



CONESTOGA SUMMER BULLETIN

MARCH 2022

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2021 & 2022 SUMMER SEASON; THE BEST ONE YET.



Wow, we have had such a season, maybe the best ever. It has rained beautifully all season. We have had to scramble and had on occasion too much water but have by the grace of God got through all of our tasks.

Building a Simbra or any cattle stud from scratch is a daunting prospect especially if you import cattle from other provinces to Natal. The adaptation to the Natal conditions is immense. The Conestoga Simbra stud was registered in 2015 when we had the tremendous opportunity to move our fledgling operation to Natal and to the Thornham Farm. We have as a family been running cattle and stud operations for people for around twenty five years and now finally we can have our own run at it. We gained a lot experience and knowledge from these years along with the Excelsus AI flask, my Nikon work camera, my old computer with all my photos, my old self-made board room table and my office pot plant. The years at Excelsus Landgoed taught us patience to let the cattle and our type evolve slowly. Our first goal was to let the animals from the other provinces settle in and adapt. This was very hard, harder than any of us imagined. We won't do that again. We have had much better success with local animals.

The Old Master Excelsus Pioneer and his two apprentices Conestoga Pioneer and Paco.



We have, from the very beginning always worked with cow bloodlines and building families. We have had tremendous success with this and we know the stronger these bloodlines are the stronger our stud is and the more quality animals we produce for stud retention or for sale. This is where it becomes especially interesting for me and we collect these females like collectors gather paintings or stamps.

The Babsie blood line at Excelsus was not a noteworthy one at all and looked to be phasing itself out of the stud. It is now to date our most prolific bloodline with no less than three direct daughters and two granddaughters retained in the stud. One of the granddaughters, Conestoga Bella Rose, a Conestoga Galen daughter scored what has been one of two of our first 8/9 at our annual Simbra inspections. Her sister's daughter, Conestoga Baby Blue, scored a 7+/9. Not bad for an almost also ran from Excelsus. Some of the original Excelsus cows have also left their mark, with a sale bull or retained heifer. The Excelsus Irish bloodline has two retained daughters and our next young gun in Conestoga Gandalf. Excelsus Darcy has bred our record sale and stud bull Agrico, as well as Conestoga Darcy, an Excelsus Ash daughter that was our other 8/9 heifer. Another Excelsus bloodline making waves is Conestoga Avon Lee, an Excelsus Wyoming daughter. She has given us two stud bull prospects with Conestoga Patrol and Conestoga Massey Ferguson as her sons. We will use both of them. Her daughter this year is simply stunning. The most surprising movers have come from our original Thornham cow herd. Rob Adam and I discussed his herd one day whereafter he bought his first Simmentaler bull from us after. We then took over this herd and used our own Simmentaler bred bulls with great effect. Those first cross females are now onto their 4th calves. Bloodlines such as Conestoga Comfrey, Sorel, Rue, Chives, Cilantro and Yarrow all are quickly becoming some of our best cows. It is so important to identify the best lines as the more great cow lines you have the more quality cattle you produce and the more sale bulls you have to work with. The winter crop gave us another three cracker heifers to add to our collection in the Prevail daughter Conestoga Bristol, Rue's daughter Rue the 2nd and Conestoga Bridgitte who I think is a Odensim Brussouw daughter. Brigitte might be the best heifer that we have bred to date. This batch have given us eight special bulls to work with. All of these bulls are backed by a special cow bloodline. Most Exciting! The most interesting are a PRR Papa son bred from our Excelsus Dinky cow, a rare Excelsus Palace son also called Conestoga Palace and an Excelsus El Paso son Conestoga El Tigre. These are three awesome young potential herd sires and it is a massive privilege to be able to work with them. Conestoga Palace, as far as I am aware, is the only Excelsus Palace son in South Africa as we exported this bull to Namibia as a young bull. Excelsus Palace was a PRR Prevail embryo son with the super cow Excelsus Zoranna being the dam. His full brother Excelsus Photon did good things for the Richter Simbra stud. Very Exciting!



Conestoga Palace



Conestoga El Tigre



Conestoga QC2118

DIP1369 Tauro Timbuktu



The immediate future of our Conestoga Simbra is the introduction of two noteworthy sires. Both belong to Tito and Desire Voster of the Delft Simbra Stud in Mpumalanga. Both these proven sires have a lot of progeny at Delft and we are very privileged to have them here. Timbuktu was the first bull here and his first calves will be weaned this winter. We have two or three potential herd sires from Timbuktu and a shoal of exciting heifers. Look out for Conestoga Tambourine, Tambootie and Tambiti, Tambiti is the maternal half brother to Conestoga Quentin that bred at the Joshlin stud in the Eastern cape. I have three top Quentin daughters here at Conestoga.

Conestoga Papa, a PRR Papa son



Brand new genetics for Conestoga. Papa is bred from the Pine Ridge Ranch super sire PRR Papa.



The building of our female lines has always been the corner stone to our breeding policies. The old adage says a herd sire must have a great dam. We want our herd sires to have powerhouse female bloodline to back him up.

Bridgette is a new backcross for us with the stunning Odensim Brussouw as her sire bred from the Namibian imported Pilansberg Bridgit Bardot. Bridgette is possibly one of the finest looking heifers that we have bred here at Thornham. She hails from the Diana's Simbra Stud of Otto Herrigel which was jam packed with top female blood lines.



Another top female line emerging here is the Dijon bloodline. This line traces back to our old Super champion sire Metsibra UDM9453B. The Dijon, Dionne, Drusilla & Duena blood lines all stem from the original Excelsus cow Dijon.

Another new heifer is the Excelsus Aco daughter Conestoga Rue. Rue is from one of the original Thornham cows which we mated with Conestoga Exxon, Exxon was a registered Simmentaler bull and a Mont-Beau Espresso son. This union produced Conestoga Rue ,an F1 Simbra.



Pine Ridge Ranching continues to guide our way with a brand new PRR Prevail daughter Conestoga Bristol. Bristol is a half sister to our young herd sire Conestoga Paco and is a typical high quality female that we've come to expect from Pine Ridge. We also have three brand new PRR Palisade daughters with Conestoga Fashion, a Metsibra UDM9453 Granddaughter, Conestoga Tarragon, a Conestoga Emblem Granddaughter and Conestoga Chicory bred from CF1418





Conestoga Payton and Agrico were our headline sale bulls for 2021. How well they did. We have a serious challenge to market Simbras here in Natal, especially in East Griqualand, with a lot of folk, including our marketers, needing a lot of convincing. The EG Bull Sale for 2021 was a breakthrough year for us with these two bulls standing as our shop window. The Judges scored both bulls an 8/9 and it was so great to get more than one bid for each bull. Agrico was the top seller of all 120 bulls on sale and now stands in Mafikeng at Riyaaz Hoosein's Simbra stud. Payton also sold really well and is near Hoopstad in the Free State on the farms of Martin Coetzee. We used both bulls, Payton on our heifers and Agrico in the main stream stud cows.

Conestoga Young Herd Sires Leave Their Mark



Conestoga Avon Lee is rapidly becoming one of the top bloodline females here at Thornham. Top left picture is Avon Lee with her 2021 heifer calf Conestoga Avon Lee 2nd. This is one of Agrico's first calves and is the maternal half sister to Conestoga Patrol and Massey Fergusson. Avon Lee is a rare Excelsus Wyoming daughter and we are so blessed now to have a daughter from her. Pictured on the right is Conestoga Darcy, Darcy is Agrico's younger maternal sister and an Excelsus Ash daughter. She scored one of our first 8/9's at the yearly Simbra inspection.



Conestoga Payton's first calves are stunning! Meet Conestoga Islay and Conestoga Tinley. We used Payton on our heifer herd and he has thrown a consistent type with both heifers and bull calves looking good.



A Super Star comes to Thornham: Excelsus Pioneer Jr.



Spot the Difference!

Our next Stud bull is also from Delft and needs no introduction. I still cannot believe that he is here at Thornham doing his job for Conestoga. It is Excelsus Pioneer 2nd or Jr. What a bull!

What a bloodline! It's like having a past champion warrior climb out of the Excelsus story books and announce himself in person. I never dreamt that such a bull would ever walk here at Conestoga. We have a special bunch of cows mated to Pioneer.

Interestingly we have Conestoga Lace here, who is a Pioneer Snr daughter and her son has been used in our stud and also carries the Pioneer name. He is an Excelsus Prairie son and will be on auction later this year. I have written a Pioneer bloodline news letter and will make it available on our website detailing the Pioneer blood line journey from Texas to Excelsus to Best Bull Simbra's, to Delft and finally to Thornham. The Pioneer bloodlines run tall on outstanding heifers. We have had a few top herd sires bred from him with Pioneer Jnr and Excelsus El Paso been the most famous. El Paso has covered himself in glory being at Dalvan Simbra stud in Klerksdorp. He has over achieved for Daleen, again breeding beautiful heifers. His semen is traveling across Africa. We also jumped on the El Paso train and have Conestoga El Tigre as one of our young super-stars at the moment. Exciting times!



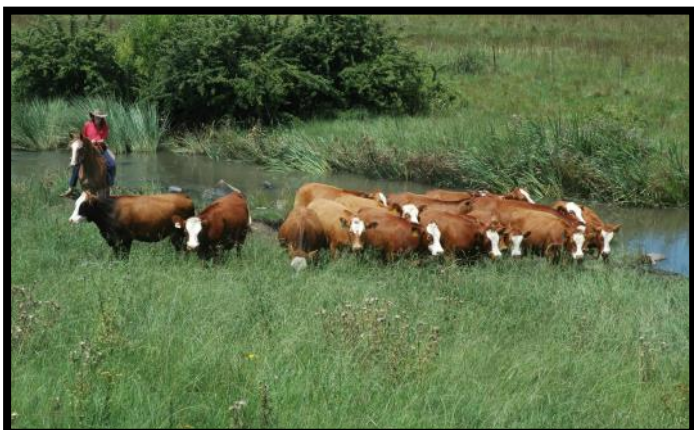
Always take time to breed beautiful females, the bulls will come by themselves. Any top breeding sire always has a cracker-jack female line backing him up.

Conestoga Replacement Heifers!



Cattle Judging at Thornham.

Ian Currin Jnr and Sven Lindeque had a go at judging the Conestoga replacement heifers. Ian was the best stockman of the year in 2018 and 2019 at Weston and Sven and Ian were a huge part of the Weston Agricultural College all conquering show team that dominated all events at the 2019 Royal Show.



The Conestoga Top Four.

The heifer they placed first is Conestoga Darcy. This is an Excelsus Ash daughter and Conestoga Agrico's maternal half sister. The next three are all Conestoga Galen daughters. They are Conestoga Baby Blue, her first cousin Bella Rose and these are from the Excelsus Babsie female line. Babsie was a PRR Scout daughter. Their second best pick, Conestoga Yarrow. She has been bred up from our Commercial program.

The Galen Files.



Another old Excelsus bloodline that we are privileged to have is that of Excelsus Galen. This line started with the import from Namibia of Diana's Gugi. What a wonderful bull. A Namibian Junior Champ and from such a Stud. Otto Herigel was one of my closest Simbra friends. The Diana's Simbra Stud was our Excelsus sister stud along with the Pine Ridge Stud of Bill and Jane Travis. Diana's Gugi bred Excelsus Galen. Galen was the perfect foil for Pioneer who ran tall on sons. Man, we sold Galen sons throughout the country. Bulls like Gambino, Gucci, Galen jnr and Galco. Galen Jr sired Conestoga Galen whose breeding has kept our young stud alive. His young son Conestoga Gandalf is our best young gun and my 5th generation of this incredible bloodline. The Galen heifers have done Excelsus Simbra so proud with Excelsus Elsa breeding Richter Prairie who is the SA current record price holder. Excelsus Darcy bred our top price bull to date with Conestoga Agrico and Excelsus Brook bred Excelsus Quantum who has bred so well for Bruce Taylor. Gandalf will be used on our crop of heifers in June. Conestoga Galen is now standing at Guy Payn's Sure-Joy farming at Willowdale where Jack Bastard had his Intsizwa Simmentaler stud.



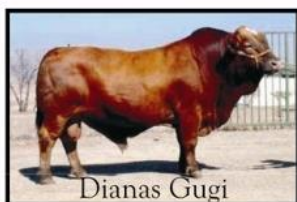
We have come a long, long way with this bloodline. The latest in this long line of tremendous sires is Conestoga Gandalf. Gandalf's lineage dates right back to Kameeldam Allen & Pott (SIM) MCK The General (Brh) Swaarbou Gert (SIM) Diana's Gugi, Excelsus Galen, Excelsus Klein Galen and then Conestoga Galen. On his dams side we have the Excelsus Irish bloodline. Irish brings the Pine Ridge Ranching genetics into the mix with PRR Prevail, Excelsus Penzance and Excelsus Aegean. Very Exciting.!

Out my Archives, an Excerpt from the Excelsus making

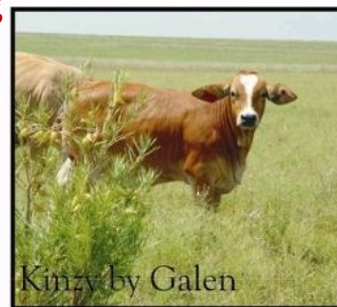
Art Newsletter

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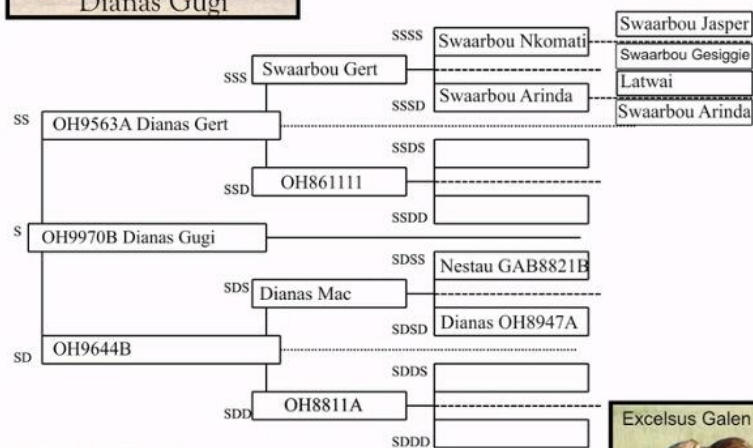
Excelsus Galen



Dianas Gugi

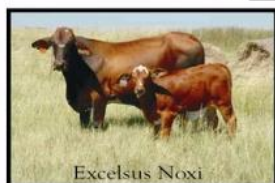
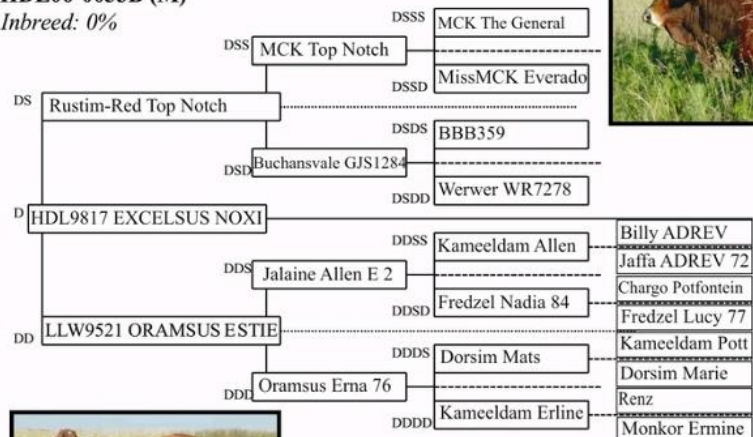


Kinzy by Galen

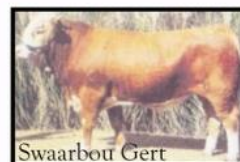


HDL06-0033B (M)

Inbreed: 0%



Excelsus Noxi



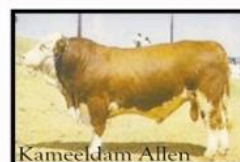
Swaarbou Gert



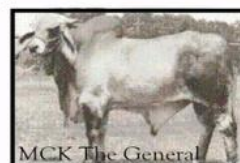
Everado



Excelsus Galen



Kameeldam Allen



MCK The General



Kameeldam Pott

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I started stud breeding in 1990, fresh out of the SADF. I was with Roland Boucher of Syrilla Simmentalers in Mooi River and we were bred some pretty good cattle in the four years that I farmed there. On one occasion Roland purchased a few cattle from Prieska in the Northern Cape and Ian Currin and I went to fetch them. One of these cows was from the old Dan Jaco Erna line and had one eye removed. We also had the privilege of meeting Mr Albie Higgs of Kameeldam Simmentalers. At this stage this awesome stud had the leading Simmentaler sires in the land with Kameeldam Pott and Allan much sought after bulls. The prices fetched for semen shares and sons of these bulls at that stage were phenomenal. These two bulls along with a host of other bulls from this stud were obtainable by only the very fortunate and at huge prices. I was privileged enough to see Allan in the flesh on that visit and will never forget that bull. At Excelsus we try to breed new genetics from only the very best Brahman and Simmentaler seed stock and Galen's dam Noxi, is no exception. She is from Oramsus Estie, a Jalaine Allan daughter. Allan is the famous Kameeldam Allan son and Noxi has Kameldam Pott from Dorsim Mats. Galen also has two of the more famous American sires in his lineage namely MCK The General and Evarado 757. The General sired 1223 calves and is seventh on their ABBA list. Evarado heads that list with 1800 calves sired. He was popular because of his large frame size. Amazing that Galen is considered a small bull!

Galen however weighs in at 1030kg

Introducing our latest Wonder Grass “Wonder Cover”



*Wonder Cover
post reaping*



Seed



*Seeded just before maize
planting*



Wonder Cover Seed



Maize Graze

Wonder Cover is a grass developed by our good friends and fellow cattle breeders Pete and Lauren Louwrens. They live at The Combles farm and are constantly trying to make it easier and more profitable to farm in East Griqualand. This is a genuinely fantastic concept bringing all the latest farming ideas and soil conservation into one grass species and pasture plan. It is said that the Free State was no good for farming cattle until the farmers learnt that maize stover is the best winter feed for cattle. Introducing Wonder Cover. Wonder cover grows between the maize plants and germinates every year if handled correctly. Only planted once, when the maize is around knee high and spread with a fertilizer spreader. It then germinates to give a beautiful pasture cover over the maize stover. My first wonder Cover crop was a bit thin after I had reaped my maize and the cattle and sheep grazed it into the ground. I left the land after they had finished to let the grass grow and seed and it was magnificent. I then put all the cows into this knee high pasture before we disked it into the ground and prepared it for the new maize crop. They tell me we should strip till our maize in next time. The wonder cover then covers the usually bare ground for most of the winter and up till the new crop comes in. This grass could be revolutionary and really add value to the maize farmers farming system. It conserves water by covering the bare ground and adds way more food for the critical winter periods.

We have also tried it in a maize graze situation, where we planted a cheaper, older open pollinated maize variety with far lower input cost and then let our cattle and sheep reap it for us.

Please phone Pete Louwrens on +27 82 852 3926 for more information.

This is my Maize Graze. The seed is from Capstone seeds and this is my first attempt at planting it. We will possibly reap this for grain as it is looking magnificent. The theory is to let the cattle and sheep graze it and thus minimise reaping and storage costs. We would probably have to use Landelek or such to prevent Acidosis in the stock. Wonder Cover will work a treat in this system.

OUT & ABOUT.FARMING FLAT OUT.



The best part of farming is the life style, staying close to nature and working on the land. It also has its responsibilities. We are stewards of the land we are in charge of. Our mission is to leave it in better condition than when we took it over. We inherited an old lime spreader and have limed our maize lands. The soil samples showed we have pretty good soils although we need to add a bit of lime. We put on 2 tons per ha and this has made a huge difference to our crops. We also burned off veld for the first time here at Thornham and will do so again this coming spring. Old moribund grass is no good to man or beast. Cattle farmers are first and foremost grass farmers and utilize cattle to harvest and convert that grass into high quality food for humans.



Our new fire cart, home-built, proved to be an absolute winner this last season. At last we have enough water to make a real difference in what is a dangerous job. We are compelled by law to burn firebreaks in Natal and a good part of the early winter is dedicated to this.

Our worst fire hazard is now no more as our star tenants Clinton and Nathan Bunting have planted a super crop of maize in those contours. This is also in accordance of improving each aspect of Thornham.

The world would be in a better place if Farmers ruled the Earth