

EMERGENCE OF STOCK FARMING IN BLOUBERG – RISE OF THE SLEEPING GIANT

Livestock contributes the largest chunk for the Agriculture sphere in South Africa with an estimated population of 13.8 million cattle and 28.8 million sheep. Stock breeders concentrate on the development of breeds that are well adapted to diverse climates and environmental conditions. Blouberg News traced one Blouberg emerging farmer to get the low down on their survival in the hurly burly world of the white dominated agriculture fraternity.

Moyahabo Josias Sebola's love for cattle dates back from childhood. Little did he know that he would some day make a living out of livestock. Sebola, who hails from Letswatla village in ward 21, ventured into the industry over two decades ago and has never looked back ever since.

He boasts over one -hundred and fifty mixed breed cattle ranging from Bonsmara to Brahman among his collections. The live stock was being kept at Tolwe where he shares a farm with other local emerging livestock farmers. One cow gets easily sold for prices in the range of between R5000-R7000. The stock gets auctioned and part of the stock is also sold to the community at large and has since created a few job opportunities for the locals.

He indicated that among many major challenges he and other livestock farmers was their livestock being devoured by wild animals. Other problems that seem to be common amongst emerging livestock farmers include, shortage of water, lack of secure title to the land, lack of investment and working capital and limited access to credit, poor veld conditions, highly variable climate and insufficient farm size. Others are inadequate infrastructure, poor access to funding and a highly competitive industry context.

Sebola however, believes that many of these problems can be resolved at sector departmental and national government levels. “The problem of financial and property management can be addressed by training and support to emerging farmers. We call on the department of Agriculture in the province to assist with training for us to compete with big business” added Sebola.

He also made an impassioned plea to the municipality and the local leaders to assist with the land for lease for grazing. He advised aspiring live stock farmers to be patient, build strong and sustainable businesses.

