



## **RED MEAT RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT SA**

### **RMRD SA press release re climate change workshop on 30 January 2013**

The livestock sector is often attacked by the media, especially regarding environmental and sustainability concerns. The livestock industries in South Africa recognize the effect of livestock on Greenhouse Gas (GHG) production and climate change of between 4 and 8%. The livestock industries met on 30 January 2013 to interrogate current research commissioned as well as relevant projects and programs by other role players regarding climate change. The most prominent researchers in South Africa and industry partners were engaged.

The aim of the workshop was to establish a centre for excellence in the livestock industry of South Africa for climate and the environment. They have the following objectives:

- Share available information and dissemination of information
- Collate other information regarding studies conducted as well as current initiatives
- Study and contribute to the “Climate sector plan for Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries” as published on 7-1-2013 for comment by 7-4-2013
- Build and secure an information centre and data bank
- Build and secure Research and Development capacity
- Identify areas of risk and potential risks, as well as prioritization thereof
- Conduct Research and Development studies

The above should be done in close liaison with participating industries so as to effectively address the special challenges facing each industry.

The industry stated their particular needs and priorities. This was followed by the following speakers:

Dr G Scholtz	Report on African meeting.
Dr F Engelbrecht (CSIR)	Climate change projections for sub-Saharan Africa.
Dr BScholes (CSIR)	Projections of the impact of climate change on forage production and animal performance in South Africa in the 21st century.
Dr L Stevens (NWU)	Measuring of C and N fluxes in pasture, livestock & manure management systems.
Prof R Schulze (UKZN)	Climate change & livestock – some perspectives.
Dr A Hassan (UP)	Highlights on the progress of EU/DST funded Animal Change project.
Mr L du Toit (TUT)	Greenhouse Gasses of SA Livestock.
Dr G Backeberg (WRC)	WRC FUNDED PROJECTS: An overview of current research projects.

Important factors that must be considered:

- The nutritional value of meat, dairy and products thereof, its function in a sustainable diet and the implications of reductions in meat consumption in the health status of a society where micro-nutrient deficiencies are increasingly prevalent;
- The multidimensional role of livestock in a sustainable food, leather and fibre system;
- Possible adaptive responses to reduce vulnerability of the emerging sector to climate risks;
- The noteworthy progress made by the meat industry in an effort for continuous improvement.

The workshop was concluded with a concept R&D plan for the Climate Change and Water Footprint research focus area. The following challenges facing the industry are to be addressed:

1. Restoring the value of grasslands / rangelands
2. Pastoral risk management and decision support systems
3. Improved production efficiency
4. Global warming and sustainable livestock production
5. The disconnection between food and nutrition needs
6. Greenhouse gasses from South African livestock, carbon sequestration and water footprint (Measuring techniques and Database of national and regional figures)
7. Greenhouse gas, water and waste management
8. Emerging sector
9. Food security

The meat sector considers it vital to have a balanced perception of how products are produced and consumed and best contributes to a sustainable food system. It is encouraging that other industries contribute resources to RMRD SA to manage the process.

Liaison will be coordinated by Prof Hettie Schönfeldt (RMRD SA Research Manager) and Dr Giel Scholtz (Subject Working Group Coordinator).

Contact us for more information.

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