

Spotlight on Agriculture

Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development • Directorate of Agricultural Research and Training • Private Bag 13184 • Windhoek

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Sandveld Research Station

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY

Sandveld Research Station lies approximately 60km northeast of Gobabis in the Omaheke Region. This farm was bought in 1968 by the Government, and is the only Research Station in the east-central part of Namibia. The mission of the station is to play the leading role in proper livestock and veld management research, through the provision of clear and practical messages to all role players in the agricultural sector.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

The following trials are carried out at Sandveld Research Station, or in its vicinity with the help of the personnel from Sandveld.

An economic and biological evaluation of beef production with four different stocking rates and two cattle types

The two cattle types used in the project are the indigenous Sanga cattle from the Caprivi Region (small framed / SF), and Simmentaler-Afrikaner crossbred cattle (large framed / LF). These cattle types are compared at four different stocking rates, namely 15, 25, 35 and 45 kg/ha.

Project objectives

- ❖ To investigate beef production per unit area with four fixed stocking rates and two cattle types.
- ❖ To determine the relationship between the stocking rates for maximum production per animal, maximum production per hectare and maximum profit per hectare.
- ❖ To determine the optimum stocking rate for sustained optimum animal production under varying climatic and economic conditions.
- ❖ To determine norms for carrying capacity and veld management in this area.



An example of a cow and her calf in the Large Frame and 25 kilogram per hectare stocking rate group.



One of the Sanga bulls used in the project.

The stocking rates are evaluated with respect to reproduction, production, as well as economic criteria such as production costs, netto income etc.

The Sanga cattle at Sandveld Research Station were registered as stud animals in 1996, and surplus animals are sold annually at a stud auction during July.

Table 1: Average reproduction figures of cow groups between 1987 and 1997.

Stocking rate (kg/ha)	Large frame				Small frame			
	15	25	35	45	15	25	35	45
Calving %	92.0	91.3	89.1	85.6	97.2	95.7	91.6	92.6
Weaning %	89.2	90.8	87.9	82.5	93.3	93.5	89.8	90.8
Weaning mass (kg)	239	232	215	205	160	154	150	146

Evaluation of oriental tobacco cultivars in Namibia

The aim of this project is to determine whether it is possible, in economical terms, to cultivate oriental tobacco under Namibian (dry land) conditions; and obviously, which cultivar should be used. The reason for tobacco cultivation is that it mainly serves as a cash crop.

Oriental tobacco was planted and harvested at Sandveld Research Station, as well as at the Drimiopsis resettlement camp.

Table 2: Various tobacco cultivars, as well as their respective production results.

Cultivar	Total yield kg/ha	Market yield kg/ha	Average price N\$/kg	Income N\$/ha
WOT 164	836.34	836.34	10.31	8624.90
WOT 104	426.33	426.33	10.61	4523.40
WOT 125	663.57	663.57	10.32	6848.00
WOT 127	763.03	763.03	9.24	7047.20
WOT 215	785.05	785.05	9.70	7618.90



Tobacco cultivation at Drimiopsis

Performance testing

The aim of performance testing is to improve the growth of animals, thus helping the farmer with selection of animals. The Phase D or farm growth test is executed at Sandveld Research Station. In this test, ten or more bull calves from the same breed from one or more breeders, are tested on the farm of one breeder or at a central point for post weaning growth and efficiency. Sandveld tests its own Nguni bulls as well as bulls from Omatjenne Research Station, and has also been approached in the past by emerging commercial farmers to test some of their bulls. This was done on a non-official basis. The results were used for the training of farmers in the selection of bulls for breeding purposes.

Training

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development is committed to serve all the farmers in Namibia, and therefore accepts the importance of training. Apart from the normal research activities, the personnel at Sandveld Research Station is also involved in the training of communal and emerging commercial farmers, as well as practical training of students. Training courses are organised and presented in the following fields: pasture management, selection of breeding animals, de-horning and castration, vaccination, branding of animals, herd management, as well as supplementary feeding. Courses are also presented in the fields of small stock farming, the integration of small stock farming into a beef cattle operation, marketing and any other subject which the farmers express a need for training. If the training cannot be provided by the Ministry, the farmers are assisted with finding and institution that can assist them.