



grass roots

Newsletter of the Grassland Society of Southern Africa

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*One way to control bush encroachment... Just how strong is that fence?
Private game ranch near Musina.*

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*P.O. Box 41 • Hilton • Pietermaritzburg 3245 • South Africa
Tel: 033 390 3113 • Fax: 033 390 3113 • Cell: 083 256 7202
e-mail: admin@gssa.co.za • <http://www.gssa.co.za>*

EDITORIAL

Dear members

This is the last issue of *Grassroots* before the 2005 Congress. According to the organising committee, we're likely to have a healthy turnout this year, including an encouraging response from non-members of the GSSA, so all indications are that this will be a great Congress. There's still time to register and send in your abstracts, as the deadline date has been extended. You can find out more in this issue and in the previous issue of *Grassroots*, as well as on the website.

This issue of *Grassroots* is largely about housekeeping; the Annual General Meeting will be held at Congress, as usual, and there are some important decisions on the future of the Society that need to be made by members. We urge you to get involved and help the Council to decide the direction that the Society needs to take. After all, it's our Society, and we all need to guide those that have been entrusted with governing the GSSA, to ensure that the Society fulfils its mandate.

Over the years, there has been some criticism from members involved in pasture research that the Society doesn't cater for their interests. We are making a concerted effort to attract pasture practitioners and researchers to the Congress this year. We'll keep you updated on the programme via the website, the press and mail (electronic and snail).

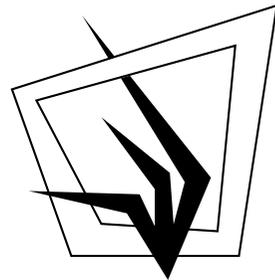
On that point, it's interesting that the dichotomy between pasture- and veld-

based grassland science research seems to be a largely southern African phenomenon. Of course, a great deal of work in natural rangelands is in the field of ecology trying to understand the incredibly complex interactions between factors in these systems. But the roots of the GSSA are still solidly founded on research on forage resources for game and livestock. Certainly, many people are still involved in both veld and pasture research. Cultivated pastures and veld form integrated parts of fodder-flow systems for livestock all over the country, and especially in the sourveld.

So we hope to see you all at Congress pasture and veld researchers, ecologists, economists, sociologists, conservators, technicians and managers. Everyone has a vital part to contribute to the GSSA, and the GSSA, in turn, to our constituencies.

See you in July!

Alan



GSSA Council 2004/05

President:

Nicky Allsopp
nallsopp@uwc.ac.za

Immediate Past President:

Annelie de Beer
asdebeer@nwpg.gov.za

Vice President:

Annelene Swanepoel
annelenes@elsenburg.com

Honorary Secretary:

Sigrun Ammann
kassiers@arc.agric.za

Honorary Treasurer:

Mike Panagos
panagosmd@tut.ac.za

Scientific Editor:

Pete F. Scogings
pscoging@pan.uzulu.ac.za

Public Relations Officer:

Nicky Findlay
findlayn@dae.kzntl.gov.za

Bulletin/Newsletter Editor:

Alan Short
alan.short@dae.kzntl.gov.za

Chairperson of Trust:

Winston Trollope
winfire@procomp.co.za

PAC Chairperson:

Leslie Brown
brownlr@techsa.ac.za

Additional member:

Justin du Toit
dutoitJCO@ukzn.ac.za

**Additional member
(Website co-ordinator):**

Dawood Hattas
dhattas@botzoo.uct.ac.za

Additional member:

Mphoya Thobela
mphoya@mvelo.co.za

Administrator:

Freyni du Toit
admin@gssa.co.za

News from Council

Sigrun Ammann

Dear GSSA members

The Council Exco and Council members from around Pietermaritzburg had a meeting on 20 April 2005 at Cedara. The deliberations were mostly about the up-coming Congress and the journal.

One of the aspects we discussed was the organizing of congresses in general and the problem of continuity and the fact that GSSA members have now become accustomed to contacting the administrator about GSSA matters, due to the GSSA now having a good administrative service. Future closer involvement of the GSSA administrator with the congress organizing committee will be explored and discussed further in the coming months.

The journal was also discussed, with one of the issues being the format i.e. printed versus on-line. This topic will be discussed at the AGM in July. The modern trend is on-line journals. There are, however, many people who still like a printed copy on their shelf. The format that the journal takes is also

linked to cost implications, which will have to be considered very seriously.

The Council feels encouraged about the way *Grassroots* has now re-established itself as the bulletin of the GSSA and hopes that members will contribute even more to its contents. Likewise the website is successful and user-friendly. Members are invited to visit the website and read the new additions such as the interviews that have been conducted with some GSSA members. Members are also encouraged to contact the website coordinator with contributions, resulting in a website that is interesting and useful.

At the AGM in July a constitutional change will also be debated relating to the quorum for the AGM. In recent years it has been very difficult to get a quorate meeting and in 2004 the AGM was in fact inquorate.

We are looking forward to seeing many GSSA members and others at Congress 40 at Kapenta Bay, Port Shepstone