

Dear Pinzgauer Breeder,

Over the past couple of months, I have had some enquires regarding the sale of Semen. As I or the Association does not have details of who has Semen for sale, I have been limited in my ability to point potential buyers in the right direction.

If any members who hold Semen would like to forward details of their holdings to me, it may assist in my directing buyers to a wider range of suppliers and help in promoting the breed generally. This information, if supplied, will be held in confidence and will only be used to promote sales.

Any information can be forwarded to me at Lachvina@skymesh.com.au or by Post to 280 Wattamolla Rd, Woodhill, NSW, 2535.

A project that has been long discussed is the development of a new website that will be more attractive, functional and contain relevant and current data. This is an essential tool for members and will help with the marketing of our Breed. This project will occur over the next several months and will be ready to launch early next year. More details will be given in the next communication.

Concurrent with this project, I am undertaking an audit of the Herdbook records to bring them up to date. One of the areas that need addressing is in relation to the current status of registered animals. I am in the process of sending out to each breeder, a list of their registered animals. It would be appreciated if you would review your list and indicate if the listed animals are still active, deceased or sold and return it to me again by email at Lachvina@skymesh.com.au or by Post to 280 Wattamolla Rd, Woodhill, NSW, 2535.

Where I have email addresses, I will send the lists that way as it makes for easier editing. In the other cases, the lists will be mailed out.

If you receive a mailed communication but would prefer to receive communications by email, please advise me of you details. A move to electronic communications with members is another opportunity to reduce our administrative costs.

The 2013 International Pinzgauer Breeders Congress was held in Pretoria on 5 September 2013. I was privileged to attend the Congress and the associated tour along with a number of other Pinzgauer breeders from Australia. Those members that also attended were Stephen and Linda Sainsbury, Graham and Helen Walker, Laurelle Price, Bruce Walker, Berit Grotrian and Doug Lockwood. Ken Craig also came along as an observer although we nearly lost him to a Vulture.

I believe that I speak for all when I say that it was a most enjoyable tour that mixed some exciting big game tours with visits to South African Breeders' farms. The hospitality shown was outstanding as was the organisation of the tour. The tour included attendees from Austria, Italy, Slovakia, Switzerland, Germany Canada as well as Australia and South Africa. For me, it was an eye-opener, not only regarding South Africa generally but also the breeding and promoting of Pinzgauers. It is definitely worth looking at how they have markedly increased the number of cattle and memberships over the past decade. The Association has already been working on the development of some similar strategies and where appropriate will incorporate some of their ideas in our planning.

While not all of the methods used may be suitable to Australia, it demonstrated the success that can be achieved by thinking outside of the square. What was achieved was a commitment between the

South African Pinzgauer Association and our Association to work more closely to promote and improve the breed in both of our countries.



Pretoria Spring Show Grand Champion

Early in the tour, we attended the Pretoria Spring Show where the Grand Champion Pinzgauer was a Bull that was sired by Doug Lockwood's "Ravensbrook Caesar". This was a feather in the cap for Doug in particular and Australian breeders in general and gave us boasting rights for the rest of the tour. There is continuing interest from South Africa in Australian genetics and it is a market that we will be pursuing.



Australian Attendees at the 2013 Congress

In South Africa we saw a consistently high standard of animal both in the Show Ring and on farm. However, I believe that we have animals that are competitive with those we saw and have the potential for further improvement. In South Africa, they have put particular emphasis on increasing

the length of their animals without increasing the height. Their claim is that for every 2.5 cm increase in length there is a 30 Kg increase in the weight of the animal.

Another area of interest was that in South Africa, there is a much more attention paid to assessment and performance measuring. This has been part of their herd improvement strategy and has appeared to have helped provide a focus which has paid dividends.

I had the opportunity to gather some information about their methods and we were able to develop networks through which to gather ongoing information. Theirs' is not markedly different from the direction in which we have begun to move, it is just that they are at a more advanced stage. However, it gives us the opportunity to compare and review our strategies and our standards and assessment guidelines in line with a continuous improvement philosophy.

Getting back to home, one item that keeps coming up as a point of discussion from a wide range of members is how to improve the breed in Australia. Below are three ways in which I see that we could expand and improve our genetic base. I stress that these are my personal thoughts and not necessary any position of the Association.

1. Import Semen or Embryos. This is probably the easiest way in theory to expand our genetics. However, currently the source of suitable genetics is limited. Many countries that have suitable genetics are quarantined from Australia, e.g. South Africa. Other beef oriented countries such as Canada and USA may have similar genetics to us as that is where the majority of our animals originated. Many of the European breeders have concentrated on milk production and have even crossed their herds with dairy breeds. Currently, investigations are taking place to see if there is suitable genetics available in some Northern European countries.
2. Improve the Herd through Cross-breeding. This has often been suggested as a way to bring specific improvements into the Pinzgauer herd. To do this would require a strategic plan with all participants working towards a common identified goal. It would be of little use for all breeders to go off on different paths. This would still be a long term solution with no guarantee that we would get the desired result.
3. Selective Breeding of Pinzgauers. While there is a lack of variety of genetics in some areas, Australia wide we have a variety of breeding and a quantity of quality animals. The problem in the past has always been distance. One way of improving the herd is to develop a program of selective breeding on a National basis. The suggestion is that a number of high quality animals with varying genetic backgrounds be identified across Australia. A strategic breeding plan could be implemented to establish several lines of breeding. The resultant blood-lines could be provided to any interested members. This type of program could also benefit from the inclusion imported genetics if they can be sourced. Such a program would face many problems not only in the planning but also in coordination and management and may also require some rule changes to be able to implement.

This issue and many others are on the agenda for the next Council meeting and your input is most welcome.