

By Zippo Lamprecht



Bloodline Veld Bull Club produces outstanding Boran bulls

The Bloodline Veld Bull Club was established in 2012 and has since performed several veld bull tests involving Boran bulls. The club is affiliated to Veld Bull and Ram Southern Africa (VBRSA) and is managed under my supervision. Data processing is conducted in conjunction with the well-known Dr Hannes Dreyer of Vrede. The principle and aim of veld bull tests are that beef can be produced sustainably from the veld. To be cost-effective and to remain competitive with other meat industries, the effectiveness of veld performance must be increased.

To realise this vision, the Bloodline Veld Bull Club endeavours to ensure that, by conducting meaningful testing under the protection of VBRSA, they are able to identify as many veld adapted Boran bulls as possible and to make them available to the industry. Bloodline Veld Bull Club and VBRSA also strive to scientifically, meaningfully, consistently and reliably apply performance data.

Boran veld bulls

Bulls are tested mainly on the veld for three reasons:

- **Adaptability:** The concepts 'adaptability' and 'hardiness' are often confused. Adaptability can be defined as the ability of an animal to survive, reproduce and produce in a specific area. Hardiness, on the other hand, refers to the animal's ability to adapt to sub-optimal environmental conditions.
- **Fertility:** The effect that high energy rations (concentrates) have on the development of the young animal's rumen, is well-known. However, concentrate-fed bulls often experience difficulty adapting to veld conditions and many are culled after a single mating season. Research on

its effect on fertility was conducted in Canada some time ago, but a South African study was only conducted over the last few years.

- **Growth on veld:** Producers farm with ruminants because of their ability to convert nutrients such as grass and other types of roughage into utilisable products such as meat and milk. Their rumen is a unique 'factory' that allows the animal to perform this function. The rumen should therefore be fully developed to be able to digest roughage.

Testing procedure

Boran bulls are introduced from the beginning of September to April of the following year. These bulls are given a maintenance lick in the winter test and a P6-phosphate lick and rock-salt supplement in summer. The bulls are weighed every three weeks and breeders receive progress reports during the testing phase. The duration of the testing period is usually between 180 and 240 days.

The following aspects are measured: Weight gain, condition score, muscling, temperament score, tick count, hair count, pelvic size and scrotum circumference.

Performance of Boran bulls

The following are calculated: Complete average daily gain (ADG), ADG in peak summer, tick resistance, veld feed conversion (VFC), pelvic size, Kleiber index, temperament, condition, muscling, scrotum and economic indices.



This Boran bull is a typical example of an outstanding SA Veld Bull with the distinctive Veld Bull branding on its body.

The average ADG was 700g per day over two different seasons achieved by Boran cattle in the Bloodline Veld Bull Club's veld bull tests. The average of the best bulls in different tests was 797g per day and the best bull gained 851g per day during the testing period, in an extensive winter and summer veld phase. The average VFC was 9,64g per day with the best bulls at 8,46g and the very best bull at 7,57g per day.

The average starting weight was 212kg with an average end weight of 325,5kg. The average starting weight of the best bulls in the different tests was 213,5kg and ended at 372kg. It is noted that the better veld bulls started with a weight of just 1kg above average. Therefore, an average bull ended up 46,5kg heavier at the end of the test. Thus at R20/kg, an extra R930 was earned at the lowest cost from natural veld.

For more information, contact Zippo Lamprecht on 082 396 9071 or the Boran Cattle Breeders' Society on 051 410 0900. Visit the website at www.boran.org.za.