

South African Judging Training Course
By Jo Jenkins, Hornets Herd.



Grading at Piet Wannenburg's Property

Well, where to start. What a trip, what an opportunity! I have competed and judged horses at top level including The Royal International Horse Show and The Horse of the Year Show, but I have never judged livestock. So the invitation from Ian Johnson to join a group of fellow Boer Goat breeders on a visit to the HOME of the boer goat, South Africa, was too good to be missed. Our mentor was to be Kobus Senior Lotter who is a world renowned expert on the Boer Goat.



No Traffic Jams Here

Day 1 morning and off we set in high anticipation to the Lotter family farm, where on this area, Kobus Junior had his house. Some of the roads were tarmac but only the width of a car and half so in the unlikely event of meeting traffic one had to pull off the road partially on to the rough stone at the sides, dust storm didn't come into it! Then off the tarmac and on to rolled stone roads, pretty rough, and we wouldn't have wanted a puncture with the snakes about!

Kobus Senior Lotter met us at the threshold and we first saw approx. 70 goats with their kids who had been gathered in off the veld so that we could see how well they looked despite the rough sparse vegetation and the worst drought for 30 years. Some of the paddocks are irrigated to provide grazing and also Lucerne is grown. Bore holes were providing water which supplied many, many paddocks. These had high fences around them to deter the large variety of antelope from pinching the valuable green stuff! However, it didn't deter the monkeys of course of which there are a huge variety and evidently baboons are a real threat to the goat kids.

Kobus had open sided barns and holding pens where we were grateful to get out of the sun in order start our Junior Course. We all introduced ourselves and Kobus had some goats bought in so that he could explain the finer points of the Boer goat and start to discover what we all knew of the Breed Standards. He also explained how the Breed Standard was relevant to the living, everyday goat not just show animals. He asked that he would like us all individually to discuss each goat as it was bought in, starting with the positives and then the negatives and then in which of the 3 sections available we would place them. Kobus would then question our reasoning or push for more info, agree or just tell us we were plain wrong!

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