



# grass roots

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*Nicolaas Willem Wagner who received the GSSA trophy for the highest mark in Pasture Science in the third year (Potchefstroom Agric. College)*

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# EDITORIAL

Hi everybody

I'm back. Thanks to Freyni for handling the editorial for me in the last issue; I was a bit busy running around trying to keep a three-year old daughter happy and make sure all was well with the wife in hospital for the birth of our son.

As always life moves on apace and almost half the year is gone. The Annual Congress looms large on the horizon, and reports have it that Annelene Swanepoel and her team from Elsenburg are putting together a really good programme for us. With regard to congress: please take note of the call for nominations for awards and office bearers. These are matters which deserve careful thought before arriving at congress.

In this issue we have another article from

Dean Anderson; this one about the interesting concept of integrating animals of different species into a single Flerd. From the lack of news coming in from the various regions it appears that the Society and/or its members are not being particularly active. A happening of note which is reported on was the Prestige Grazing Day held at the University of KwaZulu-Natal entitled: "Grasslands in South Africa: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow. This was well worth attending; if you missed the event, skip through to the report.

The dearth of response to Grass Roots is leading me to believe that nobody is reading it. Please send in your comments on articles published or your own material for publication.

I look forward to seeing you at Goudini.

Grass greetings  
Graham

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## NEWS FROM GSSA COUNCIL

At the council meeting in January it was decided that it was time to have a Strategic Planning Workshop to assess the activities of the GSSA and develop a revised Strategic Plan. On 28 and 29 April council met at the conference facility at Ukulinga Research Farm. The vice president Dr Nicky Allsopp and Richard Hurt, of the PAC portfolio, led the very constructive workshop and did so excellently. On the first day it was very helpful to have a facilitator, Mpyoya Thobela, not linked to the GSSA asking questions and facilitating the discussion.

The first task was to assess the present situation of the GSSA, looking at the achievements, strengths and challenges, vision and mission. Next a review was undertaken of all the portfolios on council, the budget, the membership, the administration and the vision and mission.

From all the reviewing and discussion, numerous actions were identified in order to achieve the re-worked mission and vision. Some proposed changes to the constitution were also identified and will be discussed at the next AGM.

It became clear during the two days that various circumstances have changed which means the GSSA operates in a different

environment to the one of a decade ago and it is thus necessary to adapt accordingly. We also "discovered" the many excellent contributions members of the GSSA have made and an astonishing amount of strengths were identified. The flagships of the Society are the journal and the congress, while both the website and the Grassroots newsletter are invaluable to the profile of the Society. In order for Grassroots to be dynamic more contributions are required from members. The discussions also precipitated that the GSSA consists of a "friendly" group of people, which makes the Society accessible to everyone. We, however, also found that the GSSA is no longer very strong on influencing policy.

The challenges that were identified are mainly related to finances, raising the profile of the GSSA and its influence and finding enough people to become actively involved in the society. Retaining the knowledge base of experienced members, while also involving the younger grassland scientists was viewed as important, also for the leadership of the society.

We as council hope to see many of the GSSA members at the congress in June and hope for enthusiasm for the discipline of range and forage science.

# GSSA Council 2003/04

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## **JOURNAL NAME CHANGE: SUMMARY OF RESPONSES**

In the last *Grassroots*, there was a proposal that the name of the journal be changed to *Range & Forage Science*. The motivation for the change was that this simple alteration could have a major impact on the sustainability and international exposure of the journal to the benefit of African scientists. The following is a tally of responses from the Editorial Board of the journal: **4 Yes, 8 No**. On the “no” side, the main reasons given were that:

Ø the current name defines a niche for the journal,

- Ø there is no guarantee that a name change will have a positive effect, and
- Ø it is more important to achieve ISI rating.

The response from members was very much in line with the opinion of the Editorial Board.

Thank you all who responded.

Peter Scogings  
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