
3 August 2020

NAMPO/ALFA 2020: Livestock program

We expected 2020 to be a remarkable year after the success of ALFA 2019 and the prospect of NAMPO/ALFA at Nampo Park. Well, remarkable it is, but for very different reasons than what we anticipated! Covid-19 had a detrimental effect on all of us and caused a lot of uncertainty and anxiety over the past five months. NAMPO/ALFA at Nampo Park was finally cancelled end of July. After lengthy discussions, planning and collaboration, we are now ready to make the first online NAMPO/ALFA a great one!

All the elements of what made ALFA the biggest livestock event in SA over the past four years remains the same for NAMPO/ALFA 2020 livestock program. In fact, we have added some exciting new projects that would even improve on the program of 2019. The online format of the expo introduces a new normal that will become increasingly important as biosecurity risk increases. This focus fitted 100% into the ALFA-focus to introduce new technology and practises to the livestock community. The program includes all the species that are registered under the Livestock Improvement Act. This includes cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, dairy, rabbits, and game. It is crucial for us to keep the momentum that was built up over the last four years in these difficult times.

The program stretches over a period of four months this year concluding at the end of November 2020. The final event will provide an overview and summary of the 2020 program and will be hosted by Agri Gauteng's, Agri-channel supported by DigiTV. The different projects will, over the next few months, be presented on different platforms, including the NAMPO/ALFA webpage and Facebook page. The program is divided in 14 focussed weeks, each focussing on a specific topic to provide structure to the event. Topics include inter alia auctions, youth, small stock, cattle, dairy and game week. This has been structured around other agricultural events with similar focus such as the MPO national conference, SA Studbook's Logix-Elite awards evening, Samic's national awards evening, NAMPO Virtual and Agri Gauteng's livestock expo. Although we would have loved to welcome everyone at Nampo Park, we can assure the ALFA-community that the content, the communication and the excitement will still be there, if not in person, then on screen!

The different performance competitions will continue as normal, including the BKB ram performance championships, the GWK performance championships and the Nutri Feeds heifer performance championships. Nutri Feed's Money maker nominations for both ewes and cows continues as well as all the RPO's interbreed carcass competitions for cattle and sheep. The same goes for the Envarto pig carcass competition which had a record number of entries last year.

Some exciting new development include the Barnlab online small stock show and the Zoetis online interbreed beef cattle championships that are both a first for South Africa! The QPro national growth test in collaboration with the University of Stellenbosch is also a first for SA. The SAFA beef brands championships in partnership with the University of the Free State and SAFA is again included in the program for this year. The Cape Gate Mega-ox competition, a favourite on the ALFA calendar is presented online in partnership with Friends of Agri. The online format of all these competitions means that they all have a national reach – whether breeders are 10 or 1,000km from Nampo Park they can still compete.

In addition, we have a full auction program this year. It includes the Braunvieh national auction, the Northern Cape Veld-ram Club auction (both live-online auctions) and an online female breeding stock auction, managed by GWK Veewinkel. Exsell hosts the first genetic material auction @ Nampo/ALFA and Wildswinkel will be auctioning off hunting packages. All auctions are conducted in adherence to the Covid-19 regulations applicable at the time of the auction.

Livestock program @ NAMPO/ALFA 2020

The Alfa youth program was affected the worst by the pandemic. All of the ALFA youth projects will continue and a few highlights include: The first online youth show in SA, an agricultural school webinar and a tertiary student's webinar. The scope of Sernick junior carcass competition is also extended to include a training webinar with Agri Gauteng.

We find that the conferences and workshops work very well on the different online platforms, again offering more opportunities than was possible previously. An example is our partnership with the Small Business institute (SBI) to host a webinar on SME's in the agricultural value chain. In partnership with Agri Gauteng and Way Makers we also host an import and export workshop and the Total SA game-week offers series of webinars on different topics relevant to the game industry.

The usual student team that organizes ALFA is still involved representing the Universities of the Free State, Stellenbosch, Tuks & NWU. It's a challenging year and we have to adapt on a daily basis to keep the program afloat, given the ever changing Covid-19 regulations. We are determined that nothing will stop us from build on the momentum of the past four years and to make this a remarkable event!

We look forward to everybody's involvement and participation at the online NAMPO/ALFA expo of 2020. Please contact us if you have any questions or suggestions to make your involvement easier.

Regards

Albert Loubser,
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