



2014 Beefmaster Tour

Despite incessant, heavy rains, the Mpumalanga/Gauteng Beefmaster clubs went out of their way to ensure that the annual tour was once again a great success.

This year, Beefmaster breeders from across the country toured eastern Gauteng and scenic Mpumalanga.

The three-day tour started on Tuesday, 4 March at Manjoh Ranch near Nigel in welcome rain and wet, muddy conditions. Until that morning, it had been touch-and-go as to whether the tour would go ahead, as we had to make sure the farm roads were still passable.

After coffee at Manjoh Ranch, Gideon Brits showed the tour group guests around his huge and successful operation, Beefmaster Alliance.

This stud, a breed founder in South Africa, is one of the oldest and largest studs in the country, and was acknowledged as 'Herd of the Year' in 2013.

The bus, with about 50 breeders on board, then headed for Open Range Beefmasters, belonging to Jan van Heerden. Here, Jan's son, SW van Heerden showed us a herd of top-rate heifers that had just been mated.

Unfortunately, we could not make it to Willem and Sarie Pieterse of Sarwipi Beefmasters because of the heavy rains the night before.

ABOVE: A group of Beefmaster bulls. The quality and uniformity of the animals, as well as the size of the herds, all point to an excellent future for the breed. BEEFMASTER ALLIANCE

Snowy River, belonging to Jannie and Heidi Ungerer, was our next stop. Unfortunately, the weather was not conducive to cattle viewing because it was raining heavily. Despite this, the cattle we saw looked in prime condition.

A HERD TO WATCH

After lunch, we tackled the long road eastward to Mylpad near Morgenson. Johan and Sonja Pretorius had moved there only a few months earlier, but pulled out all the stops and showed us some fine animals. As new breeders, they certainly impressed us and theirs will be a herd

to watch in the future.

The last stop of the day was Kerneels and Rienie van Rensburg and their son Gerrie, near Ermelo. They are established breeders with a well-known, uniform and highly functional herd.

After checking in at the nearby hotel and changing and enjoying a hot bath, we returned to the Van Rensburgs for a delicious meal and a few drinks to conclude an interesting first day.

Day two started a little later than planned as we once again checked the weather and the roads. Eventually, we headed out



to Stefan and Lena van der Merwe of 5x5 Beefmasters. It turned out to be an adventurous journey, giving the youngsters on the bus a chance to prove their worth as they had to get out and push on numerous occasions!

STRONG FOUNDATION

Eventually our driver got us to our destination where we enjoyed a lavish breakfast in huge and beautiful gardens.

We then viewed the Van der Merwes' well-cared for cattle that had been bought from the renowned 4X4 stud two years before. We wish Stefan and Lena all the best as they build on this strong foundation.

Our next stop was Corneels and Jannie Greyling of Mooibank

Beefmasters near Wakkerstroom. Here we saw hardy cattle run extensively under extreme conditions. The medium-framed cows were functional and productive – real money-makers!

Unfortunately, we had to skip the visit to Hans and Marius Moolman of JM Beefmasters due to the ongoing rain and headed straight to Ignus van Niekerk of Sizana Beefmasters near Amersfoort.

Ignus is a young, enthusiastic new breeder who will go a long way. He also showed us several impressive oxen weighing more than a ton, which he claims he is keeping for 'lobola'.

In true Beefmaster-style hospitality, the Moolmans drove all the way to the

ABOVE:
The Beefmaster tour group at Mooibank Beefmaster.
PHOTOS:
BEEFMASTER SA

ABOVE LEFT:
Not even the rain could dampen the breeders' enthusiasm.

Van Niekerks to serve us the lunch they had promised. Then it was back to the luxury of the hotel to enjoy a hot bath, a good meal and a few beers.

Day three kicked off with a magnificent continental breakfast at Valmar Beefmasters near Carolina. Charles, Walter and Sheila de Villiers went out of their way to make us feel welcome after we had traipsed through rain and mud to view a group of highly impressive cattle.

Alzu is a well-known name associated with animal feed and eggs as well as Beefmaster cattle. Leon du Toit and Pieter Strydom explained their management systems and breeding programmes and showed the offspring from different sires used in the programme. The society can definitely benefit from their youthful enthusiasm.

ENJOYABLE AND INFORMATIVE

The last stop was Dunel Beefmasters belonging to Pieter (senior and junior) du Toit and Dr Willie Nel. Unfortunately, Willie was unable to be there. As they say in Texas: "For every successful stud, there's a partner working in town!" With the first rays

of sunlight peeping through the clouds, the tour came to an end.

Despite the copious rain and the wet, slippery roads, the tour was, as always, a huge success.

It was highly encouraging to see how the Beefmaster breed has progressed over the past few years. The quality and uniformity of the animals and the large herds of 1 000-plus cows can only bode well for a breed where the sky is the limit.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to the Mpumalanga/Gauteng clubs for their amazing hospitality and the lengths they went in order to accommodate us.

It truly was an unforgettable experience and a great time was had by all.

• Call Beefmaster SA on 086 111 3144.

