

HEADLINE STORY

REST IN PEACE?

Five years ago, because of certain circumstances, we were saying that litter registrations were going to drop, and two years later we were more adamant on the issue than ever. Logic demanded that they could not remain at even their lowly levels of that time. We then noticed a slight improvement, but not one that would have come anywhere near returning our favourite dog to his rightful place as a family pet in the average household. We probably took credit for this unexpected upturn in the fortunes of the registered Rhodesian Ridgeback in the country where it is recognised as the national dog.

Well, we have now been very rudely put back in our place. Last year, 1998 to August 1999, we registered 594 puppies. Sure it was an increase on 97/98 but we still fell out off the top ten registrations at KUSA. Luckily we did not fall far, only to number 11, and then not by a large margin. There was every hope of recovery in the following year. But now reality has hit us. For the year 1999 to August 2000 we have dropped to number 13 which we share with Pomeranians. That placing doesn't sound too serious: but from almost 600 puppies in the previous year we have now managed to register only 365. That represents a reduction of almost 40%! It also means that should we intend recovery to our weak 1999 position we must now improve by 63%!!

That must be totally out of the question, but it is a natural consequence of falling behind by a horrendous 38.55%. The Foundation exists purely for the benefit of the Rhodesian Ridgeback. It supports any and all the clubs which in turn support and represent the breed, wherever. But when we say that the Foundation acts on behalf of all the Rhodesian Ridgebacks we mean just that. We accord no exclusivity to a KUSA registration. We are not affiliated to KUSA and are in no way beholden to it. On the other hand we have helped to form a club which is affiliated and which does its best to guard the interests of the breed at KUSA. We are assisting with the formation of another club in Mpumalanga which already has a standing committee. Hopefully a third club in Port Elizabeth will reach the starting blocks in the next few months. We are convinced that this is the right way to go. But we must not be blind to the fact that KUSA's involvement in the RR is precariously tenuous. They may use a representation of the RR in their emblem in the traditional 'dog on a rock' pose, but even in a wildly enthusiastic moment they don't reach 10% coverage of the RR. Even if they did it is now



coming down to 6%. Closer to reality is 5% coverage which is now headed towards 3%. The view is easily supported that they have between 1% and 2%, which puts them (us) on the extinction trail.

For all we know it suits KUSA to have smaller numbers of RR's on their books, though it doesn't strike one as logically likely. It will definitely result in fancy dogs in the KUSA show rings fetching very fancy prices for the 'dedicated' few. But this would be far from the family pet image that we envision for

the RR; so maybe we have got it all wrong. We also see the RR in an outdoor capacity i.e. the ultimate sporting dog. But that is his natural bent, and he should be perfectly capable of fulfilling that function while doing duty as a family friend and protector also.

Up in the Rhodesia of yore the RR started off as an exclusively sporting dog whereas in RSA the original components of what was to become the RR were expected to protect the family, the wagon/goods/chattels, and livestock of



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that family, and in addition to help in hunting for the pot. This is a very rough approximation of his history but what is important is that the RR was always a multi-faceted performer even when hunting various animals, and he was expected to be accomplished in all fields. Perhaps we expect too much of him, but we aim to get as much out of him now as we did in years gone by, and we believe he won't let us down.

We welcome any comments from readers on this matter which must be of enormous importance to the future of the breed as a registered dog. Life in Zimbabwe is pretty tough right now and certainly does not lend itself to simple and regular breeding practices. In itself this is a very serious matter, but from a strictly numerical point of view the breeding up north is not all that material and approximated only 10% of what was taking place in the 'area of origin' (Zimbabwe plus RSA). What with this disastrous slump in RSA it is quite likely that Zim's contribution has maintained its 10% level, but they do produce excellent dogs up there and right now any loss is serious. We can only hope that they are still producing those 'brighter and lighter' dogs for which they are so renowned.

Let's take a pessimistic view and say that 2% of the RR's are KUSA registered and that they are aimed at 1% right now. This means that we are in a 99% 'mongrel' scenario. If a ridgeie does something naughty which catches the public eye then we stand a 99% statistical chance of being correct when we say 'but of course it's not one of our registered dogs'. Even if it is in fact not a registered dog does it make the slightest difference to Mr Public. If it's a Ridgeback then that is what it is, no arguing, and we will be just as culpable as sin because we (KUSA) are the only recognised representative of the breed around. Our participation/share may diminish but not our responsibility.

This is a very difficult position to be in and it is going to get worse. There are a lot of very recognisable Ridgebacks out there and no-one is going to be fooled by the 'cross-breed' story. Does the same scenario obtain for other breeds? Are 99% of the recognisable staffies also so called; 'cross-breeds'? It would be very difficult to assume so but someone must have an idea of the total approximate number of dogs there are around and about and just how many of them are registered. Surely at least a quarter of the canines out there have KUSA birth certificates. If not it's easy to understand KUSA's predicament, but with falling, drastically falling, participation where do we go from here?

BOARD CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Before we get into overweight items like that headline story on the front page we would just like to cover what is hopefully, finally, a success story. And here we are pulling that heavy old chestnut out of the deep-freeze, the WEB SITE! We worked so hard on it that, like Topsy, it grew and grew until it weighed out at 40meg., or so the story went. With Bill Jukes moving to PA and putting renewed pressure on our manpower (the Puppy Finder job in particular) we had further impetus to take drastic action and it was a matter of either dumping the whole thing or getting in some help. Perhaps this extract from the minutes of our January meeting will explain what had happened in sufficient historical detail. ...

"The Chairman said we must consider the overall computer/IT situation in its new context in RSA. Our capabilities in this field were at the forefront in the world, but we have lost much expertise in the last year or so to overseas interests, as he and Laurie V could vouch for, from family emigration. The resulting additional burden on those remaining is taking its toll. Although both Rob/Belinda W and Charlie P are more than competent enough and wish to do the job, circumstances have moved beyond their control..."

So we have now moved on apace and the address of our domain is < rhodesianridgeback.org.za >, so please go to it and tell us what you think of it. Constructive criticism will be most welcome. As you will see it is nowhere near 40meg., we slimmed it down a lot and we are particularly keen to obtain comments on the Breeders/Puppy portion.

It remains still in construction and we offered short term display free of charge to several current interested parties just to have some examples available for you. We are confident that you, and they for that matter, will be very happy to support it in the future on the basis of the fee structure provided. If you are a member of the RRCFS, or a Sponsor of RRIF, it costs you only R 50 to have your full address particulars displayed for the world to see, and at R 10 per entry per month the availability of pups and stud dogs is for nothing.

With the scheme in its infancy we obviously are not promising to maintain these rates, and when you think of the cost of what one advertisement in our Star newspaper costs you can see what a gift it is. As it operates on a very straightforward basis (you provide a hard copy of your insert with your

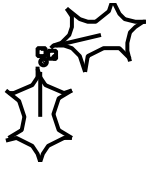
money and we put it on with an automatic expiry date) it should be simple to administer. It avoids the monumental problem faced by Bill J who is notified of the availability of puppies but NEVER of when they have all been sold. We can always delete an item before expiry date against hard copy request, but if you want to extend an item you must get your request and money in well before the aforementioned expiry date

We hope to operate the system as stated on the site for a year before adjusting anything. (price schedule included), but please understand that we have no experience whatsoever in the practical operation of this facility and must continue on the basis of trial and error, hopefully with a minimum of the latter. A point already partially considered concerns exclusivity, i.e. do we discriminate against non-members/sponsors and exclude them from participation? We must admit that it would make good economic sense. On the other hand what happens if we double the present charges for the basic Breeders entry to R 100 for members/sponsors and R 200 for those who do not enjoy that categorisation – do they automatically convert R 100 to sponsorship?

There is an area where it definitely varies from the initial concept and that is with regard to the Breeders/Puppy portion. The original idea was to have a listing of breeders on a one line basis with an indicator reflecting puppy and stud dog availability, one click and you went to the detailed portion. At present levels that technique would be redundant, but when interest builds up, particularly internationally, we shall revert to the original intention.

ADVISORY NOTICES:

An item which took up much time at a recent Board Meeting concerned the Advisory Notice on Injections, particularly for Parvo Virus (AN4). Now when we describe these statements as Advisory Notices we mean just that, they are not obligatory demands. They are compiled with the help of people who have expertise and experience and, in consequence, enjoy the attributes of self-generated authority. However, when it comes to the matter of Injections, whether subcutaneous or intravenous, we are entering into the operational sphere of the veterinary practitioner. This problem also arises in the case of our "Boere-raat" section which was backpedalled for several months as a result of this point. We are a small backyard



Merry Christmas



newsletter aspiring to greater things which is not aware of all the pitfalls and ramifications associated with "publication". We don't even carry a disclaimer anywhere, except perhaps for that "E&EO associated with show results. But we are trying to help the owners and breeders of RR's wherever they may be, and lots of them don't have vets around the corner. We think of that desperately ill dog in Northern Botswana which was taken 150 km to Hwange in Zimbabwe for treatment; and that one in the North of the Congo who enjoys perfect health, which is just as well because if he doesn't your guess is as good as mine when it comes to veterinary attention (anyone for Nigeria, say?); or the bitch in Madagascar that developed a boil on its shoulder which probably can only be attended to if flown to South Africa. Now these examples are very easy to understand, but from a practical point of view the owners of those dogs are not much worse off than a lot of farmers in various parts of RSA: which is why they personally carry out most of the health requirements on their animals, and here we think primarily of cattle, goats and sheep. And our Ridgebacks are the best suited dogs for their environment.

When we started AN4 (and from its number you can see that it was very long ago) we were putting forward the benefit of extensive experience gained in the war against parvo. That routine injection at six weeks is perfectly satisfactory in cases where the risk of contracting parvo is low (or normal). But then there is the 'moderate' level where you've had a case or your neighbour has. Then there is the 'severe' level where a few pups have been lost usually from more than one litter simultaneously. Now we know how to prevent these deaths, and we also know of 'alternative treatment', and even if your vet is only 50 km away (or to make it more definite let us say 100 km) you have a big problem pulling infected pups through by relying solely on that vet. If these pups are going to live the success hangs totally from your acumen: you also have cases where you save the pups and lose the mother.

In view of the paper presented on injections at the RRWC 2000 Congress we decided to do the same and cover the whole spectrum of your vaccine strategy. But then how do we reduce it to a simple one-page document. Again we seem to be producing something very suitable for a book but not for AN4.

PUPPY REGISTRATIONS HALVED:

You will find the puppy crash story cropping up here and there. The long

ago anticipated decline was attributed at that time to the change in H.D. requirements. This may or may not be the main reason behind it but one thing is sure and that is it is not the sole cause. For many this x-raying thing is just not a logistical proposition and for those people the ruling is a purely discriminatory measure. For others it just isn't worth the hassle, ridgies have good hips so why worry in the first place.

Just so that interpretation and context is clarified the Chairman must declare that his personal views on H.D. don't touch sides with the current dispensation at any point. He finds however that he is in total agreement with the practice of K.C. (Kennel Club) in Great Britain. The salient points there are (1) there is no compulsory requirement to x-ray originating from K.C. or the specialist clubs. (2) There is no restriction on K.C. registering litters based on H.D. in any form whatsoever. (3) The specialist clubs advise their members to x-ray their dogs before breeding them and advise them also that the score is favourable up to 20. (4) Because they use the hip scoring method it means that they are given basic/understandable/checkable details on the whys and wherefores of those hips. (But it could be further improved by allowing the scorer to make an adjustment to reduce or increase the score of each hip should he feel that the resultant total did not reflect fairly upon the total integrity of the hip.)

The number of puppies registered in RSA is well enough known to you right now. In UK they do about 1 200, i.e. more than three times our number. Haven't heard of any H.D. disaster over there. Disclosure is always the preferred route, and for those who won't, why not leave that questionable practice in the proper disclosure form by inserting two question marks to fill the places where the two numbers should appear (two zeros preferred). When the results of an examination are submitted they would replace the question marks.

Before anyone jumps to the wrong conclusion the Chairman also makes perfectly clear that he is 110% behind AN1 which recommends dogs graded 0.0 for breeding purposes. Contact your Club if you want further information.

SHOW RESULTS:

We have been a bit lax in reporting on the show results lately. Now we have picked up the major chunk of that history through the kind assistance of KUSA. Wasn't all that easy though; in addition to the marked catalogues located in the filing cabinet there were two separate

piles in baskets as well. It is a remarkably mind-shattering exercise capturing these statistics [only exceeded by checking them] and we feel no shame in attaching the E&OE disclaimer. We certainly do our best to obtain 100% accuracy but we are putting our own error possibility on top of all the earlier stages in the chain. We have never been convinced on the degree of interest displayed by the Club's members in these statistics. They are doubtlessly read avidly by those of them who do in fact attend shows, whether in P.E. or Johannesburg. They are also of interest to overseas people and a very few of those persons interested in purchasing a puppy. So just by way of variation we shall leave the show results out of our newsletter this time round and put them on the website for the time being, until the next issue. Let's hear how you feel about it.

KUSA ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

In the Feb 2001 issue of Dogs in Africa we see how KUSA obtained its income for the year ended 31 August 2000. The total income earned was R 2 447 000, and the main contributor thereto was R 1 144 000, which came from Registrations. That is KUSA earned almost half its income from Registrations alone. For that year the value of Registrations increased by R 72 000 which equated to 6.8%. Subscriptions received from members totalled R 583 000, increasing by R 70 000 (13.6%) on the previous year. The third most important source of income is Show Entries and amounted to R 238 000 after increasing by R 7 000 (3.1%). The last item of consequence is Affixes: as it must represent almost pure profit it seems strange that it features so strongly, but it did total R 131 000 and came about as a result of a R 2 000 increase (1.5%). The remaining R 350 000 income derives from nine detailed sources, not one of which is remarkable.

By combining the earnings from Registrations and Affixes you obtain a total of R 1 275 000 which is more than half the total. More importantly it represents what is directly obtained from the breeding of dogs. And that overlooks other similar source income included in the likes of Transfers and Search Fees, with added contributions to come from Stationery Sales and Sundries. Let's say that these various other minor items contribute a further R 125 000, then we see that 'Breeding' contributed R 1 400 000.

By comparison if we do a similar exercise for 'Showing' we have R 238 000 for Show Entries which can be increased by R 44 000 for Show Licences and by say, R 24 000 from Stationery Sales and Sundries, that is a



Happy New Year



At the next door table from the next door country

grand total of R 306 000 which is not so grand when compared with that R 1 400 000.

Obviously this exercise looks at Revenue exclusively and doesn't consider the relative costs which 'Breeding' attracts as opposed to 'Showing'. Nonetheless it does indicate that by far the most important activity from KUSA's point of view is the extent to which its members indulge their breeding interests. It would be interesting to know how they would cope with a 40% reduction in total income. It would help to revive memories of the Staffie episode; but even that would not be comparable as not so long before the Staffie registrations came crashing down they had been hurtling upwards. That fall was a technical correction. The fall for Ridgebacks can't fit the same description.

ACROBAT PROGRAM.

As you will have noticed previously we are particularly keen for you to receive this newsletter on the Acrobat programme. There are many reasons for this, not the least of which is the significant savings for the Club. To this end an insert was added to the last issue giving you an example of how you could receive it on your computer and providing instructions on how you could go about it. As luck would have it "the best laid scheme o' mice and men gang aft a-gley" and having inserted the requested number of copies in the RIFF news preparatory to postage it was discovered that more were required to meet the full mailing. So a batch was then photocopied which did tend to destroy the whole objective. So, to that quarter of the recipients who were disappointed to see no improvement in the insert when compared to their copy of the newsletter we say sorry, the gremlins were hard at work. And exacerbating the matter (the photocopying can be of a diabolical standard;) it has been noted that in some copies you couldn't even make out the issue number in the masthead. Also, unfortunately, the club can't track back on who received what.

THE LDD

In this issue of the LDD we take a softer line on the lives of our dogs out there in the wilds as we cover the Marloth Park story. We obtained a resident's personal experiences several months back at the time when a thief was caught (pursuing his nefarious activities) by a lion and summarily dispatched. The residents were incensed when the authorities moved in and took out several lion in 'retribution', as they saw it. So the story deals with how humans live with wild animals as opposed to our interest in

how our Ridgebacks cope with them. Next issue we should be back online with, we hope, a story on how a Ridgeback will approach lion. Now we don't know of anyone who actually uses RR's to bay lion anymore, the modern rifle has superseded all demands in that direction, but they are unequalled in their ability to warn of nearby danger and, more particularly, to locate the big cats which makes them irreplaceable when locating lion and leopard. The average Ridgie is pretty frightened of lion, so you will be very surprised to learn just how close a bitch will go, so to speak, right into the jaws of one of nature's most relentless and sophisticated killers.

STIG CARLSON.

It is with deep regret that we report the death of Stig Carlson. In our previous issue we announced that we had a copy of his excellent CD. The Rhodesian Ridgeback world will miss his incisive and reasoned defence of the breed, so often in totally unwarranted and improbable circumstances. Yet another great loss to our breed. We extend our condolences to his family and the many people who will miss him.

FINDING REASONS FOR THE DECREASED REGISTRATIONS.

We dropped a line to a few breeders, saying we would like to present the opinions of those who were deeply involved in the breed. We asked firstly, why there had been such a drop and what, if anything, should be done to correct the situation. Well, that certainly was not a successful way of obtaining copy for this newsletter.

Some people have a lot to say but shy away from committing themselves on paper, but this is not likely to have been the case in this instance. The uncomfortable truth is that the failure to respond speaks eloquently and loudly on their behalf.

But with the foregoing reaction being recognised at the time as the likely outcome, an alternative investigation was immediately instigated.

You will find a separate article on the issue, prepared by one of our members. She records the reasons given her and they do not make comforting reading for KUSA.

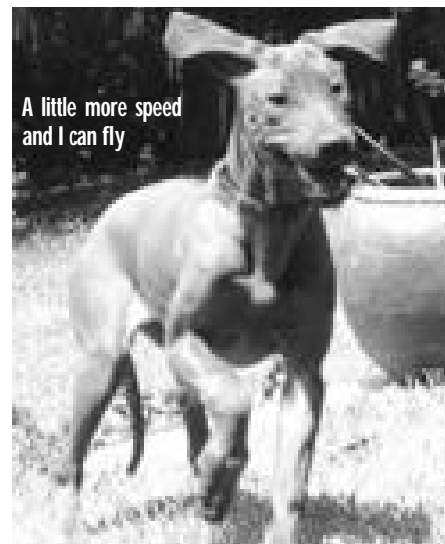
CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR PARTY

The Board held its year-end Christmas and New Year party at the Indaba Hotel on Friday 1st December 2000. It was a very successful and enjoyable get-together. Though organised by the Board (Liz Penpraise in fact) it is not an exclusive

function and any Club Member is most welcome as is any other person who has the interest of our breed at heart.

These annual parties represent the only occasion on which we can all get together in a non-business format. We've tried the odd show in the past but totally without success so far. Maybe that is the reason we all enjoy this annual event so much. We would also like to explain that it is not a freeby for the Board, they all pay their own way. In fact, on this occasion, it actually generated R 600 for the Foundation's funds. We had arranged an R 85 per head covert charge with the Indaba Hotel only to discover on arrival that they were running a special of 'pay R 85 for one and get the other free'. One of our astute visitors suggested we collect the full price from those present and give the Foundation the excess. This idea was accepted by all (maybe a bit of muttering from one, who was over-ruled) and again your Foundation garnered direct financial support from Board Members.

You enjoy many benefits from a hard working Board who derive no financial benefit whatsoever but who do devote an inordinate amount of time to the interests and well-being of you and your dog. We are always glad to accept assistance and right now we need a replacement for Bill Jukes who is retiring to the quiet seclusion of Port Alfred. He very ably carried out the duties of Treasurer, supervised our archives, issued meeting notices and minutes, maintained records of sponsors and members, looked after the stocks and sales of merchandise, and made sure the hall was booked for all Board and Club meetings. Maybe someone out there can help us, and do it in the full knowledge that the downside consists only of being co-opted onto the Board or the Committee. But in the meantime, don't be surprised if the pictures of the party show us enjoying ourselves.



DOG LOST IN JOHANNESBURG

Our one year old male pup becomes very distressed while travelling. He has plenty space at the back of the van which is big enough for him to even run around in. However, though happy to lie down in relative comfort at speeds up to 60 km/hr, he becomes increasingly distressed as the needle moves up to normal touring speeds. His over-stressed condition became very evident when panting built up to a hoarse crescendo, and he jammed his nose in the minute gap between the driver's seat and body work.

In an effort to get him over this hurdle it was decided to dose him with Eco-Fear and take him on a quick trip to town. The Eco-Fear had been very effectively used on a bitch who didn't like fireworks; in the previous year's Guy Fawkes she had taken seven days leave of absence as a result of excessive bangs in the next door property, travelling six or so kilometres to visit the rubbish dumps (according to observations) on the N3 opposite Alexandra. No need to emphasise the dangerous nature of the roads in the vicinity, certainly not to someone who believes the Ridgie is totally devoid of road sense.

The Eco-Fear experiment failed and a highly stressed one year old Ridgie was left in the vehicle with windows slightly open while he visited the Pineware spares shop on the other side of the street to obtain parts which would permit improved functioning of a jug kettle. Less than ten minutes later he started walking the thirty metres to where the vehicle had been parked only to experience that let down feeling so commonly suffered by Johannesburg motorists, no car. Statistics tell us that over a third of vehicles purchased in RSA are acquired to replace those that were stolen, and here was yet another contribution to that disgraceful statistic.

But, oh yes, not only was the car gone, so was the dog and mobile. A half-hour search of the area revealed nothing so it was assumed that the dog was now in unfriendly hands. Many traumatic days followed, but within twenty four hours all the police stations, vets, SPCA and AACL branches, and that well known expert in dog recovery (Mrs Gibson), had been notified and advertisements and pamphlets were in production. Within two hours the mobile was put off line and the next day it was determined that it had been connected to the Diepfloof beacon/tower within twenty minutes of the car's disappearance, time

enough to drive from Reuven (where the vehicle was stolen) to that part of Soweto. So all efforts were concentrated on Reuven and Diepkloof (approximately eight kilometres apart, as the crow flies), but bearing in mind that the space in between was traversed by both the N1 and M1, the busiest roadways in the Johannesburg system. Advice was freely offered from all sides, and one gem consisted of the statement that the robbers would ditch the dog as quickly as possible because he was such an 'unusual type' that he would only draw attention to them.

So, he had disappeared on Wednesday 8th and it was decided not to contact the Cleansing Dept. After two days we comforted ourselves with the hope that by the tenth day he would have recovered from the trauma and then start walking home. About fifteen kilometres due north, and basically straight along the N1. And the roads to be crossed in the process? It was not a satisfying possibility so we continued making daily trips to the area and



maintained contact with all the authorities. We only visited one SPCA once, so false alarms never became a feature.

It was now Monday 13th, and we were planning out the day. We received our second call to date – the previous one had been from the Reuven (Booyens) SPCA. This second caller had obtained our number from that SPCA when she asked them to catch the Ridgeback who was running around in the street: they advised her that they would only catch a dog which was on private property, but provided our telephone



number. She told us the dog was wearing a choke-chain, we told her to call him by name, entice him into a secure area, and offer him water and any food conveniently to hand – and we made rapid tracks to our car.

We loaded the young fellow's mother into the car and set off with great hopes. He was located in Ormonde, basically centrally located between Reuven and Diepkloof. When we turned the corner we recognised him from forty metres behind a large gate. He sort of said hello to us, but went over the top about his mother. His savour was accustomed to handling nothing bigger than cats and had provided him with some feline food, which he grudgingly ate. So we put one end of a lead on him and the other in her hand and took a photo very quickly, before he dragged her around. We exchanged pleasantries but not the offered reward money, so we set off arranging for token presents before leaving the suburb of Ormonde.

He seemed to be in very reasonable shape, and certainly not traumatised. In fact he was unbearably cheerful: pretty thin around the middle, but otherwise in good condition, in other words he looked as if he was in 'bush-trim'. His nails did look shorter and for two days he moved with care on smooth pads, particularly the rear ones. He was even more affectionate, bubbly, and chirpier than ever, and we didn't get a vet to check him over. He was given a quick check-out for fleas, which proved negative, but three days after return he broke out with a heavy crop of ticks, at least forty, over his shoulders back and neck.

He did show signs of minor damage, probably caused by forcing escape from a containment room. His right nostril was badly grazed, his right lip was devoid of hair along the edge, and the inside of the

front leg was lightly torn on and around the dew-claw. But now, ten days after his loss, he looks as good as new.

So all of this bolsters one's faith in the survival capabilities of these wonderful dogs.

One very noticeable change in his behaviour, however, is his attitude to traffic. Ever since his return he is more than wary of passing motorists. The faster they travel and the closer they pass the greater his fear, and he has a strong inclination to dive for cover in the bushes on the garden side of the pavement. So far his fear is not diminishing but time will help, and in the interim, it is comforting to have a Ridgeback that gets as far as possible from cars and traffic in general. By contrast he is definitely improving within the vehicle.

It was also decided to try him out at an open show. He reacted well enough for a 14 month male who had never met up with a dog other than his mother before. He didn't like being the object of scrutiny in the ring itself but was quite happy to rub noses with a very good Nomvuyo at ringside - great to see one of them in the Johannesburg area. He didn't become over excited, or anything else,



His saviour, Mrs Larsen

in the presence of such varied company so one assumes he is as well balanced as any un-socialised dog can be. On that subject however should ridgebacks really



after his return (at window)

have to be socialised; shouldn't the family pet be stable enough to mix with his fellow canines without causing lots of excitement? On the other hand, when running a bunch of healthy males around the ring in close proximity shouldn't we expect to hear the odd grumble, and if we don't doesn't it indicate that our males are short of 'spunk'?

But where the blazes was he for five days, and what the heck did he get up to: if only he could talk!

KUSA REGISTRATION OF RR'S DOWN BY 40 %!

A survey was done for RRIF to try and establish why the number of KUSA registered RR's dropped by nearly 40% in the period Sept.99 - Aug.2000. Telephonic interviews were done with breeders right across the country, mostly "formal big" breeders that registered more than 30 puppies in the period from Sept.1998 - Dec 2000. A few smaller, but very involved breeders were also contacted for their valuable opinions. None of the breeders came up with a definite reason or problem, but various ideas were mentioned.

Money.

Money, the lack thereof or unwillingness to pay, definitely seems to be a problem in the Free State and KZN, where numerous "backyard breeders" are selling unregistered puppies for as little as R200-00. Some of the breeders are of the opinion that the market has swung in favour of unregistered puppies. A KUSA registered puppy can not be sold for less than R800-00 to make breeding viable. (It costs +/- R600-00 to raise a KUSA registered puppy up to 8 weeks!) Many breeders, however, feel that money is not a factor at all. They are still selling all their puppies at their predetermined prices.

Laxness and ignorance.

One of the breeders expressed the

opinion that some breeders are lax and do not treasure the breed and therefore do not register the puppies. A very interesting statement was that prospective breeders are not aware of the regulations and costs involved to breed KUSA registered puppies. They bought a show quality puppy at a considerable price and thought that was it! Many are not prepared to spend more money on HD X-rays, KUSA membership fees and puppy registration fees. The breeder selling the "original" puppy is responsible to inform and educate the prospective breeder.

HD Restriction.

Most breeders welcomed this restrictive measure in order to continue sound RR breeding! Quite a few are having elbow X-rays done as well! Having HD X-rays done are a once off inconvenience but problems such as taking a litter of puppies for their inoculations, taking breeding dogs for their annual injections, keeping kennels clean and puppies healthy can be much more problematic than HD X-rays.

Time consuming + hard work = breeding (full time job).

All good breeders have one thing in common! They all agreed that breeding puppies is very time consuming and requires hard work! Many first time breeders are

disillusioned and do not breed again. It was also mentioned that many of the "informal" breeders had to go back to work due to economic reasons and do not have time to breed anymore.

General.

"Formal" breeders, which constitute a rather limited breeding pool anyway, have their "seasons" and the short time under consideration in this survey is not enough to prove much.

South-African people's lifestyle has changed considerably over the past few years and more and more people are staying in townhouses which are not suitable for RR's and security villages where BBR and Sentry Security are welcome but not dogs. (Is there still such a high demand for RR's and where is the market - on the farms?)

Advertising, publications and educating the public were some of the suggestions to make the general population more aware of the Rhodesian Ridgeback. It must be taken into account that RRIF has only been advertising and "educating" actively for the past two years and that the dogs purchased in that time will only come into "production" now.

Last but not the least, Nature has its own laws and should never be forgotten!

Adoreé Louw.

AIRFREIGHTING PUPPIES/DOGS

We've mentioned before the enormous difference in costs when airfreighting dogs and puppies from overseas sources as opposed to from South Africa. Perhaps we shouldn't make a big deal out of it here because we are quite out of step with the rest of the world and it is to our advantage.

The first thing to recognise when airfreighting live animals is the fact that the airfreighting charge is based on volume rather than weight. They use the actual mass if it is greater; the formula they use to determine weight from the volume is such that the volumetric weight is most unlikely to be exceeded by actual mass.

To determine the volumetric weight they multiply the three maximum dimensions of the container (the height, depth and length of the Varikennel) expressed in centimetres and then divide by 6000, to convert the volume to a weight expressed in kilograms. The freight rate is then quoted in terms of their currency per kilogram and by multiplying the one by the other you obtain the basic freight charge.

There are a few other 'add-ons' of a fairly innocuous financial effect such as a documentation charge of about R 100 and a fuel surcharge of say R 1 per kilogram but, though a bit of a nuisance as they just seem to add up an up they will be disregarded below as not having a material effect. At the end of the day what really matters is what they charge per kilo for airfreighting the cargo.

This survey was done in July 2000 and since then the cost in our terms has only deteriorated on account of the Rand following its routine downward trend. As a result the exchange rates actually used are stated, but it doesn't detract from the obvious difference between the rates for one direction opposite those for the other.

Let's start with costs for exporting the dog from RSA. Austrian Airways quoted R 32.31 per kg as did Airlink Cargo, R 34.34 was the KLM rate, R 33.08 for Air France, and R 30.90 for TAP. It can be seen that the rates vary slightly which must be expected with the distance to the destinations not being equal. Those destinations are in fact Vienna, Athens, Amsterdam, Paris, and Lisbon.

Let us now look at the return rates. Austrian Air did not want to answer that question at all and asked us to refer to their offices in Vienna. They were probably the most fussy Airline to deal with and wished to be assured that a

passenger was travelling on the same flight as the dog, and for this purpose they wanted the party booking in the dog to produce a valid ticket in addition to the routine vet's certificate and vaccination certificate. Though Airlink advised the cost of exporting they asked that enquiry be directed to Olympic for importing from Athens. KLM could not provide the return rate at the time as they had to refer to their Amsterdam office: the reply was obtained ten days later and the rate was given as NLG 34.65 which at an exchange rate of 3.3 gives a cost of R 114 per kg. Air France quoted Euro 27.42/kg for the return flight from Paris and at a exchange rate of 6.6 this results in R 181 cost per kg, the highest obtained and one that is five and a half times the rate to send a dog from Johannesburg to Paris. TAP didn't provide a rate for importing at all but after showing that to export would cost R 2 719.20 for freight, R 44.00 for fuel surcharge, and R 80.00 for the waybill fee (i.e. a total of R 2 843.20), they gave an all inclusive figure of R 6 928.32 for the return trip which isn't all that bad, comparatively speaking.

Other factors to consider include the following. For trips around RSA we routinely use wood and hardboard boxes which are perfectly suitable as far as the local authorities are concerned. For export purposes these boxes are also suitable provided that they have spacer bars along their sides. These wooden boxes are substantially cheaper than the Varikennel counterpart. However though the dog went over in that box it may not return in it. Once more we hit this problem where what is acceptable or done when leaving RSA is rejected and completed on a totally different basis for the return leg. This problem is again in evidence when it comes to the size of the box required. There is a laid down set of measurements to determine the box size as follows:-

(a) as per crate manufacturer: establish the maximum standing height at the top of the skull (ears excluded) with head held high and add 5 cms; establish length from tip of nose to tail insert and add 10cms. The breadth will usually be determined by the minimum length or height required to suit the dog, but in special circumstances a broader box may be called for (eg bull-terriers) as the dog must be able to turn around comfortably.
(b) As per SPCA: they support the IATA specs and expect all airlines to follow

them. Under Container Requirement 1 IATA requires the following for size 'Each animal contained in the container must have enough space to turn about normally, to stand and sit erect, and to lie in a natural position'. We can only comment that there are obvious problems associated with the measurement of dogs and it is unfair to expect airport staff to fulfil this function. So it becomes a matter of experience for the breeder to obtain the correct box when airfreighting dogs/puppies. We have a copy of Container Requirement 1 which is more than two pages long and which mentions among many other considerations that certain airlines will not carry wooden containers and that more than one puppy can be transported in one container etc etc etc etc.

However, the fact that you have gone to the trouble of working it all out doesn't wash with eager-beaver officialdom who can see big profits in front of them, and its all for the good of the animal. The cage must be IATA and SPCA approved, and the dog must be able to stand and turn around inside it. By moving up to a larger box the airline stands to make bigger money than it will for another passenger ticket, and even more on top.

Then you also have the professionals who handle the whole business for you and charge you R 500 - 1 000 for the pleasure. In fact BA won't speak to you at all and refer you to their privileged and select small covey of agents, and that's just to get the dog out of the country. There certainly are quite a few potential pitfalls in sending a live animal out of the country whether it is coming back or not, and you can understand why the airlines don't want to face embarrassing arguments when the dog is given to them for transportation in a box which is obviously too small, for example.

But the main anomaly remains the incredible gap in cost between the two directions of travel; you must beware this remarkable situation where it can cost anywhere between three and six times as much to airfreight your doggie back to Johannesburg than it did to send it over there, wherever that might be. Also it is not worth complaining about the position as we are in the unusual position of winning hands down at present, and all that can happen in the future is that our charges will be increased substantially, say five fold, to bring us in line with the rest of the world.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT <rhodesianridgeback.org.za>The prototype is still available at<<http://www.premiumgeek.com/rrif/>>

ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION

FROZEN SEMEN

There is an excellent breeding tool available to farmers whereby they inseminate their cattle artificially with frozen semen collected from bulls regarded as being of really outstanding quality. Not so common is to use this technique on canines. A small group of us RR breeders were very interested a year ago in obtaining semen from a well known dog in Scotland. These breeders pursued the idea which unfortunately fell through due to costs. If memory serves correctly the bill was 1000 pounds per collection, i.e R 10 000 to obtain say 10 straws. Onderstepoort is to all intents and purposes the only institution in RSA which collects and inseminates, and it has achieved an excellent reputation for obtaining first class results. A collection here costs about a tenth of the overseas amount, but even so it remains an expensive alternative.

The introduction of the semen into the bitch can be accomplished in several ways including an operation which requires far fewer straws. Normal methods require at least 6 straws and if you go for the full treatment at Onderstepoort (which guarantees probably a far greater chance of success than a natural mating) it will cost you a couple of thousand. Nonetheless it is normally very much cheaper to import some frozen semen than to send your bitch overseas (or to bring the stud dog here for that matter).

Normally the frozen semen route is used because of distance, and certainly it is a good way to fill in the gap when you are short of a good local stud dog. However that is not the only reason why stud dog owners put semen aside. The owner could feel that his stud dog is so good that he just cannot run the risk of the genes being denied to him as a result of, say accidental death. There are many issues involved in artificial insemination (A.I.) and in the UK, for example, frozen human semen may not be used after the death of the donor. So it is as well to inform yourself as best you can if you wish to go this route. On the other hand we can give you a brief insight on a few of the practical consequences from a breeding point of view.

Two bitches had natural/normal matings with a stud dog of good quality and for their second matings chose frozen semen from the same dog. The first bitch has already produced that second litter and it bears remarkable similarity to her first one. The other bitch has yet to be

inseminated.

Regarding that first bitch she had one twelve minute mating for her first litter of eleven puppies, one dying early on. The remainder consisted of seven males and three females, three having excellent ridges, five having good ridges but with rough fans/boxes, and two having unacceptable ridges.

For her second mating she was sent to Onderstepoort and put through their full sequence of tests. She spent ten days there, six straws were used, three at a time two days apart, but she was not given the post insemination tests. She had ten pups (seven males three females) of which one was still-born after a delayed presentation, eight had excellent ridges, one had offset crowns and one had an unacceptable ridge. On balance there is an improvement in the second litter's ridges, and their characters/temperament/activity levels at seven weeks are identical to the first litter.

One automatically has reservations about the ethicacy of anything described as "artificial". However the proof is that the out-turn of the second litter shows no deterioration whatsoever on the first. The pups are equally energetic, intelligent and alert, and there is no reason to expect that they will be any different as they mature.

The other bitch was tied for twenty-three minutes of an evening and for seventeen minutes the next morning. Two days later the mating was for fifteen minutes. She whelped fifteen puppies and smothered two of them. The survivors comprised five bitches and eight dogs. For her second litter she will be inseminated by the owner's vet who has extensive experience A.I-ing cattle.

From a practical point of view the second bitch is of greater interest to the majority of breeders. One has come to expect success at Onderstepoort as a matter of course and your local vet just does not have equivalent facilities at his disposal. Also, breeders close to Onderstepoort are less likely to want to use these facilities than those at a greater distance (more stud dogs available). There are a lot of vets out there in the country who have extensive experience in A.I-ing cattle. Give A.I. some thought and if you feel you would like to know more please contact the Chairman and he will put you in touch with those who have hands-on and practical experience.

Hopefully we shall have a follow-up on this story.

KUSA RULING

SCHEDULE 2 REGULATION 4.2
KUSA CONSTITUTION.

Litters produced by means of Artificial Insemination are accepted for registration if otherwise eligible under the Regulations.

Where semen has been supplied from abroad the following procedure must be followed and the relative documents must accompany the application for registration of any subsequent litter:

- a. A certificate signed by the the registered owner of the Sire and the qualified Veterinary Surgeon who personally collected or supervised the collection of the semen. The Certificate shall include how positive identification of the dog has been obtained, e.g. under the supervision of the Breed Club, verification of registration documents, or Pedigree certified by a Control Body with relative name and reference numbers where applicable.
- b. A Certificate signed by the registered owner of the Dam and the qualified practising Veterinary Surgeon who personally inseminated the bitch. The Certificate shall include how positive identification of the bitch has been obtained as in (a) for the Sire

The Certificate shall also testify that the semen was administered to the bitch against the relative collection certificate as correctly applicable to the dog from which it has been obtained.

The Kennel Union also requires an acceptable fully documented Certified Three Generation Pedigree Certificate of the Sire, issued by the Control Body in the current country of registration and this must accompany the application for registration of the litter together with the above Certificates. Should the owner of the Sire not be stated on the Certified Three Generation Pedigree Certificate then KUSA requires a separate Certificate of ownership.

We also require a copy of the importation Permit issued by the Chief Government Veterinary Officer, Onderstepoort, for the importation of semen, relative to the control of rabies and/or other infectious or contagious diseases.

If you are uncertain about anything then please do not hesitate to contact the KUSA office.

THOSE STATS

Let's just look at these statistical results published by KUSA in December 2000 under the heading 'What's hot and what's not'. We're not saying that last year's figure of 594 puppies being registered in the year ended August 1999 is hot. What we are saying is 365 for the latest year is definitely not hot. The resultant fall of 229 represents 38.55%, but more importantly to return to that 99 figure of 594 in the coming year 2001 we must increase by 62.7%, a well nigh impossible task.

If we take the Hound Group as a whole we see that they have dropped in the year 2000 from 2 016 to 1 760, i.e. 12.7% down. Had Ridgebacks maintained their performance then that figure would have been 1 989 not 1760, and I don't think anyone would get excited about a 1.3% drop. If we take all the breeds together in total we see that registrations dropped from 20 363 to 20 206, less than 1%, and if RR's had repeated their performance of the previous year there would in fact have been a minuscule improvement. It can be deduced therefrom that Ridgebacks have not followed the general trend which is one of really remarkable stability.

We imported three dogs in 2000, and they are included in that figure of 365 above. On the other hand we exported 40 of them, which was well down on the 1999 figure of 51. One must remember

that the number exported is not used to reduce the registrations total, so the number entering our gene pool becomes 40 less than that 365 which results in only 325. By exporting 51 out of registrations of 594 in 1999 we lost 8.6% whereas now in 2000 we exported 40 out of 365 i.e. 11%. Theory has it that 10% of the pups we breed end up in our showrings and/or serious breeding. With falling reproduction and increasing exporting we can't be doing our bloodlines much good. It is worth looking at recent registration performance:

1992	851
1993	617
1994	518
1995	499
1996	430
1997	502
1998	545
1999	594
2000	365
2001 ?	

If we drop by 40% again we shall be at just over 200 for the 2001 year. Compare that to 1 138 for 1989. In 1997 we were all "gloom and doom" about the chances of continued recovery. The downward spiral had just been reversed, but portents were not good for the future. Getting back up to 502 had been excellent, but because of circumstances we were forecasting a 10% minimum drop each year thereafter, with 20% being well with-

in reason. The 1998 figure of 545 (up 9%) was a very pleasant surprise and when 1999 came in with 594 (again up 9%) it looked like our 10% reduction had almost become a 10% increase. Tragically, if you start with that 502 figure for 1997, reduce it by 10% pa you get 452, 407, and yes, you guessed it, 366 for 2000.

So probably the best we can hope for is 330 for this new year. Let's hope not: the registrations in the first seven months (297) have been excellent. As anyone can tell you, the best way to make money in any enterprise is to ensure you have no competitive producers. But then there are plenty of Ridgies about, it's just that they're not registered. So it becomes increasingly a case of the unregistered dog (which is augmenting its majority status each year) providing the competition and this results in 'unfair competition' of the most obvious type; and if you want to make money on the lucrative export market it is becoming easier every year. So that is why we have gone to so much effort to ascertain why the numbers are dropping and what we can do about it. That is reported on elsewhere, but if your interest is to make money out of Ridgebacks, any economist will tell you that your chances are now better than ever. If you are in it for the money, go for the export market now, while prices are still stable and very high relative to local realisation.

SILVER HEADS

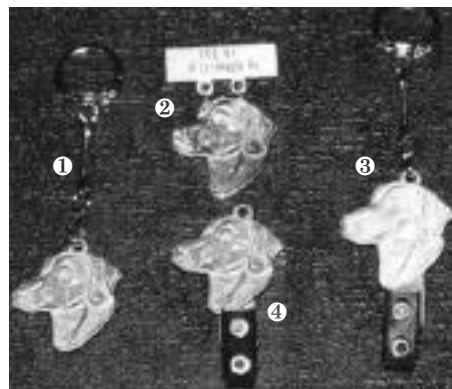
We have, for a very long time, endeavoured to obtain cast silver RR heads for use in key rings, number clips, etc. These sterling, stamped, silver trinkets, are long wearing and very attractive. It had been hoped to take some over to RRWC2000, and sell them there to raise much-needed funds for the Foundation. We obviously lost out on that one, and gave up our efforts for a short while.

However, we have been able to open up a supply line once more, and have successfully created a method for combining a key ring with a most successful number holder.

- ① Key ring, ② Presentation model,
- ③ Both key ring and number clip,
- ④ Number clip

Number two, in presentation form, has a silver plate across the top which is suitably engraved (with a brooch pin at back), and has the head swinging loosely beneath it from two rings. We would not usually make this version available, and

the normal cost is almost doubled. Numbers 1 and 4 show it in straight forward key ring and number clip forms respectively. Number 3 depicts the complete package. At 12.5 oz the major cost is in the hallmarked silver, and the key ring + number clip attachments are relatively inexpensive. There are several novel features, but the cleverest one is the nylon strap carrying the clip which incorporates its own locking mechanism and which passes through a broad loop at the back of the head, preventing the card from flipping up or rotating. We were battling to attach the whole thing to the clothing of the handler in a stable fashion until the wife of a member told us to put a safety pin through the nylon loop. That safety pin is visible on the right hand side of number 4 and as the head weighs 12.5 oz it is most important that we have a reliable fixing which distributes the load. The key ring chain has its own safety hook linking it to the loop located at the top of the head.



The whole package sells at R150-00. All parts are readily available except for the nylon loop of which we have only 10. It took forever and a day to find them a year and a half ago and at this stage we don't recollect who made them available.

While on the subject of silver, however, we are more than glad to accept offerings of any broken solid silver items which can be melted down and recycled. It all helps our cash flow.

The above item may be ordered by phoning or emailing Scotty Stewart (refer list of Board members).

TOP BREEDERS

It is interesting to see who are our top breeders [determined by the number of puppies registered]. As a result of analysing the registrations for the period September 1998 to December 2000 we find that the top ten or so breeders registered 498 [44%] puppies out of the 1135 total.

It probably comes as something of a surprise to discover that Roodedraai tops the list with 87. One cannot think of a better person to head that list than Yvonne du Preez. Very well known in Ridgeback circles for her tireless efforts to improve the breed, she is of course far better known to the agricultural community for her Nguni cattle breeding activities. It is more than a year since Kay Bean was asked to record the Ridgeback Breeding History of Yvonne and herself but unfortunately nothing has come to hand yet: we hope that in the throes of emigrating and re-establishing herself abroad, she will find time to give us this fascinating record.

After Roodedraai we find the more likely candidate for the top of the list, the Glenaholm combination on 74. It seems that breeding activity has been sparse with only five registered since August

1999, though recent registrations in 2001 show a swing back to normal performance. After that comes Kulima with 51, which must also come as a bit of a surprise. Then there is the Cartouche combo on 47, Nomvuyo 44, and Pleasantview 38. This is followed by Lionhunt 32, Calibre and Excalibur on 30, Lionridge 29, and we stop at Ruanada on 26. Working at six and a half puppies per litter, that 26 represents 4 litters in a two and one third year period which is as low as we can go for the cut-off line. Historically speaking, however, a third of our puppies came from people who bred but one litter in a five year period [usually the only litter in their whole breeding career], and a further third came from those who registered two, three or four litters in a five year period. Then there were our 'major' breeders who registered five or more litters in a five year period. It is patently obvious that any reluctance to register will knock out those one-off breeders and this would certainly explain why we already have 44% of the pups attributed to the "major" breeders, and we have not got down to a one litter per year cut-off yet.

PUPPY REGISTRATIONS, AROUND AND ABOUT.

If we look at the annual registration of RR puppies on an international basis we see that South Africa contributes about 350 to the world pool. Up in Zimbabwe we probably can talk in terms of 30 at present. Just for discussion purposes let us say that 400 are available from the 'area of origin'.

Let's now consider the biggest breeder of all, the USA. Without getting bogged down in any argument about type etc., we accept that there are in excess of 2 000 puppies registered there each year and that Great Britain and Germany contribute, respectively, 1 200 and 300. Therefore, outside the 'area of origin' we are talking in terms of 3 500 already and we haven't mentioned Australia, France, Italy, etc., etc., which must carry us beyond 4 000.

In absolute terms, between Zimbabwe and ourselves, we (the area of origin) provide, at most 10% of the Rhodesian Ridgebacks in the whole world.

Puppy Brokers

Political hate-speak has tried all too often to make a bloated meal out of the so-called "puppy farmer". Can't get wildly enthusiastic about them myself but I find them very pleasant company next to the puppy "brokers".

The activities of one called KC van der Merwe, trading as T.A. Quality Pups, was brought to our attention recently. The potential customer was advised by us to keep as far away from this van der Merwe joker as he possibly could manage. The only contact numbers offered by him were fax no. 969-1146 and mobile 082 962 9851, and the party did not make an appearance in the East Rand Telephone Directory. So the customer was recommended to try a few of

our reliable breeders. He contacted us a few days later to say that the object of his dislike, the party, had been contacted in Durban by the police. We tend to assume that the police should be able to find an excuse automatically to interview a puppy broker, but it seems that they (puppy brokers) continue their businesses without a hitch, willy-nilly.

Odd thing though. Apart from Mr van der Merwe I was contacted, within a week, by two other brokers looking for puppies, all for export. In addition, also within a week (though not exactly concurrently with the first group), we were contacted by employees of the Swiss Danish and American embassies. It is difficult to assume that there is no connec-

tion between their enquiries and reduced puppy offerings. As far as the brokers are concerned the pickings should be easy, and they are concentrating obviously on the export market. Hopefully our website will contribute to cutting out these unnecessary and distasteful middle-men. This will give our local breeders a chance to share in the rewarding overseas business.

However we would like to remind you, our RSA breeders, that our AN8, the Code of Ethics, requires (a) that they do "not knowingly sell any dog directly to commercial dog wholesalers or retail pet dealers" and (b) that they "ensure that the best examples of the breed are retained in the breeders' country etc, etc

FOUNDATION'S BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2001

	HOME	WORK	Cell Phone
Hermine Biber	011-958 1591	011-958 1591	082-4591828
Willem Fourie		012-541-0015	0836332046
Bill Jukes	011-476 5079	011-476 5079	083 654 5079
Liz & Charlie Penprase	011-803 1892	-	083 326 9044
Nathalie Rouget	-	011-314 1738	082 451 2199
Scotty Stewart	011-678 3617	011-678 3617	082 253 3111
Francie & Dirk v Rensburg	058-821 0339	058-821 0339	082 779 3646
Laurie Venter	011-794 1587	011-795 2165	082 443 2284
Rob Wright	011-792 6461	011-792 6461	082 853 6385