



Basic principles for the successful cattle farmer

by Charl van Rooyen, Tuli Association

South Africa is a country known for the wide variety of commodities produced for the local and also the export market. Some geographical areas are suitable for the specialised production of a specific product, such as pineapple cultivation in the Eastern Cape and small livestock in the Karoo, producing wool, mohair and meat. But in spite of this, there is no rule of thumb to limit a specific branch of farming to one region only. An excel-

lent example is chicken farming to produce eggs and/or meat, which can be practiced just about anywhere.

Why do you farm with cattle?

- Firstly, to make a living, of course. Then also because one is fond of cattle.
- What are the basic requirements to be a good cattle farmer?
- Know the resources of your farm to ensure it can sustain cattle –

80% of your land should consist of veld/grassland;

- Practice strict veld management to avoid over-grazing;
- Divide the grazing into camps and provide water troughs in every camp (doing it where four camps meet, requires only one line); and
- Invest in handling facilities (neck clamp, sorting kraal, cattle crush, dipping-tank);

The bottom line of successful cattle farming is to be a good grass manager. You will only be a successful cattle farmer if you manage your grazing sustainably.

Managing your cow herd

- Cows are your factory on the farm.
- If your factory is not well-managed or running smoothly, you won't make money.

You must know your cows well:

- Identify your cows (but don't give them individual names); do the following:
 - Fit ear tags;
 - Cut specific ear notches;
 - Do branding using your specific, registered code; and
 - Do proper record-keeping.

Mating season (Don't let your bull run the whole year with your cows)

- Allow the bulls 90 days with the cows; and
- 63 days with heifers.



Amelia Tulis



Don't let your bull walk with your cows for the whole year. Only allow your bull to walk with your cows for 90 days and 63 days with your heifers.

Glen Heath Tuli Stud

The calving season

- In sequence with nature (the rule of thumb is ± 6 weeks before the first summer rain);
- Select your early calves - your more fertile cows will calve earlier; and
- Keep frame-size in mind - big-framed cows need more feed.

Important facts

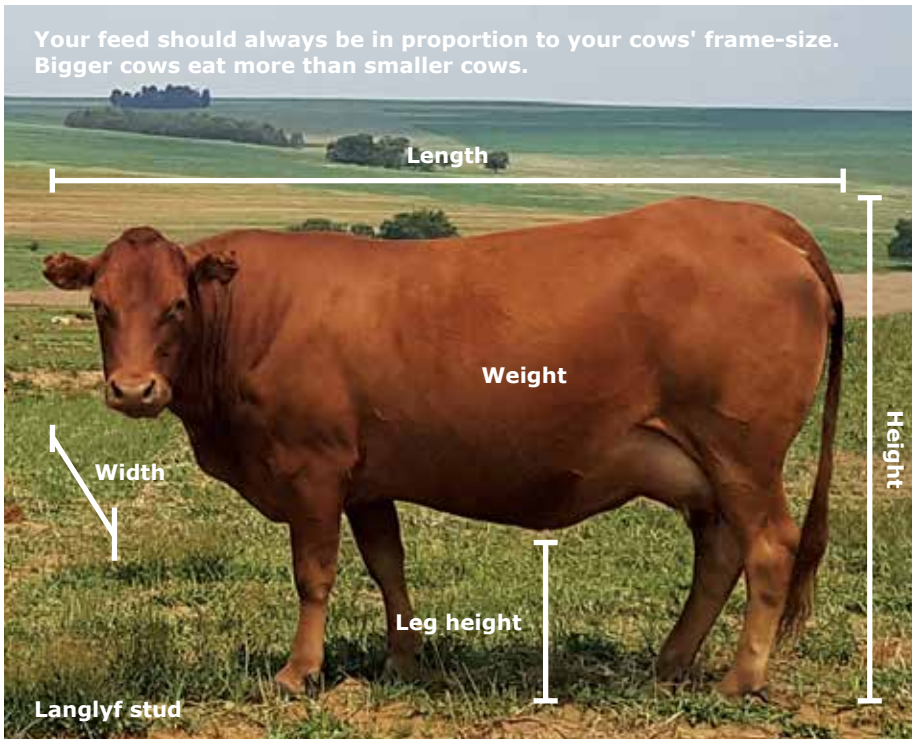
- Frame-size must always be in relation/proportion to fodder/grass availability;
- Remember that bigger cows eat

- more than smaller cows;
- Cows with higher lactation require more feed than lower lactating cows;
- Milk is the most expensive trait you can select for when buying animals;
- Weaning weight of a calf (when available) is a good indication of milk yield potential; and
- Cow size should match your farm's resources (less cow but more milk).

Conclusion

- Apply the KISS principle (Keep It Simple, Stupid);

- Know your cattle;
- Observation is very important (regular inspections);
- Breed choice: Choose a breed that fits your environment best;
- Make sure there is a market for your product;
- Take note of climate changes;
- Make sure you have and can provide sufficient water;
- Choose a breed with an even temperament; and
- Farm in close harmony with nature.



Your feed should always be in proportion to your cows' frame-size. Bigger cows eat more than smaller cows.

Langlyf stud

What does the word mean?

Commodity: A raw material or primary agricultural product that can be bought and sold, such as corn or wool.

Geographical: The features of an area on the earth's surface - Its climate, natural resources, water, rivers and mountains.

Frame-size: The size of a cow's body. Its weight, length, height, width and bone structure.

Lactation: The production of milk by female mammals like cows.

Weaning: Changing the diet of a baby animal little by little, from its mother's milk to the food it will eat as an adult.

Harmony: Things that work together well.