

## Obituary for Prof. Izak Bartholomeus Groenewald

**\*03.06.1949 - †16.06.2021**



On 16 June 2021, the Covid-19 pandemic claimed a colleague and senior Animal Scientist, Prof. Izak Bartholomeus Groenewald.

Our sincerest condolences to Mrs. Gertraud Groenewald and daughters, Izelle and Mariska (Smith), Herlu Smith (son-in-law) and grandson Leané.

Izak Groenewald was born on 3 June 1949 in Harare, Zimbabwe (previously Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia). It is well documented that Izak studied at the erstwhile University of the Orange Free State University (UOFS) in Bloemfontein. From 1972 to 1975, he was employed at Henderson Research Station, near Mazowe (known as Mazoe, just north of Harare) in the Mashonaland Central Province. Supervised by Dr. Peter Johnson, Izak studied the nitrogen intake and utilization by dairy calves and in 1973 obtained an M.Sc. (Agric.) at the UOFS.

At Henderson Research Station, Izak was fortunate to be in good company of renowned animal scientists and active members of the South African Society of Animal Production, namely Dr. R.C. Elliott, Dr. J.H. Topps, and Dr. W.M. O'Donovan, to name only a few.

In January 1976 Izak moved to South Africa and was employed by the erstwhile Rumevite Animal Feeds and assumed responsibility for Waterkloof, its animal nutrition research facility near Newcastle in KwaZulu-Natal.

From January 1996 Izak was employed as the Director of the Centre for Sustainable Agriculture, Rural Development and Extension in the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, University of the Free State (UFS) in Bloemfontein. During the next two decades Izak expanded the Centre's footprint in agriculture and drew many masters and doctoral candidates from South Africa and beyond its borders. In January 2016 Izak retired at the UFS.

In January 2017 Izak became involved at the Peritum Agri Institute in Bloemfontein and appointed as the Chancellor.

Our personal acquaintance started in the early 1980s. It was inevitable that our scientific professions would converge because of a mutual focus on grazing ruminants, specifically the phosphorous (P) nutrition of beef cattle grazing natural pasture (veld).

In the 1970s and 1980s the Glen Agricultural Research Institute near Bloemfontein gained international recognition for research on grazing ruminants, specifically application of the rib bone biopsy technique to assess the P-status of grazing cattle and sheep. Therefore, Izak was assisted in analysing rib bone samples collected from beef cows in his field trials. The study was conducted over several years and Izak focused on the effect of nitrogen, energy, and P containing licks on the production and reproduction of cows grazing veld. In 1987 Izak obtained a Ph.D. degree at the UFS. The results complemented and greatly advanced the existing knowledge of the P-status of grazing beef cattle in South Africa.

The arduous efforts of Izak and his contemporaries and, therefore, the scientific achievements and academic contributions should be appreciated. Remember, data were statistically analysed with mechanical calculating machines such as Facit's. Some colleagues were fortunate to type the results on paper data cards and analyse it statistically with a main frame computer before the results were spewed out on streams of paper sheets. Pencils or pens were used to draft manuscripts with a dictionary close by and then it was typed by a typist with a typewriter. This was followed by correcting and then retyping of drafts until a copy of the thesis was ready for reproduction on a photocopying machine. One must appreciate, before the advent of faxes or e-mails, typed draft copies of thesis chapters were sent by ordinary post between candidates and the supervisors at universities.

Izak Groenewald dedicated a lifetime to animal science, practical implementation of results and new developments, and the academic training of postgraduate scientists. In the latter part of his career, Izak focussed on novel methodologies of agricultural extension. His legacy remains in the scientists currently engaged in implementing sustainable agriculture in many countries.

Sela.

HO de Waal

(Foto – Schink Fotografie)