

THE BONSMARA SYSTEM

*The System Behind A
Superior Breed*



DEVELOPMENT OF BONSMARA

The Bonsmara is the only beef breed in the world created through a well documented crossbreeding programme with the aid of objectively recorded performance data. Visual evaluation according to norms for functional efficiency are also strictly applied.

Bonsmara was bred at the Mara and Messina Research stations between 1937 to 1963 by scientists under the watchful eye of Prof Jan Bonsma. The name Bonsmara was derived from Prof Bonsma's surname and Mara, where the first crossbred calves were born. Prof Bonsma and his colleagues constantly exercised crossbreeding experiments in about 20 commercial herds in different parts of South Africa, to finally establish the best performing crossbred sample, 5/8 Afrikaner and 3/8 Exotic Hereford/Shorthorn.

The first Bonsmara bulls were made available to commercial cattle breeders in the 1950's and soon were widely spread across South Africa and the rest of the world. This led to the formation of the Bonsmara Breeders Society in 1964. Other African countries which promptly accepted Bonsmara were Namibia, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Zambia and the beef cattle industries of Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Paraguay, Colombia, USA and Uruguay.

Strict selection for economic traits such as fertility, milk production, growth and adaptability are still practiced. This has contributed to the reality that Bonsmara proudly succeeded in becoming the strongest and most professionally administered beef breed in South Africa. Bonsmara, the most prominent of beef breeds in South Africa, currently have more than 120 000 registered Bonsmara cattle.

BONSMARA MISSION

While totally dependant on our Creator, the Bonsmara Cattle Breeders' Society endeavors to be the leader in the beef cattle industry and to serve producers in South Africa and the rest of the world by:

- Acting with credibility and integrity at all times.
- Promoting scientific, biological and economic efficiency.
- Promoting practical and efficient production methods. Supplying superior, market-related breeding material to the industry.
- Supplying affordable, quality beef to all consumers.

Through these actions, the Bonsmara Cattle Breeders' Society strives to make a positive contribution to the promotion of a balanced, environmentally friendly beef-cattle industry, which will benefit the population as a whole and support its members in viable business undertakings.

A Bonsmara Bull is ...

Registered with **SA Studbook** ■

Performance tested by **ARC** ■

Approved by **Bonsmara Inspectors** ■

Branded with a  on the right shoulder ■

Buy 
branded
Bonsmara
Bulls!!

Bonsmara, the first beef cattle
breed qualifying to register
as proudly South African.



FEATURES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BONSMARA

■ GOOD ADAPTABILITY ON THE VELD

- For more cost effective production off the veld. Bonsmara was the first breed to inspect cattle with their production records. All Bonsmara cattle are inspected at breeding age and any not showing good veld adaptability, are rejected.

Well adapted Bonsmara animals can be identified by the following:

- Smooth coated in summer;
- well pigmented eyes, udders and hooves;
- strong constitution and
- sound feet and legs

Any animal with structural defects or those that are functionally inefficient, are culled.

■ GOOD MOTHERING ABILITY

- As a result of intensive selection, calves are produced off the veld at very low cost.

Listed below are some of the most important mothering abilities:

- Early puberty - Bonsmara grow fast, mature early and breed at 12 - 18 months of age.
- Ease of calving – Bonsmara are known for their ease of calving, which is also of value in crossbreeding.
- Superior fertility – This important trait is maintained by strict selection standards.
- Good milking ability – Due to this factor, high weaning masses are attained.
- Low mortality – Calves are highly resistant to tick-borne diseases.

■ GOOD GROWTH UNDER INTENSIVE AND EXTENSIVE CONDITIONS

■ GOOD CARCASS

- Bonsmaras round off very well (in feedlots and on the veld) with best grades at a young age.

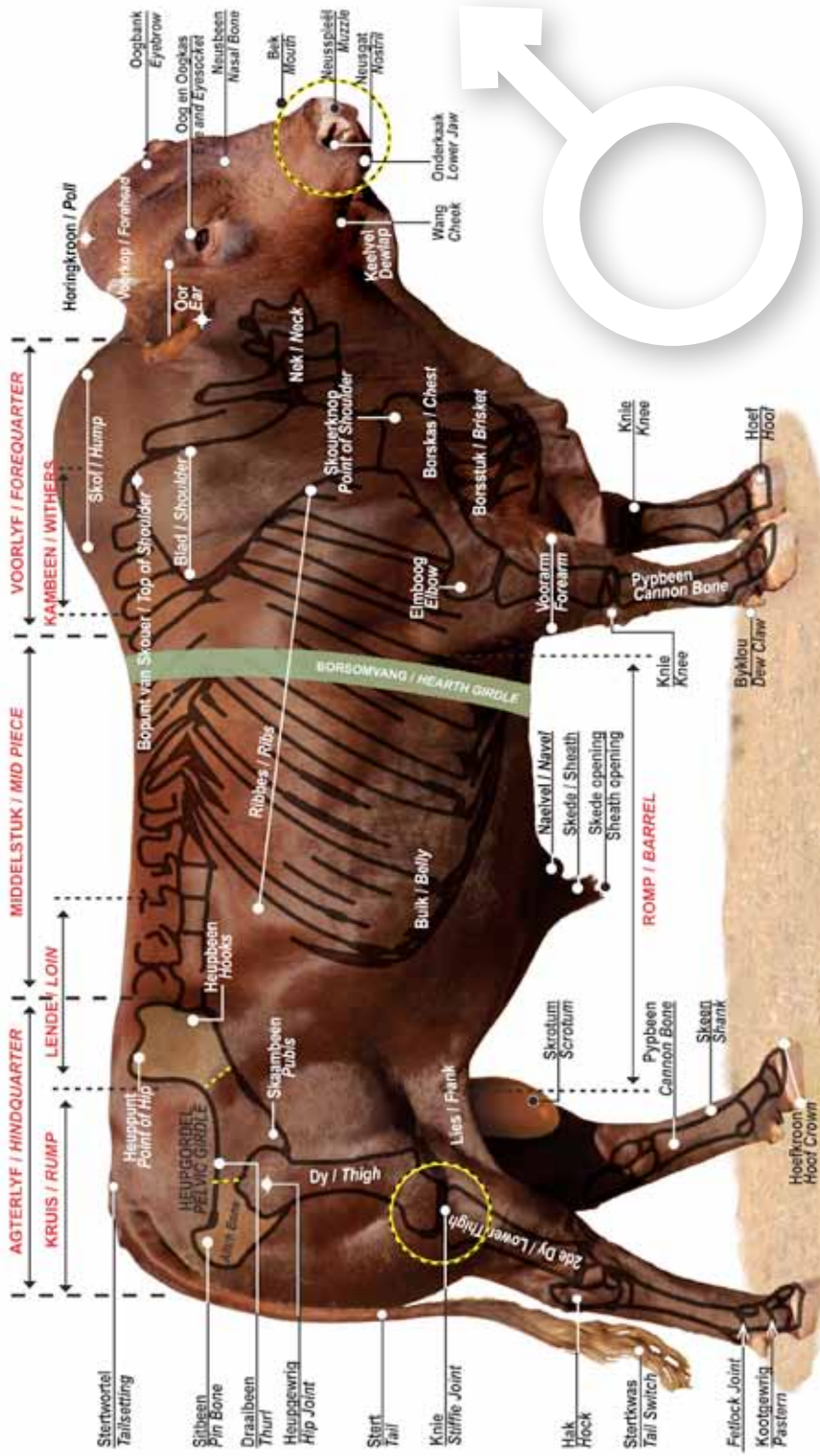
■ DISPOSITION (TEMPERAMENT)

- Bonsmara are docile animals, easy to handle and as a result require less labour.

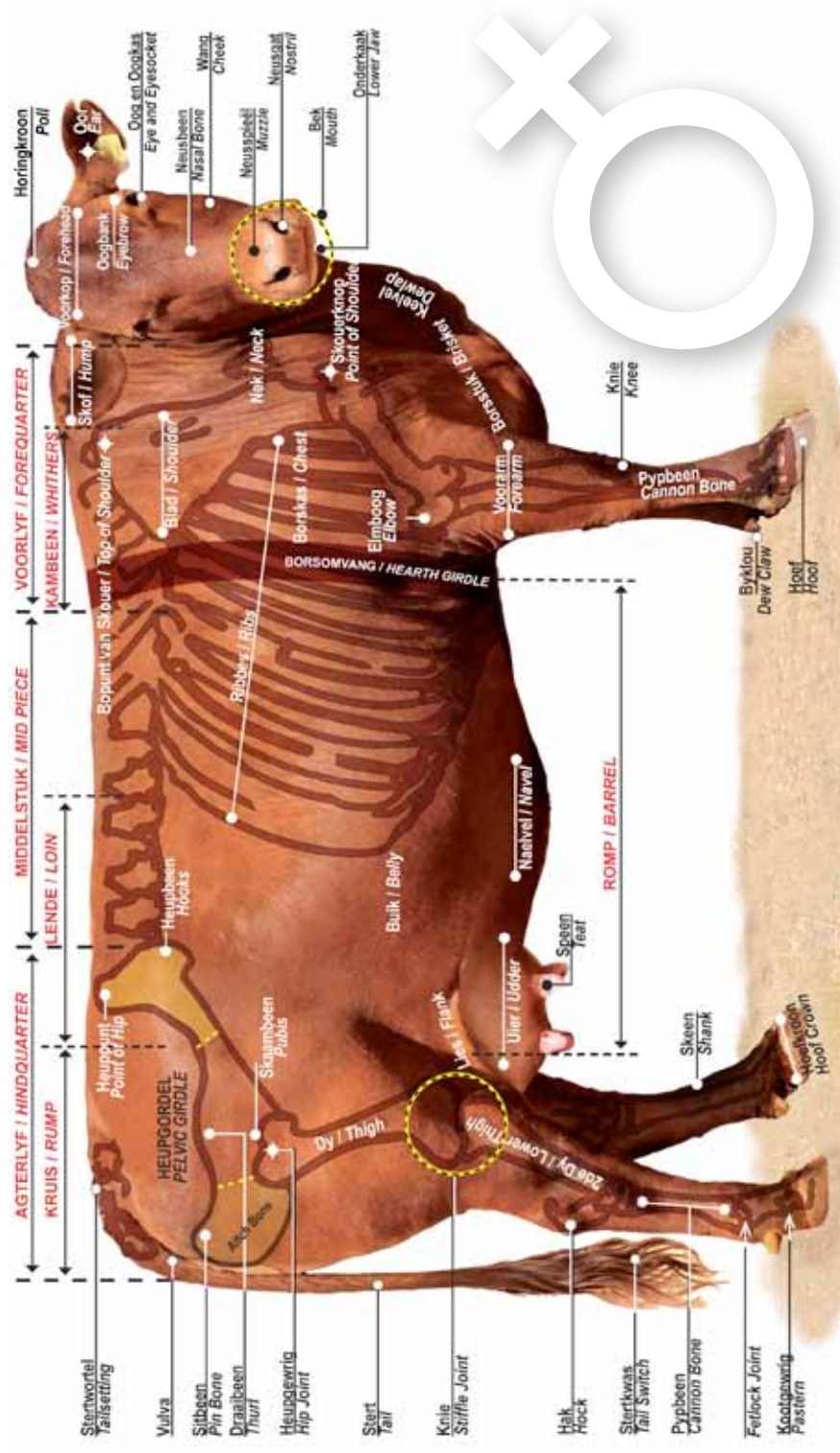
■ CROSSBREEDING

- Bonsmara plays an important role in any crossbreeding programme.

BULL CONFORMATION GUIDE



COW CONFORMATION GUIDE



This conformation guide was compiled by Hartebeestloop Bonsmaras, Namibia.

THE ROLE OF BONSMARA

The development and implementation of the Bonsmara System over many years, has scientifically moulded the breed to become the benchmark in breeding. Today the breed plays an important role in:

■ STUD BREEDING

Bonsmara is ideally suited to South African conditions. The purpose of stud breeding as seen by the Bonsmara Cattle Breeders' Society, is to satisfy the needs of the commercial breeders. Bonsmara is also setting the pace by breeding cattle to perform in all environments by using scientific selection procedures.

■ CROSS BREEDING

Bonsmara bulls cross extremely well with a variety of breeds and types. Commercial breeders who continue to use Bonsmara Bulls will not forfeit productivity after the first cross. In fact, Bonsmara is a synthetic breed that performs extremely well in cross breeding programs.

■ FEEDLOT PERFORMANCE

Bonsmara has proved to be a popular breed for the feedlot market. Bonsmara's feedlot performance is highly economical, their temperament is suited for the feedlot and tender meat of high quality is produced. Carcasses grade well from veld or feedlot, with high dressing percentages, even fat deposition, marbling and excellent muscle to bone ratio.

THE BONSMARA SYSTEM

The Bonsmara system is unique and the strict implementation thereof with a competent staff component contributes largely to the position of the breed in the beef industry.

The System relies on four factors:

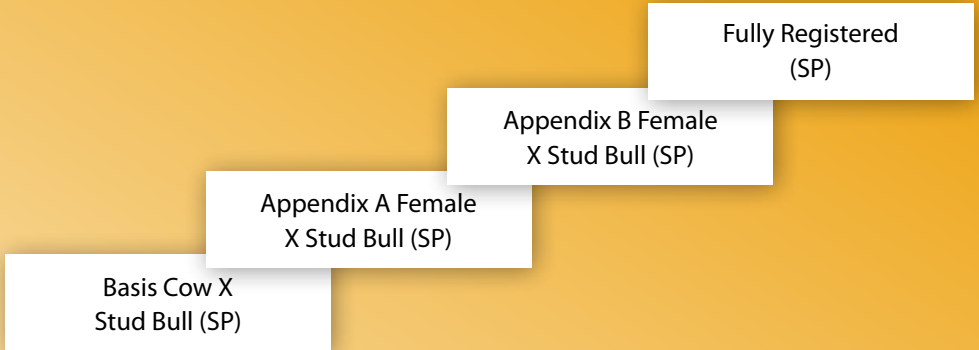
- Genetic material – a large gene pool;
- efficient machinery –
to select the best genetic material;
- competent marketing –
for efficient marketing strategy;
- dedicated manpower –
coordinating all aspects of breeding.



GENETIC MATERIAL

■ THE APPENDIX SYSTEM

- Specially selected basis cows provide an important genetic base from relatively inexpensive commercial cows. These cows are selected by Bonsmara inspectors according to minimum breed standards. The cows are mated to S.P. registered Bonsmara bulls.

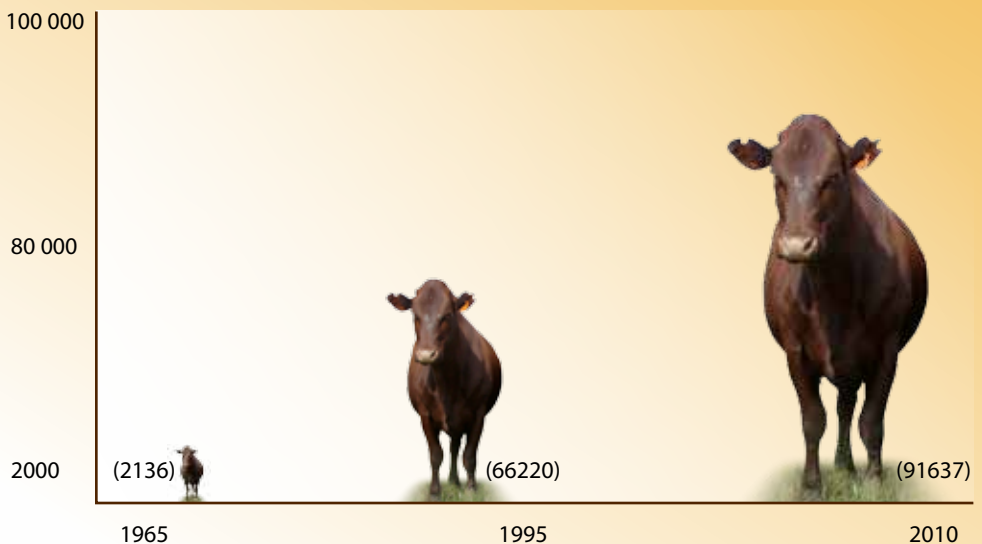


■ LARGE COW HERDS

- A large population is essential for effective herd improvement. Genetic improvement is limited in small herds. For this reason a minimum of 20 cows is a prerequisite for Bonsmara breeding. Bonsmara have the largest average herd size in comparison to all other breeds in South Africa.

■ COW NUMBERS

- Rapid expansion gives momentum to the breed and also provides a large population for stricter selection. **The increase in cow numbers is illustrated below:**





Bonsmara, the benchmark breed.

INVEST IN DEDICATED BREEDING AND A WELL PROVEN SYSTEM.

■ SELECTED BULL POWER

- Bonsmara bulls are subjected to phase C and/or D growth tests in large numbers. The use of such performance selected Bonsmara bulls has contributed progressively to the improvement in growth and feed efficiency in commercial herds.

■ ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION (AI)

- The society controls the practice of AI in Bonsmara herds in accordance with the “Livestock Improvement Act of 1998”. A wide variety of genetics are available through AI approved bulls. All AI-bulls have to meet minimum performance standards, they are approved by the Breed Society’s AI - committee and two senior breed inspectors.

MACHINERY

■ SCIENTIFIC BREEDING POLICY

- The Bonsmara breeding policy is compiled in cooperation with leading animal scientists and geneticists. Performance testing is compulsory and all animals have been weighed and full records have been kept since the early years. The breeding system, based on performance testing, has resulted in improved production.

■ MINIMUM BREED STANDARDS

- A heifer must calve before or at the age of 39 months for the first time.
- A calving interval may not exceed 790 days.
- **Minimum number of calves a cow must produce by a certain age is noted below:**

Age	Min. No. Calves	Max. ICP (Days)
3 years 3 months	1	-
5 years 3 months	2	790
6 years 3 months	3	578
8 years 3 months	4	628
9 years 3 months	5	563
11 years 3 months	6	596
12 years 3 months	7	558
14 years 3 months	8	582
15 years 3 months	9	555
17 years 3 months	10	575



- A cow must rear at least two of any three consecutive calves (up to weaning age).
- A cow may not wean more than two calves with an index below 90. Once a cow has weaned three calves with an index below 90, she will be culled.

BULLS

For phases A & B

- Minimum wean index of 90
- Minimum 12 month index of 90
- Minimum 18 month index of 90

or for phases C & D

- Minimum wean index of 90
- Minimum ADG index of 90
- Minimum corrected scrotum 305(mm)



- A lot of emphasis is placed on the functional appearance of the animal. All animals are inspected at completion of the test and all animals that fail the inspection must be slaughtered.

■ COMPULSORY COMPUTER VERIFICATION

- The Bonsmara society relies on computers and specially developed computer programs for the following reasons:

- To computerise all its animal records.
- For the application of the minimum standards and especially to identify cows with below standard performance that are then culled.
- Verifying and approving data for sales catalogues.
- To cope with administrative work.

■ INSPECTION SERVICE

- The success and uniqueness of the Bonsmara inspection system lies in the fact that we use our own breeders as inspectors. They in turn train young breeders (juniors), who accompany them to the farms for the most practical and hands on herd selections. Inspectors are rotated regularly. All animals are inspected at breeding age. They are visually appraised for functional efficiency together with their official performance data. Animals that do not meet the performance standards are culled. All rejected bulls are slaughtered.

MARKETING

■ SALES UNDER AUSPICES OF BREED SOCIETY

- Sales held under the auspices of the society are arranged by clubs and private breeders. All animals are visually screened by society inspectors and performance data in catalogues is verified by the office.

■ CLUBS

- Clubs conduct sales, host training and information days and perform various functions in all nine provinces.

■ PROMOTION

- The breed is constantly promoted by means of the Bonsmara Journal, brochures, pamphlets and other highly informative promotional material.

■ SHOWS

- Bonsmara may be exhibited at shows but are not permitted to participate in any competitions. The Bonsmara has become the largest breed in South Africa without competing in shows. The elimination of competition between breeders at shows has been beneficial to relationships between breeders. Many farmers choose Bonsmara for the very reason that the breed prefers not to compete at shows.

MANPOWER

■ DEDICATED BREEDERS

- The implementation of the Bonsmara system rests squarely on the shoulders of dedicated breeders. **A fine spirit of cooperation exists in the Bonsmara Society that stems from the following:**

- Common goal – in regards to red meat production. The ideal is to maintain a breed of cattle that is in step with the requirements of the commercial beef industry.
- Education – to keep abreast of developments. **The educational programme to aid breeders in developing functionally efficient cattle takes the form of:**
 - Bonsmara days – organized by regional clubs.
 - Inspectors' courses to attain uniformity.
 - Annual symposiums to keep abreast of scientific developments.
 - "Think tanks" with geneticists, animal scientists and veterinarians to evaluate the breed and decide on strategy.
 - Breeders forums to maintain standards and expand knowledge.

■ DEDICATED ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

- The society has a small, yet close knit team of dedicated office personnel, communicating with breeders and the public on a regular basis.

BONSMARA ACHIEVEMENTS IN ARC AWARDS



- 62% Out of the total of 40 914 cows qualifying for the ARC Best Producing Cow awards over the past 14 years, were awarded to Bonsmara.
- In the ABSA - ARC Beef Cattle Improvement Herd Of The Year award, 14.5% Bonsmara herds

qualified, in comparison to the average of 3.4% for all other beef cattle herds participating in the scheme.

- 67.8% Of the Bayer – ARC Platinum awards went to Bonsmara since the inception of the award.

How to become a member of the breed Society:

- Application forms are obtainable from the society.
- Performance Testing is a prerequisite for membership to the Bonsmara Breeders Society.
- 20 Bonsmara type females are required for the initial herd. Application must be made for the inspection if any unapproved basic animals are involved.
- Completed applications for membership should be sent to the Bonsmara offices together with:
 - A map indicating the way from the nearest main road to the farm and stating distances between places.
 - Six short names for the registration of the herd prefix and a choice of three herd designation marks of three letters each.
 - Cheque covering the required fees.

More information regarding the Bonsmara breed or membership is available upon request.

The Bonsmara Society is proud of the exceptional service they provide to their members as well as the industry.

For more information on Bonsmara or how to become a member of the society, please contact us:

T: 051 448 6084

F: 051 448 6327

E-mail: info@bonsmara.co.za

www.bonsmara.co.za

The office of Bonsmara SA is based in the S.A. Stud Book Building.

118 Henry Street • Bloemfontein

P.O. Box 12051 • Brandhof 9324

Born to breed, born to lead

50 REASONS

why you should breed
with Bonsmaras

THE BREED

- 1 Red Cattle
- 2 Good adaptability
- 3 Tick resistance
- 4 Heat resistance
- 5 Ideal mother breed for Commercial breeders
- 6 Good re-conception
- 7 Old cows marketable off the veld
- 8 Bonsmara can thrive off the veld
- 9 Excellent beef quality
- 10 Fat deposition
- 11 Performs under intensive and extensive conditions
- 12 Good feed conversion
- 13 Early maturity
- 14 Ease of calving
- 15 Fertile cows



- 16 Longevity
- 17 Good milk production
- 18 Good temperament
- 19 Ideal carcass size
- 20 Superior cow efficiency
- 21 Ideal breed for beginners

THE SCHEME

- 22 Minimum breed standards
- 23 Credible performance testing
- 24 Estimated breeding values
- 25 Large database
- 26 Comprehensive auction catalogue
- 27 Computers improve accessibility
- 28 Independent inspectors
- 29 Society and Council function efficiently
- 30 Animals screened for auctions
- 31 Broad minded society
- 32 Nation-wide club structure

THE PEOPLE

- 33 Trained breeders

- 34 Enthusiastic Breeders
- 35 Unity amongst breeders
- 36 Breeders with integrity
- 37 International Society
- 38 Commercial breeders

AIDS TO BETTER BREEDING

- 39 Data available through research
- 40 Auctions under the Bonsmara Society's Auspices
- 41 Reasonable prices
- 42 Large herds, more effective selection
- 43 Many phase C and D bulls
- 44 Many phase B and field tests
- 45 Excellent communication between Breeders and the Society
- 46 Information days
- 47 Modern Synthetic breed
- 48 Brand marked beef
- 49 Breeders widely distributed
- 50 Proudly South African



VOERMOL

Wat die natuur kort
sal Voermol voorsien



FNB

First National Bank



Bayer HealthCare
Dieregesondheid

