

Coinciding with Grootfontein's centenary celebrations, the Grassland Society of Southern Africa (GSSA) held its annual congress at the College during July. Around 160 delegates attended the week-long function, travelling to the Karoo from around South Africa and neighbouring countries. Having been warned of the cold winter conditions, everyone padded up with extra layers, brought gloves and beanies, and enjoyed the low temperatures. The opening function combined an

overview of the College by the Principal, Strydom Schoonraad, the presidential address by Sikhhalazo Dube, and a keynote address on integrating science and policy by the well-known water

biologist Tally Palmer. Over the next few days there were talks by delegates from a wide range of backgrounds, as well as a special session on the invader shrub Slangbos, and a session titled "Rangelands, both sides of the coin", where farmers and scientists discussed issues on the interface of science and practice, including some interesting presentations on land reform success stories.

The rich history of Grootfontein was showcased with visits to long-term grazing trials, as well as a tour of the Museum led by Elana Kitching. A promising upshot was that several scientists expressed an interest in collaborating with Grootfontein on exploring further the interactions and links between soil, livestock, and plants in this semi-arid rangeland. The academic component of the congress ended with a discussion on Fracking in the Karoo, where presentations by local farmer

**46<sup>th</sup> Annual GSSA  
Congress held at  
Grootfontein  
Agricultural Development  
Institute.**

Justin du Toit  
Grootfontein Agricultural Development  
Institute, Middelburg, Eastern Cape,  
South Africa

Lukie Strydom, who had just visited the USA, and by Jonathan Deal of Treasure the Karoo Action Group, were well received by delegates. The discussion provided information to the Direc-

tor of GADI, Tino Herselman, for establishing what the future position of the Department of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries will be on the issue of shale mining in the Karoo. During and following the congress there was a wealth of positive comments from the delegates who had enjoyed the programme, the activities, the College, and the town of Middelburg. The GSSA thanks all who contributed in so many ways to making the event such a success.



Sikhlalazo Dube, Immediate Past President, Lorraine van den Berg, Vice President and Wayne Truter, President



GSSA Members kicking back after a long week of Science Talks



Klaus Kellner, Yolandi Els and Wayne Truter



GSSA delegates - Long term trial at Grootfontein: The oldest in Southern Africa



GSSA Group Picture