LANDS: 2 reasons

1. To bring our rangelands back into an optimal and sustainable state of production – to increase our livestock production in terms of kg/Ha, add value and earn foreign currency for Namibia. This is the economic aspect.

2. We have an obligation to manage the resources responsibly that are (endowed) available to us and thus preserve them ecologically well. We owe this to the next generation. The basis being healthy soil conditions which are a prerequisite for an abundance of micro-organisms, bio-diversity and plant material. This is the environmental aspect.

A future prerequisite for niche markets

STATUS of Namibian Rangelands

- Namibian rangelands leave much to be desired. – “precarious state”
- Rangeland degradation on a large scale – 26 – 30 mill Ha bush encroached
- Losses are N$1,4 Bn p.a. in meat production due to bush encroachment
- Additional losses of N$ 500 mil p.a. in livestock production due to bad rangeland management practices (Himavundu and Barnes)
INITIATIVE TAKEN IN 2007

- Members of the Namibian Agricultural Union, i.e. farmers, initiated a process at their congress in October 2007 to get actively involved with the officials of the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry in structuring a policy and strategy on good rangeland management.
- Their concern was based on the continuous drastic reduction of livestock production over the last decades mainly due to degraded rangelands.
- THUS a collaborative process started between all stakeholders to formulate a policy / strategy on setting rangeland management guidelines for all type of resource managers!

Working Group

- Mr. Leon Lubbe (MAWF)
- Mr. Bertus Kruger
- Mr. Collin Nott
- Mr. Nico de Klerk
- Mr. Norbert Neumann (MAWF)

- PPS: Government is custodian of policies, successful PPS co-operation

The Formulation of a Policy/Strategy

**FOCUS:**

- Formulation of Good Rangeland Management Policy/Strategy
- Pin-point the principles of good rangeland management

**The 8 basic principles for good rangeland management are:**

- knowing your resource base;
- managing for effective rest of plants;
- managing for effective utilization of plants;
- enhancing soil condition;
- addressing bush encroachment;
- doing timely drought planning;
- monitoring the resource base;
- and properly planning land use infra-structure.

Approach

- All inclusive to incorporate the challenges of all land uses:
  - Commercial and resettlement farms
  - Communal areas and national parks
  - Fenced off game farms
- First drafts were shared with senior staff in the MAWF, MLR and MET
- The NRMPS was also on the agenda of the Livestock Producer Forum
The Formulation of a Strategy/Policy

Proposals made by the PS of MAWF:

- That the policy and the strategy part of the document be separated into two documents;
- That the rangeland policy should be part of the National Agriculture Policy;
- That a chapter on the economic implications of implementing good rangeland management principles to be included;
- That a chapter on the short-, medium and long term implementation plans is included – use of legislation not preferable rather through incentives;
- Specific attention should be given to the management of communal rangelands;
- That the effect of climate change and options to manage this is included in a separate chapter.

The Goals and Objectives of the NRMS

- **Long-term goal:** Significantly contribute toward improving the livelihoods of people directly or indirectly dependent on the management and utilisation of rangeland resources.
- **Short-term goal:** To empower rangeland managers and users to use their rangeland resources in such a way that
  - animal production per Ha is optimised without the loss of rangeland productivity
  - economic losses due to a highly variable resource base is minimised

7 Objectives to achieve short-term goals

- The importance of Namibia's rangelands is raised at local, national and international levels.
- The understanding of the national rangeland management principles among all stakeholders is improved.
- Best practices and lessons learnt regarding sound rangeland management are identified, documented and widely shared.
- Sufficient support structures to implement the NRMS are in place and functional.
- The policy environment is conducive to the implementation of the NRMS.
- The adverse effects of bush encroachment are reversed.
- The implementation of the NRMS on commercial and resettled farms, in communal areas and in protected areas is supported. (Chapter 3 in NRMS)

Special chapters and studies

- Effect of Climate change
- Effect of bush encroachment on underground water resources
- Economic Valuation of Good Rangeland Management Practices
Climate change and NRMS

- Climate change predictions affect biological growth in Namibia negatively.
- Anticipated 200mm less rainfall (central) and evaporation rise of 5% per deg (3 deg warmer by 2050) diminishes availability of water.
- Good rangeland management is the only vehicle to address and mitigate spells of less rainfall and droughts.

Effect of bush encroachment on underground water resources

- Colin Christian & Associates (2010) estimates that invader bush leads to water loss amounting to the order of 12 million m$^3$ on a 5,000 hectare farm. Through their extensive root systems, encroacher bushes compete with grasses for available soil moisture.
- The impact of encroacher bush on water resources is mainly due to the large volumes of water that are intercepted by bush, above- and below-ground.
- The Platveld Aquifer Study, north of Otiwarongo, clearly shows that dense woody vegetation does reduce groundwater recharge significantly.
- Encroacher bush has affected approximately 89% of Namibia’s high groundwater potential areas, and 52% of the moderate groundwater potential areas. The bush problem also affects catchments in which several major storage dams are located.

Economic valuation of good rangeland management practices

- The realities of the detrimental influence of undesirable management practices on the natural resources of Namibia are well known and documented. For example: bush encroachment has severely impacted Namibia’s beef production, which is now only between 30% and 50% of what it was in the 1950’s. The loss to the economy is estimated at N$1.4 billion / year.
- The analysis of beef cattle production in the savanna areas indicates consistently that introduction of established sound range management strategies can increase long term average carrying capacity for stock and that these are financially profitable and economically efficient (Investigation by M Himavunda et al, 2011).
- Resource managers / farmers need to be aware that in order to be successful commodity farmers, they need to be successful grass farmers.

STATEMENT

- Economic growth affects the natural environment, but the natural environment also affects growth. That implies that concern for the natural environment needs to be at the core of development policy, not just a stand-alone environmental policy.
The National Rangeland Management Policy & Strategy was approved by Cabinet in August 2012 – it was lively and seriously discussed.

Official launch by the Hon Minister of MAWF on 11th September 2012 during the 16th Nam Rangeland Forum.

The key to increasing income and reducing poverty is: to enhance agricultural production at farm and household level in a sustainable manner.

Awareness and education needs to be extended to all.

Conserving rangelands and ensuring a prosperous future are not opposing goals!

Farmers have to change & adapt their farming practices to restore the productivity of their rangelands on their farms - the backbone of Namibia’s economy;

As the rest of us, farmers are accountable for their actions, but we need to find ways to motivate conservation and sustainable use of our resources. Challenge: investigate means to effectively & practically implement this strategy. Answer may lie in financial incentives.

It is important that government and all other stakeholders MUST now work together – “my personal request entails that the partnership that finalized the NRMPS document investigate ways to cement the commitment of all role-players to implement the principles for productive rangelands.”

The African Accreditation Cooperation (AFRAC) is a cooperation of accreditation bodies, sub-regional accreditation cooperation and stakeholders whose objective is to facilitate trade and contribute to the protection of health, safety and the environment in Africa and thereby improve Africa's competitiveness;

3 October 2012: The Minister of Trade and Industry, Dr Rob Davies, says ‘eco-protectionism’ and increased requirements for health, safety and the environment are an emerging threat to African products in international markets. He was speaking at the 3rd African Accreditation Cooperation (AFRAC) General Assembly and Meetings held in South Africa.
The way forward - challenges

- Clearly define the role of government, farmer unions, land users, private sector and NGOs – collaborative partnerships;
- Roll out this policy and strategy into all farming communities in all regions to initiate an awareness campaign and then to proceed into implementation (See goals and Objectives). Concentrate on principles!

- We have to speak with one voice so as not to confuse land users (or to make them indecisive). Includes rangeland scientists + extension officers of MAWF
- Explore and assess international approaches to incentivise ecosystem conservation and restoration - Strategize on incentives to facilitate the implementation
- The NRMPS should be taken up as a crucial prerequisite in mitigating climate change effects in METs Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (2010).

Address the combating of bush encroachment in a more co-ordinated manner with clear guidelines for after care procedures.
- The effect of bush encroachment should thus be considered in a national context – it is not only an agricultural issue.
- Bush utilisation and rangeland improvements – deliberate on strategies
- Formalize the National Rangeland and Bush Encroachment Forum

Namibia Rangeland Forum Annual Meetings (AM)

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THANK YOU!