

Minutes of the GSSA AGM held on 22 July 2009, UNISA, Florida Campus

1. Welcome PC

Pieter Conradie welcomed all and thanked everyone for attending the Annual General Meeting.

2. Introductory session SD

Sikhalazo Dube gave a presentation on the demographic and professional characteristics of the GSSA Congress 2008 delegates.

He indicated that the GSSA broadly seeks to promote and advance the science and technology of rangelands and pasture production. He stressed the fact that scientific societies need to play a significant role in policy development and implementation, capacity building and transformation to remain relevant.

He indicated that there is no clear evidence of the influence of scientific societies in South Africa and the SADC region and explained that the study was conducted to: (1) understand the profile of the GSSA Congress participants, (2) assess how well the society is doing in the promotion and advancement of the science, and (3) understand the development of linkages.

A survey was conducted of delegates attending Congress 43 2008. A questionnaire was used to collect demographic information. The results showed that 66 delegates (68% GSSA members) completed the questionnaire (74% male and 26% female). Most of the respondents reside in South Africa, Lesotho and Zimbabwe. The respondents were aged between 24 and 64 years (mean, 37 years) and most of them were technicians (27%), students (23%) and lecturers (15%). The majority of the respondents had less than 5 years GSSA membership experience.

The following conclusions were made from the study:

- GSSA has not really drawn many delegates from SADC and other African countries.
- Gender imbalance and skewed provincial distribution is still evident among GSSA members.
- There is a need for a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of the Society.

Pieter Conradie thanked Sikhalazo Dube for the interesting presentation.

3. Present and apologies

Present: Joseph Baloyi, Anuschka Barac, Malenyalo Batlhatswi, Rina Grant, Lesego Bodibe, Philip Botha, Cobus Botha, Hannes Botha, Kwezi Booi, Leslie Brown, Trust Chinuwo, Eunice C'hoshi, Kedibone Chueu, Marisa Coetzee, Riaan Dames, Chris Dannhauser, Mbaniso Diko, Charl du Plessis, Justin du Toit, Sikhalazo Dube, Albertus Dyason, Luthando Dziba, Terry Everson, Andiswa Finca, Eddie Goldschagg, Paul Gordijn, Neo Heyns, Riaan Jonker, Gideon Jordaan, Oupa Keromecwe, Klaus Kellner, Stephen Kgobalale, Vhalinavho Khavhagali, Linda Kleyn, Gustav le Roux, Mota Lesoli, Fikile Luthuli, Thembisile Mabuza, Paul Malan, Isaac Mapaure, Kgaugelo Masenya, Khanyisile Mbatha, Chris Mbuti, Macanda Mfundo, Ntuthuko Mkhize, Thabile Mokgakane, Keletso Mopipi, Theunis Morgenthal, Poloko Mosebi, Hloniphani Moyo, Bethwell Moyo, Msomi Msawenkosi, Mupenzi Mutimura, Vutivi Ndhlovu, Zandile Ndlovu, Leana Nel, Bernice Nell, Basanda Nondlazi, Tim O'Connor, Anthony Palmer, Michael Panagos, Graham Peddie, Michael Peel, John Peel, Tiffany Pillay, Gilbert Pule, Matome Rabothata, Keith Ramsay, Clement Ratsele, Ivan Riggs, Igshaan Samuels, Rakololo Samuel, Rob Scott-Shaw, Alan Short, Doreen Sithole, Hendrik Snyman, Michael Stiller, Annelene Swanepoel, Jan Theron, Tanki Thubela, Julius Tjelele, Wayne Truter, Thulani Tshabalala, Wayne Twine, Loraine van den Berg, Minette van Lingen, Frits van Oudtshoorn, Johannes van Schalkwyk, Izak Venter, Pieter Wagner, Desale Obakumichael, Mmapula Bothola, Mahlodi Tau, Ramakgwale Mampholo

Apologies: Winston Trollope, Nico Smit, Peter Zacharias, Richard Hurt, Susi Vetter, Mark Hardy, Willem Myburgh, Jorrie Jordaan, Norman Rethman, Erika van Zyl, Dave

Goodenough, Franci Jordaan, Clive Bunting, Mark Surmon, Maureen Wolfson, Peter Scogings, Thabo Motsoane, Lerotholi Qhobela

The meeting was declared quorate.

4. Additions to and acceptance of the agenda All

No additions to the agenda.

The agenda was accepted.

5. Approval of the minutes of 23 July 2008 All

The previous minutes was accepted.

Proposer: Sikhhalazo Dube

Secunder: Wayne Truter

6. Matters arising

6.1 Congress 45 (2010) KK

Klaus Kellner presented a proposal for Congress 45 2010 on behalf of Hugo Bezuidenhout.

The Congress will take place from 19 – 23 July 2010 in Kimberley. Most of the organization will be carried out by SANParks and the Department of Tourism, Environment and Conservation. People and organizations from the North West Province will mainly be involved in the organization of the scientific program.

The main theme of the Congress will be – Challenges to integrate range and forage science in arid and semi-arid landscapes.

The Tabernakel AGS Church was proposed as a venue and KK pointed out that the venue has very good presentation equipment. There is also ample space for parallel sessions as well as a number of breakaway rooms.

KK indicated that they will try to make a block booking for accommodation at the Horseshoe Motel, but indicated that there are various guesthouses in Kimberley which will serve as suitable accommodation. Theunis Morgenthal asked if the venues are close together and KK pointed at that they are approximately 5km apart. Luthando Dziba wanted to know whether it would be possible to compile a list of suitable guesthouses. KK indicated that such a list will be circulated. Cobus Botha stressed the fact that it would be good to make a block booking somewhere as most of the congress delegates do networking after hours. FdT pointed out that people needed to register early to make a block booking possible.

The provisional program is as follows:

Monday – Registration + Meet and greet (McGregor Museum)

Tuesday – Sessions + Dinner at Marrick Safari's

Wednesday – Sessions + Free evening

Thursday – Sessions + Gala dinner (Horseshoe Motel)

All pre- and post Congress tours will be organized by Northern cape Tourism Authority. Dept of Tourism, Environment and Conservation.

At this stage the cost to host the Congress in Kimberley is R2 800 / person, excluding accommodation, but this can change with changes in delegate numbers.

Riaan Dames indicated that he would be willing to organize a rangeland tour including commercial and communal rangelands.

KK thanked Hugo Bezuidenhout for all the arrangements.

7. Treasurer's report

JdT

Justin du Toit presented the Treasurer's report.

Budget (attached)

The actual income and expenses for the last year and budget for 2009/10 were presented. He indicated that the GSSA is financially secure with regards to solvency and cash flow. He pointed out that we made a loss in 2008/09 due to issues with the accommodation at Congress 43 2008, but as a result of our nest egg this did not really impact on the day to day running of the Society. The proposed total income for 2009/10 is R302 500 with the proposed expenses being R293 046, resulting in a net income of R9 454.

A comment was made about the shortfall of Congress 44 2009 as the Congress was down in numbers, but JdT indicated that there would be no shortfall as it was known that there would be less delegates and this was built into the Congress fee structure.

JdT proposed a membership fee increase of 8% for all the different categories. The following membership increase was suggested:

Category	2008/09	2009/10
Primary membership	395	425
Online only	350	380
Student	350	380
Grassland Guru	350	380
Secondary membership	70	75
Professional register	45	50
Institute benefits	350	380
Postage to Africa	150	160
Postage overseas	260	280
Additional journal	275	295
Additional online journal	230	250
Additional grassroots	80	85

Tony Palmer warned that the membership fees should not be increased too much as most of the membership fees are paid by the Government. FdT indicated that this year registration fees were built into the Congress fees for those people who struggled to register.

The proposed budget was approved.

Proposer: Graham Peddie

Seconder: Jorrie Jordaan

Pieter Conradie thanked JdT for his inputs.

8. Editor's reports

8.1 Scientific Editor

FdT

Freyne du Toit presented the report on behalf of Susi Vetter.

Editorial Board

- Scientific Editor – Susi Vetter
- Administrative Editor – Freyne du Toit
- 7 Assistant Editors
- 16 Editorial Advisory Board

Manuscripts received, rejected and accepted

- Received – 27
- Rejected - 10
- Accepted - 14

Volume 25

2008

- 14 Papers
- 4 Research notes

25 (2)

- Special feature consisting of guest editorial and 4 papers – insights into working with communal and individual farmers in SA

Referees

The referees (40) were thanked for their contributions.

Strategic planning

CRISIS – low and declining submission rates, plus low standard of manuscripts submission.

RESPONSE – improving submissions rate, reviewing aims and scope, improving the editorial structures and procedures.

The Scientific Editor position was expanded to include

- Soliciting contributions from high profile authors
- Commissioning review articles
- Book reviews
- Special issues
- Initiating a mentorship programme

ISI rating

- As of January 2009 AJRFS has been indexed in Thomson Reuter's Journal Citation Reports® (JCR)
 - Calculation based on 2009 + 2010 data and the rating will be released in 2011

Online submission system

2008

- Did not materialise – NISC abandoned the plan in favour of utilising an existing international system (Manuscript Central)

2009

- NISC entered a co-publishing agreement with Taylor & Francis Group
- Manuscript Central implemented for AJRFS and Taylor & Francis staff will set up and customize journal's online submission system

ASSAf

- Sent out a Questionnaire about editorial practices and policy
- Forms part of a pilot peer review process in response to 2006 Report of the Academy of Science of South Africa "A Strategic approach to research Publishing in South Africa"
- No feedback yet

Submission – acceptance trends

- Concern that some manuscripts in 25 (1) took over a year from submission to acceptance
- The trend over the last 3 issues has been of decreased time from submission to acceptance

Closing remarks

From low to HIGH

- Submissions have increased
- ISI rating achieved
- Strategic plan to improve the journal

Susi Vetter thanked Peter Scogings for immense efforts with editing from 2003 – 2008. She also thanked Freyni du Toit for the professional and efficient handling of journal administration.

Pieter Conradie thanked the Editor for her hard work.

8.2 Publication Editor: Grassroots

AS

Alan Short, the Publication Editor, reported that it has been a very successful year for the Grassroots. He indicated that four issues have been published in 2009. The following range of articles was published: pastures (5), conservation (1), rangeland ecology (4), rehabilitation technology (1), dairy production (1), invasive plants (4) and communal systems (2). He furthermore indicated that a number of other articles such as reports of farmers days etc. were also published.

He said that in the future the Grassroots will be taken to a higher level as quotes for professional design and layout has been obtained. In addition it is a priority to print colour covers for the Grassroots (at a cost of R2 000 per issue).

He thanked everybody who contributed to the Grassroots during the last year. He also thanked Julius Tjelele for all his assistance recently. He informed the meeting that he will be resigning from the position of Publication Editor and indicated that he will nominate Julius Tjelele to take over the position.

Pieter Conradie thanked Alan Short for his hard work with regards to the Grassroots and wished the new Editor good luck.

9. **Website Editor's report**

AB

Anuschka Barac presented the report.

She reported that during the year a problem was experienced at certain big institutions, where the Microsoft Security software was blocking the website software, causing members difficulty to access the new GSSA website. Members were e-mailed regarding this problem, providing instructions for their IT staff to correct the software blockage. She stressed the fact that this was a Microsoft bug and **NOT** a problem with our website.

2008

She pointed out that the total number of visits to our website during 2008 was 13 475. The top five countries to visit the website included South Africa, USA, UK, India and Australia. Swaziland, Lesotho, Namibia and Botswana were at the top of the list of SADC countries to visit the website.

The GSSA Homepage got most of the hits followed by the Job Opportunity, Annual Congress, Upcoming Events and Publications pages. A very exciting statistic is that there were 75% new website visitors during 2008.

2009

To date a total number of 8 453 visits to the website was recorded which is 17% higher than the same time last year. The top five countries to visit the website remained the same while the pages visited differed slightly.

AB informed members that the Publications page makes provision for published papers to be listed and asked members to inform the administrator if they wanted to be listed.

AB thanked Leana Nel for updating the website on a regular basis. She also thanked FdT for all the guidance.

Pieter Conradie thanked everybody concerned with the website.

10. **PRO report**

SD

Sikhalazo Dube presented the PRO report (attached).

Farmers days

No farmers' days were brought to the attention of the PRO's office. He asked members to

inform the GSSA about events, symposia and farmersdays.

Student Awards

Five university students received GSSA academic medals in 2008 for their excellence in grassland science related studies. SD encouraged universities to nominate students for awards and indicated that the notices have already been sent to universities.

GSSA Eskom Expo for Young Scientists 2008

The Society was represented by eleven judges at seven Regional Expos and the National Final. At the Regional level, six projects presented by six scholars received the award. All of these scholars received a framed certificate from the Society. The winner at national level received a framed certificate and medal.

Future Plans

The PRO's office will continue to identify and follow-up opportunities that will grow the Society and capacity building in the field of rangelands and cultivated pastures. In the heart of this growth is the mentorship of young scientists and the "sexing up" of the society so that the disciplines are identified by young people as disciplines of choice for careers.

Members are encouraged to make the Society aware of linkages, collaborations and common projects and program that other institutions and organization that can enhance our visibility.

Pieter Conradie thanked the PRO officer for all his efforts towards PRO related activities.

11. PAC report

LB

Leslie Brown presented the PAC report (attached).

Membership

The PAC currently has a total of 71 professional members who are potentially on the register. There are currently 64 members of which 42 are in good standing. The professional members are listed on the website. The public only have access to the members' name and Province but have to contact Freyni who will notify the member.

All paid up professional members will from now on annually receive a GSSA membership card with his/her name on it as well as an expiry date. The cards will be sent to all Professional members within the months following the Congress.

Composition of the PAC

The following professional members have been appointed on the PAC:

- Dr. Albert Smith
- Dr. David Grossman
- Dr. Maureen Wolfson
- Dr. Richard Hurt

Secretary: Ms Tersia de Beer

SACNASP

LB indicated that Norman Casey is the new Chairman of the Council. A meeting was held with the registrar of the SACNASP Council on 24 April 2009 to clarify issues related to registration with the Council. All people working within the field of Natural Scientific Professions will eventually have to register with SACNASP. There are however various categories within which almost all of our members would be able to register.

The GSSA have submitted an application to be registered as a "Voluntary Organization" and are awaiting the outcome. If successful we will also enter into negotiations with the new SACNASP Council to allow Professional members to become SACNASP registered at a discount rate and hopefully not having to go through the whole application process. Members with lots of experience could also go through the process of RPL.

12. Trust report

KK

Klaus Kellner presented the Trust report.

He pointed out that the impact of the global financial crises led to financial impacts in the Trust. Ewing Trust (PMB) advised Trust to sell the Old Mutual Unit Trusts and invest the money in selected equities (shares in 15 companies on the stock market). No disbursements have been made due to poor markets. He also indicated that no additional Trust meetings have been held. He said that in the future Trust will be more active with disbursements and the mentorship program of the GSSA.

As on 30 June 2009 with interest/profit:

- Cash : R 288 378.81
- Equities : R 280 937.00 + R 40 000 (property)
- Total: R 569 315.81
- Invested in shares: R 267 675.94 since 18 March 2009
- Net gain from shares: R 13 261.06
- Expenses: Ewing admin fees and Admin salary still to be paid approx. R 18 000 (in past R 40 507.30) – September 2009

KK indicated that he will be stepping down as Chairman of Trust and informed the meeting that Chris Dannhauser will be taking over as Chairman.

Pieter Conradie thanked Klaus Kellner for the report and wished Chris Dannhauser good luck.

13. Election of office bearers

13.1 Vice President

Three nominations were received for Vice President

1. Sikhhalazo Dube
2. Wayne Truter
3. Justin du Toit

Non-voting attendees were appointed to collect the ballots and count the votes.

Sikhhalazo Dube was elected as Vice President.

13.2 Additional members

As a result of the fact that Sikhhalazo Dube was elected Vice-President, two additional members were elected.

Five nominations were received for additional members.

1. Vhali Khavhagali
2. Igshaan Samuels
3. Cobus Botha
4. Marisa Coetzee
5. Gus le Roux

Non-voting attendees were appointed to collect the ballots and count the votes.

Igshaan Samuels and Cobus Botha were elected as additional members.

14. Congress 45 (2010)

Marisa Coetzee proposed Grootfontein Agricultural Development Institute as host for Congress 46 2011. A question was raised concerning accommodation in Middelburg and MC informed the meeting that accommodation will be available in the hostel and in town. A comment was made that members should be informed that Middelburg doesn't have as high a crime rate as Johannesburg (hopefully this will attract lots of delegates).

15. Date of next meeting

Next meeting to be held during Congress 45 2010.

17. Closure

Pieter Conradie thanked the members for having the opportunity to head the Society. He thanked all Council members and especially Freyni du Toit for their inputs during the last year. He especially thanked Philip Botha and Rina Grant for their time on Council.

President _____

Secretary _____

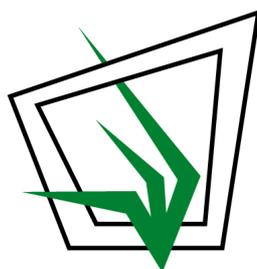
Date _____

Date _____

Proposed budget 2010

Justin du Toit

	Actual 07/08 Audited	Budget 08/09	Actual 08/09 (to Jun 09)	Budget 09/10
Income				
Membership Fees	102989	138782	90181	142000
Outstanding membership fees		6000	13529	11500
Advertising		15000	0	0
Annual Congress	744907	130000	100000	130000
Symposia, Farmers Days & Workshops	53798	10000	11378	17000
Interest (Moneymarket)		13200	961	2000
GSSA Publications			200	
Total income	901694	312982	216250	302500
Expenses				
Administration	82804	84240	54442	79848
Administration - Reimbursement			1182	
Advertising	1329			
Annual Congress	682884			
Annual General Meeting		3000		0
Auditors	1903	4300		2200
Bad debts	1280			
Bank Charges	1763	2100	2957	4200
Congress admin	10000			
Decrease in provision for bad debts	-16672			
Foreign exchange loss	125			
Council Meetings	33036	38000	15418	34000
Grassroots - production and printing	22433	38000	10217	34676
Journal Expenses	69534	80471	50671	78100
Journal Editor Costs		24000	12000	30000
Journal mentorship programme		25000	0	0
PAC Meetings				
Postage & Courier	11637	9000	6123	12000
Public Relations	11109	17000	1969	5000
Subscriptions	439	1000	492	550
Sundry expenses	3356			
Symposia, Farmers Days & Workshops	5070			
Website and Database	36956	18060	8503	12471
Total expenses	958986	344171		293046
Net income	-57292	-31189	216250	9454



GRASSLAND SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER'S REPORT 2008

By
Sikhalazo Dube (PhD)

Introduction

The vision of the GSSA is to advance the rangelands and ecology and pasture management in Africa. We seek to do this by providing a dynamic and inclusive platform for discourse in this science and through capacity building. To this end we ask our members to bring to the attention of the PRO's office any opportunities we can use to realize our vision. These include but not limited to field days, policy discussion platforms, training opportunities, young scientists' development forums, within and outside our borders.

Farmer's Days

No farmers' days were brought to the attention of the PRO's office. It is important that members bring these to our attention

Student Awards

Five university students received awards GSSA academic medals in 2008 for their excellence in grassland science related studies (Table 1).

Table 1. List of recipients of the GSSA academic medals 2008

Name	University	Thesis Title	Award
1. Ms. Jane Holliday	Univ. KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa	Management of Kikuyu (<i>Pennisetum clandestinum</i>) for improved dairy production	Best MSc
2. Mr. Edward Mwavu	Makerere University, Uganda	Human impact, plant communities, diversity and regeneration in Budong Forest Reserve, North-West Uganda	Best MSc

3.	Mr. Theo Scholtz	North-West University, South Africa	The evaluation of the establishment and growth of indigenous trees to restore deforested riparian areas in the Mapungubwe National Park, South Africa	Best MSc
4.	Mr. Abraham Landman	Univ. Free State, South Africa	NA	Best BSc
5.	Ms. Käte Booyens	Univ. Free State, South Africa	NA	Best BSc

GSSA Eskom Expo for Young Scientists 2008

The Society was represented by eleven judges at seven Regional Expos and the National Final. At the Regional level, six projects presented by six scholars received the award. All of these scholars receive a framed certificate from the Society. The winner at national level received a framed certificate and medal. At a regional level, the prize consists of a GSSA certificate for each member of the winning team. At national level, the prize consists of a GSSA certificate and medal for each member of the winning team. If possible, the prize may also include "tickets" to the next GSSA Congress. Only Matric and Grade 11 students may be awarded the Grassland Society Award.

Regional Expos

Grahamstown: 18 July 2008

The power of mycorrhiza on eutrophicated (*sic*) ecosystems, Vuyile Sixaba, Grade 10, Nathaniel Nyaluza High School. Judged by Susi Vetter and James Gambiza, Rhodes University

Bloemfontein: 14 August 2008

Termite mound - no growth, Michael Leeuw, Grade 11, HTS Louis Botha. Judged by Hennie Snyman, University of the Orange Free State

North West Cape: 21 August 2008

Weiveldbestuur, Susan van der Merwe, Postmasburg High School: Judged by Marna van Zyl

East London: 21 August 2008

Be wise...fertilize, Nadine Nowers, Grade 11, Stutterheim High School: Judged by Sikkhalazo Dube, University of Fort Hare and Pieter Conradie, Eastern Cape Department of Agriculture

Cape Town: 21 August 2008

Global Warming - Armageddon or Utopia, Siobh n O'Donovan, Grade 6, St Cyprian's High School: Judged by Dawood Hattas, University of Cape Town

Lebowakgomo: 23 August 2008

No award given: Judged by Pieter Wagner, Limpopo Department of Agriculture

Nelspruit: 30 August 2008

Overgrazing: Impact on ecosystem, Adriaan Mostert, Warmbad High School: Judged by Jorrie Jordaan and Erna van Schoor, Limpopo Department of Agriculture

National Finals: 2 October 2008

The role of allelopathy in agriculture, Emelia Swart, Waterkloof Hoerskool: Judged by Julius Tjelele, Gilbert Pule and Malenyalo Bathlatswi, Agricultural Research Council – Livestock

Business Division, Pretoria

Future Plans

The PRO's office will continue to identify and follow-up opportunities that will grow the society and capacity building in the field of rangelands and cultivated pastures. In the heart of this growth is the mentorship of young scientists and the "sexing up" of the society so that the disciplines are identified by young people as disciplines of choice for careers. There PRO's office recognizes the delay in the launch of a pilot rangeland/pasture clubs at university; this endeavor will be followed-up in the next year.

Members are encouraged to make the society aware of linkages, collaborations and common projects and program that other institutions and organization that can enhance our visibility

We need, as a society, to actively engage the media to promote our vision and participate in public discourse on issues relating to grassland sciences.

PAC REPORT 2008/09

1. MEMBERSHIP

The PAC currently has a total of 71 professional members who are potentially on the register. There are currently 64 members of which 42 are in good standing.

2. PROFESSIONAL MEMBERS

The professional members are listed on the website. The public only have access to the members' name and Province but have to contact Freyni who will notify the member.

All paid up professional members will from now on annually receive a GSSA membership card with his/her name on it as well as an expiry date. The cards will be sent to all Professional members within the new few months following the Congress.

3. FUNCTIONING OF THE PAC

The PAC comprises the following professional members to assist in taking decisions regarding PAC affairs:

- Dr. Albert Smith
- Dr. David Grossman
- Dr. Maureen Wolfson
- Dr. Richard Hurt

Secretary: Ms Tersia de Beer

No meetings were held this year.

4. SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR NATURAL SCIENTIFIC PROFESSIONS (SACNASP)

A meeting was held with the registrar of the SACNASP Council and attended by myself and the President of the GSSA Pieter Conradie on 24 April 2009 to clarify issues related to registration with the Council. The following is a summary of the meeting:

All people working within the field of Natural Scientific Professions will eventually have to register with SACNASP. There are however various categories within which almost all of our members would be able to register.

We have submitted an application to be registered as a "Voluntary Organization" and are awaiting the outcome. If successful we will also enter into negotiations with the SACNASP new Council to allow Professional members to become SACNASP registered at a discount rate and hopefully not having to go through the whole application process.

5. CONCLUSION

I want to thank Council for their continued support and especially Freyni du Toit and Tersia de Beer for their assistance.

I trust this meets your approval.

Leslie Brown