

CROC RANCH AND ITS "HUGUENOT" CATTLE

Crocodile Valley Estates established and developed Croc Ranch from 1953, in the bushveld 'far from anywhere' but now near Phalaborwa, the Copper mine and town which came into existence many years later. The initial intention was mainly to run a large herd of cattle to produce kraal manure for the fertilizing of the Estate's citrus trees! This soon changed to commercial beef production, with rigorous selection of breeding stock through performance testing and cross-breeding the indigenous Africander stock to purchased bulls of exotic breeds. Dennis Solomon and his ranch manager Danie Laubscher found that a 5/8 x 3/8 blend of Charolais/Africander was ideal for Croc Ranch's hot and dry bushveld conditions, these cattle retaining the Africander breed's hardiness, ease of calving and ease of handling while incorporating the much better beef production characteristics of the Charolais. Dennis Solomon coined the name "Huguenot" for this blend in recognition of its French/Akrikaner heritage. He 'closed' the herd and concentrated on breeding Huguenots to Huguenots, applying even stricter selection standards, taking care to avoid in-breeding and devising a 3-stud system within the herd to avoid it.

Annual production sales were held on Croc Ranch and even though the Huguenot was not a registered breed many commercial cattle farmers throughout the old Transvaal province and beyond recognized its merits and it was not long before more than 100 farmers were breeding their cattle to Croc Ranch Huguenot bulls.

The South African Studbook Association then expressed its desire to register the Huguenot as a distinct cattle-breed and, after inspection of the herd and its comprehensive private 'register', Studbook officially registered the entire Croc Ranch herd as the new HUGUENOT CATTLE BREED.

Croc Valley assisted other cattle breeders who had been using Croc Ranch Huguenot bulls to also register with Studbook, a Huguenot breeders association was formed and this new South African breed was firmly placed amongst premier registered cattle breeds.