

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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AGRICULTURAL SECTION OF 2008 PRETORIA SHOW BOOMING

The 69th Pretoria Show, which is being held at the Tshwane Events Centre from 27 August to 7 September, will once again boast one of the most comprehensive and best agricultural programmes in South Africa.

Hanlie Delpont, manager of the Pretoria Show, says it is going exceptionally well with the Pretoria Show's agricultural section and it is one show that should not be missed by farmers of large and small livestock. "Although the high diesel prices have had a slight impact on the number of animals which are being transported from far, we are proud to host two international and two national championships, with record entries for both Brahman and Simmentaler. We are also welcoming the Suffolk breed, which has never been presented at the Pretoria Show before."

Some of the highlights of this year's Show include the International Simmentaler Championships, the International Brahman Championships, the National Pinzgauer Championships, the National Drakensberger Championships, the National Pedi Championships and the final round of the ARC Beef Star Performers and Herd of the Year Competition. For the first time in years, the show is hosting the Regional Saddle Horse Championships.

According to Delpont the agricultural section of the Show is bigger than ever. There are 160 horse stalls, and 30 additional temporary facilities that can accommodate on average 2 000 horses over the two weeks. The cattle stalls can accommodate 1 500 animals and are filled to capacity during showtime. The separate and user-friendly sheep and goat facilities can house about 700 animals.

Delpont says they are particularly excited to welcome the Suffolk breed at the show this year. "Five breeders will bring about 60 animals, which will be auctioned during the Show. Suffolk sheep are well-known for their high fertility and carcass quality, and the breed has an inherit ability to adapt to different environmental conditions, a characteristic which is confirmed by the fact that Suffolk sheep are found all over South Africa. We trust that the participation of this breed at the Pretoria Show will grow in future years."

Another highlight of this year's show is the participation of the first black horse riding school in South Africa, which will form part of the equestrian offerings at the Show. Enos Mafokate's riding school in Soweto will visit the Show with 30 of their horses and riders from the townships. This school was formed by Enos in 1990 after he discovered how badly animals were being treated in Soweto, especially by children. His lessons are free and a number of his riders have entered competitions elsewhere in the country, with good results.

BEEF CATTLE

A total of 11 cattle breeds will compete in this year's show, including the International Simmentaler Championships, which will be held on 2 and 3 September and the International Brahman Championships, which will be held from 1 – 3 September.

The other beef and dual-purpose breeds taking part in the Show are Dexter, Braunvieh, Limousin, Red Poll, Drakensberger, Simbra, Pinzgauers, Jerseys and Santa Gertrudis.

Fifteen beef breed bulls are qualifying for the 2008 Platinum Performance Awards. These awards, which is being held for the 30th time this year, is organised by the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) and Bayer Animal Health Care.

Platinum awards are issued annually by the ARC. The requirements for these awards are that the bull must have achieved Gold Merits in a phase C-growth test (C1, C2 and C3) during the previous year, while his dam must have achieved Elite status earlier in the same year in which the relevant bull received his Gold Merit.

The winners of these awards are not necessarily the top achievers of their breeds, however the awards fill a gap in the performance testing, namely linking a bull's official growth percentage with the fertility status of his mother – an important aspect of animal improvement.

CARCASS COMPETITION

The judging of the slaughter animals on the hoof (cattle and lambs) in this competition will be done on 30 August. The carcasses will be judged on the hook on 2 September at the Chamdor Abattoir in Krugersdorp. The normal auction and prize-giving will take place on 2 September.

PIGS

Some 15 boars and between 20 and 30 sows, varying between Large White, Landras and Duroc, will be on show.

HORSES

The horse show starts on 22 August, with judging from 08:00 (some days from 07:00) until 18:00, over a period of 14 days. Two arenas will be used for the lead reign, riding and harness classes. So far, 13 breeds will be competing in the various championships and the qualifying round for the show jumping World Cup promises to be a highlight on the programme. Shows of the beautiful Friesian horses and the Star Stallions will most definitely attract the cream of these breeds.

- The Pure Arabs show is scheduled to start the day before the show officially opens, on 26 August, 08:00 – 17:00 in the Main Arena. Judging is taking place on 26 August and will be done in the Main and East Arenas.
- The World Cup qualifying round for show jumping will take place from 29 – 31 August, 08:00 – 17:00, in the Main Arena.
- The Star Stallion is a spectacular event and will be held on 27 August from 19:30 in the Championship Ring.
- Some of the country's most beautiful Friesian horses can be seen in the Friesian horse show which will be held in the Main Arena on 1 September.
- The interbreed judging of horses is taking place in the Main Arena, on 6 September at 16:00.
- Enos Mafokate's Soweto based riding school will compete in their class on 4 and 5 September in the East Arena.

SHEEP AND GOATS

The National Championship of the Pedi breed will be judged at the Show this year, on 26 and 27 August in the Sheep Complex. The judging of the SA Boerbokke is being held on 1 and 2 September. There will again be a boerbok auction at the Show this year, which will be held on 3 September at 11:00 in the Sheep Complex.

The Kalahari Reds are coming to the Show for the third time this year. This breed will be judged on 1 and 2 September and will be auctioned in the Sheep Complex on 3 September.

Dorpers and White Dorpers will be judged on 4 September, and auctioned on 6 September.

FEATHERED FRIENDS

Some 450 poultry will be on show from 26 August – 1 September, including breeds like Ostrolops, Bramas, Orpingtons and Legons. During this time the pure bred poultry will also for sale. More than 300 fancy pigeons will compete in various competitions from 2 – 6 September.

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