald’s, Burger King and Walmart, have also announced a complete transition to cage-free eggs in their U.S. supply chains. **Sodexo**



**Poultry raised outside the cage. Still, poultry can be raised in a poultry house where they are not cooped up together in a wire cage but able to move around and grow well.**



The world’s leading Quality of Life services company, Sodexo with operations in 80 countries, announced that it will source only cage-free eggs for its global liquid and shell egg supply chain by 2025.

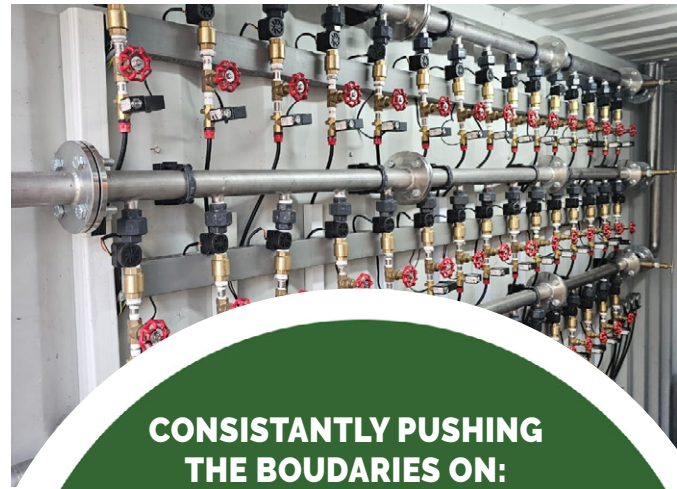






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# HITACHI CONSTRUCTION MACHINERY AFRICA— TRANSFORMING AGRICULTURE WITH CUTTING-EDGE CONSTRUCTION MACHINERY

## Unveils New Product Lines in Southern Africa



Riaan Carstens,  
Director of Sales  
& Marketing  
at Hitachi  
Construction  
Machinery  
Africa

In the rapidly evolving world of agriculture, construction machines such as front-end loaders and backhoes are crucial for enhancing farm efficiency and productivity. These versatile machines play a pivotal role in soil preparation, irrigation system installation, and farm infrastructure development. By reducing the time and labor required for these tasks, they allow farmers to focus on maximizing crop yields. As farms expand and climate challenges grow, the need for reliable, high-performance construction machinery becomes increasingly vital, making these tools indispensable for modern farming operations.

### Innovative Solutions: Minimizing Downtime, Maximizing Profit and Safety

Hitachi Construction Machinery Africa is stepping up its game in Southern Africa with the introduction of two new product lines: the Zaxis-7G series and the Shinrai-Power BX100 backhoe loader. These new offerings are a strategic enhancement to the company's already robust lineup of construction

machinery, tailored to meet the diverse needs of the construction, quarrying, forestry and agriculture as well as mining industries. Both product lines reflect Hitachi's commitment to innovation, customer-focused solutions, and environmental responsibility, addressing the evolving demands of the industry while prioritizing sustainability.

Riaan Carstens, Director of Sales & Marketing at Hitachi Construction Machinery Africa, underscores the importance of these new launches: "We live in an increasingly turbulent economic environment. We believe these new product offerings, with their focus on high productivity and lower Total Cost of Ownership, will allow us to continue helping our customers remain competitive."

### Zaxis-7G Series: A Leap Forward in Excavation Technology

The Zaxis-7G series represents a major advancement in the evolution of excavators, building on the strengths of the previous -5G models. Engineered to meet the rigorous demands of key market sectors, these excavators offer enhanced reliability, durability, and operational efficiency. The Zaxis-7G models are designed to perform consistently under challenging conditions, with improvements that not only increase operational efficiency but also contribute to a noticeable reduction in fuel consumption – a crucial factor in today's cost-sensitive environment. Carstens emphasizes the significance of these advancements: "The enhancement of the -7G line up is a strategic move to address the evolving demands of the industry. By focusing on increased safety and

productivity, we are not only responding to the critical need for machines to perform more efficiently but also ensuring the well-being of their operators with the latest ergonomic enhancements of the new -7G Cabins."

The latest "R-specification" lineup includes the ZX490LCR-7G, ZX690LCR-7G, and ZX890LCR-7G, designed for the mining and quarrying industries, as well as the ZX350LC & LCH-7G models, which are engineered to handle challenging construction environments. With advancements in engine technology and hydraulic systems, the Zaxis-7G series is more precise in its operations and significantly





more fuel-efficient. This focus on efficiency and safety makes the Zaxis-7G range an unparalleled choice for businesses looking to invest in top-tier excavation equipment.

**Shinrai-Power BX100 Backhoe Loader: Versatility and Performance in One Machine**

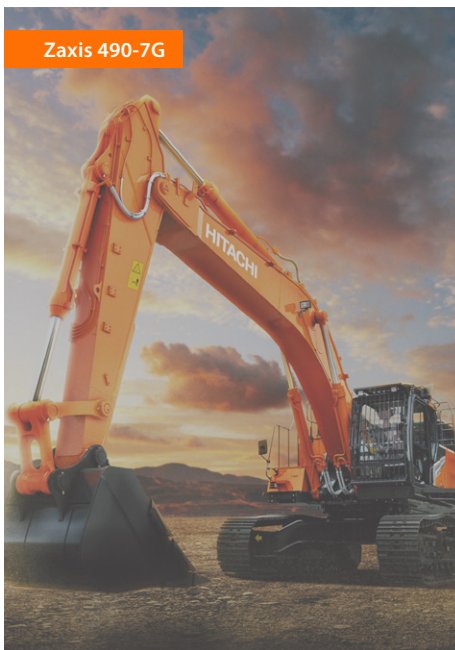
The Shinrai-Power BX100 backhoe loader is a significant addition to Hitachi Construction Machinery Africa’s portfolio, blending versatility, performance, and safety. This robust machine is designed to tackle a wide range of tasks with reduced fuel consumption, ensuring cost-effective operation. Its exceptional durability and adaptability make it suitable for diverse applications, reflecting Hitachi’s commitment to providing solutions that meet the industry’s evolving needs.

Carstens notes the strategic importance of this new offering: “The backhoe market is indeed a significant segment within the construction equipment industry, reflecting a substantial demand for these versatile machines. With the introduction of our BX100 to the Southern African market, we will be a key player to be reckoned with.”

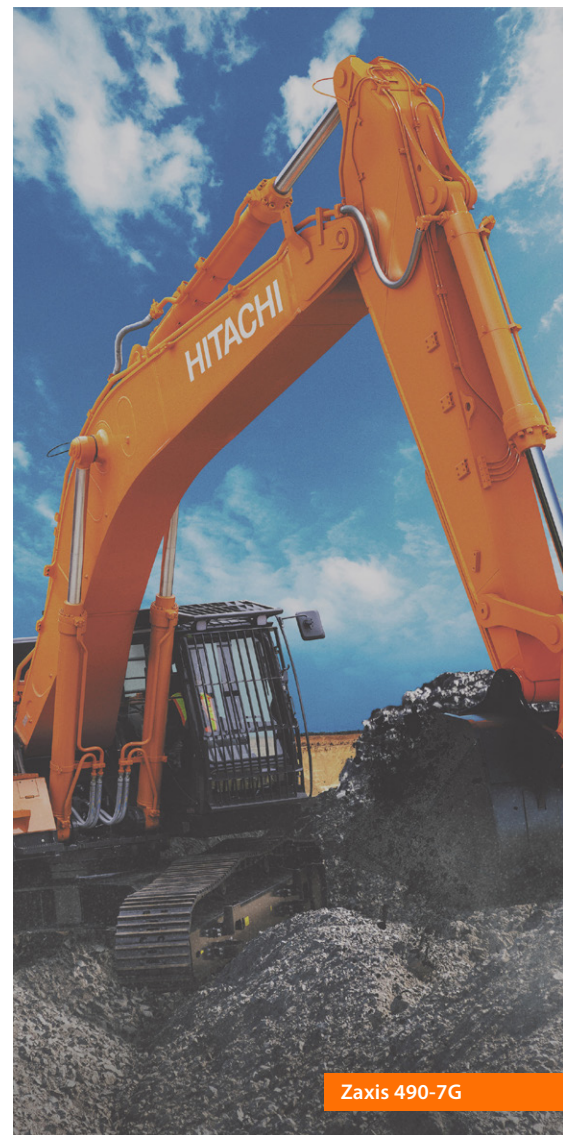
Powered by a 99HP engine and an operating weight of 8,680kg, the BX100 is designed to enhance productivity and user comfort. Its low-maintenance design not only reduces downtime but also lowers long-term operational costs, making the BX100 an economical choice for any business. The integration of a reliable transmission and axles ensures consistent performance under demanding conditions, while a robust hydraulic system provides the precise control necessary for complex tasks, significantly boosting digging power and overall productivity.

**Strategic Focus on Southern African Markets**

Hitachi Construction Machinery Africa’s emphasis on the Southern African market highlights the region’s growth potential. The introduction of the Zaxis-7G series and the Shinrai-Power BX100 is



Zaxis 490-7G



Zaxis 490-7G

a direct response to the unique challenges and opportunities presented by the local market. These machines are designed to meet the high standards of safety, performance, and cost-efficiency required in the region’s diverse operational environments. With a focus on innovation and customer satisfaction, Hitachi Construction Machinery Africa is poised to make a significant impact on the construction and mining industries in Southern Africa, contributing to the region’s economic development.

Carstens concludes with a vision for the future: “As operational costs are a major concern, integrating maintenance and safety practices has proven effective in reducing expenses, ensuring that our machines are not only safer and more productive but also more economical to operate in the long term. The commitment to these enhancements reflects a deep understanding of the Voice of the Customer.”

**Contact Information**  
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Live Demonstration of the new machines at the launch event







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# MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT ANTIBIOTICS IN FOOD-PRODUCING ANIMALS

It is vital to address concerns about antibiotics in food production and link to antibiotic resistance in bacteria.

Growing scientific concerns over the use of antibiotics in food-producing animals and the perceived link to resistance to antibiotics in bacteria that affect human health are real and need to be addressed. While the science is not definitive about the role of antibiotics used in livestock in furthering the development of resistance in human pathogenic bacteria, the collective livestock industries, scientists and policymakers must jointly develop long-term solutions that protect public health and enhance food security and animal welfare.

This is according to Prof. Moritz Van Vuuren, a specialist veterinary microbiologist, co-chair of the South African Antibiotic Stewardship Programme (SAASP) and Professor Emeritus, University of Pretoria. "Understanding the origins of antibiotic resistance and what this means for human and animal disease management is fundamental to safeguarding our future health across all species and food security.

At the same time we must ensure that farmers are able to produce enough affordable food in a sustainable manner while safeguarding animal health and welfare and enhancing food safety.

"In terms of food production, we have a responsibility to keep animals healthy and to treat sick animals while balancing the long-term effectiveness of antibiotics for human use. Ultimately this is not just about animal health, but about the health of humans, animals and the environment. It is about the creation of safe, nutritious food that ensures the health of people, protects animal welfare and the planet's limited resources," says Prof van Vuuren.

### Some Myths and Facts about antibiotics in food production

**Myth:** Antibiotic use in animals is leading to the emergence of resistance bacteria that infect humans.

**Fact:** Some bacteria are naturally resistant to antibiotics or can develop resistance through mutations or by acquiring resistant genes from other bacteria.

**Myth:** Antibiotics should only be used to treat an animal after it gets sick.

**Facts:** Antibiotics are one tool among many that veterinarians and farmers use to protect animal health and well-being that includes preventing the spread of diseases among herds and flocks.

**Myth:** Farmers use antibiotics all of the time and however they see fit.

**Fact:** Antibiotics are just one treatment option that farmers consider.

**Myth:** Antibiotics wouldn't be needed if animal husbandry improved.

**Fact:** Bacteria and other microbes are found everywhere in the environment, and it is virtually impossible to prevent animals from being exposed to disease.

**Myth:** Organic producers don't use antibiotics.

**Fact:** Overall antibiotic use is lower in organic units but antibiotics are still used to treat bacterial infections. Failure to treat a sick animal would be ethically unacceptable in terms of animal welfare.

There is no scientific evidence to suggest a difference in nutritional content between conventional and organic protein or a difference between the safety of the two. It does however come down to choice and consumers must have options to purchase the most nutritious food they can afford. For many, it's not a realistic possibility to eat organically produced food due to access and cost. **Source: U.P.**



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