



# World

CONGRESS

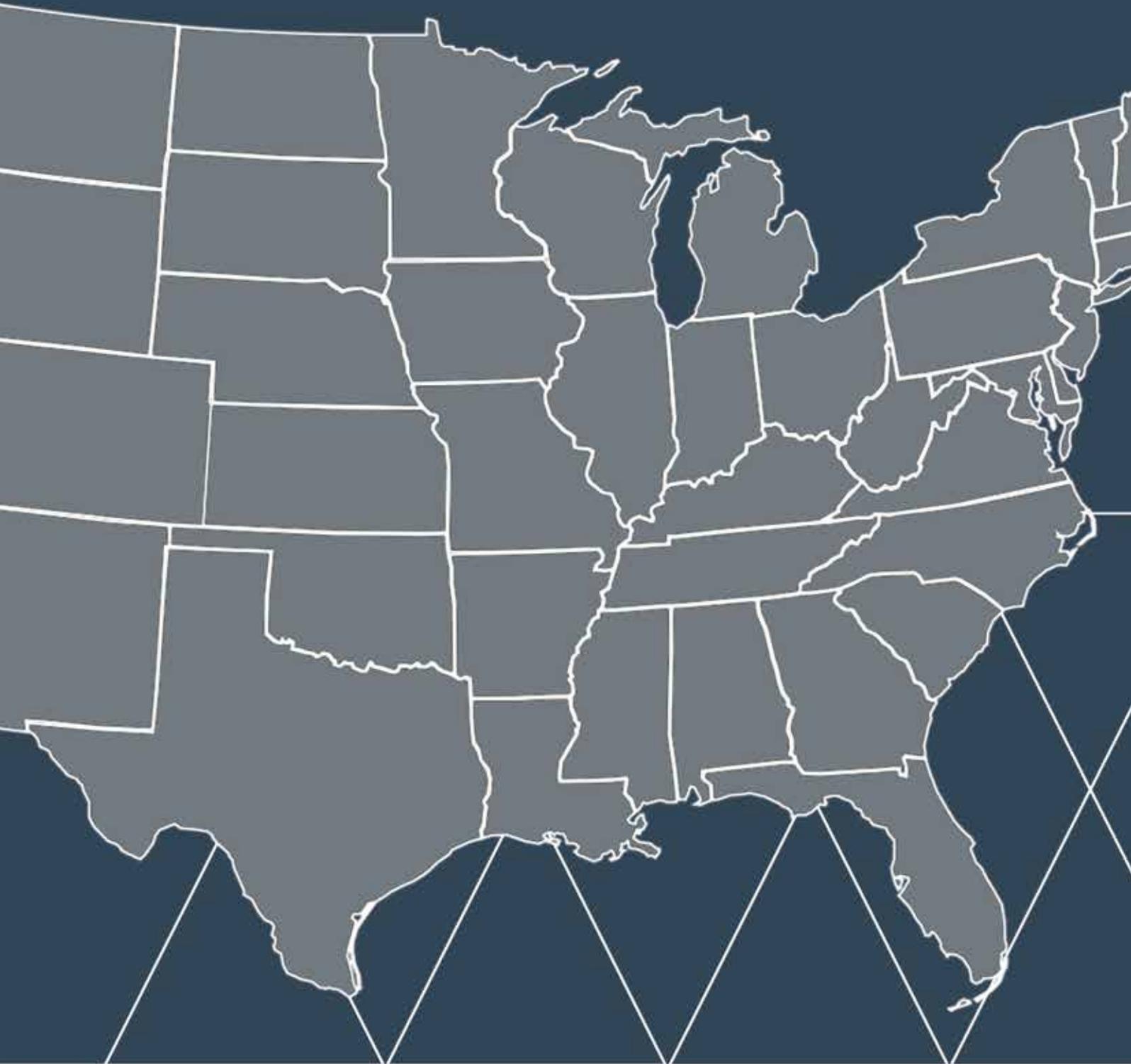
United States

4-19 OCTOBER 2019

>>> Abri Lock



It was a wonderful privilege for me and Juan Freeman to represent South Africa at the 11<sup>th</sup> Santa Gertrudis World Congress in the United States in October. We were joined by our fellow breeders from Africa- Steven & Isabel Vorster from Botswana and Keith Clubb from Zambia. Representatives from other countries were from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Mexico, New Zealand and Paraguay.



We had a nice in-depth look, not only at the American Santa's and their important role in the US, but also at the American Beef Industry as a whole. During our Ranch visits, we were treated as Royal Guests by our amazing hosts. In hindsight, I think we should have weighed ourselves before the trip and again when the trip ended to measure our Average Daily Gain and Feed Conversion Ratios, because Juan and I could have easily been the South African National Champions in the Phase C class in Bloemfontein this year!

We started our long journey in the US in Atlanta, Georgia where we all came together on the morning of the 4<sup>th</sup> at the Marriot Hotel Piper Room, where we met all the attendees and everyone gave a short introduction of themselves and a little background of their farming activities. We soon departed after all the formalities to our first destination- Cullman, Alabama.

Late in the afternoon we went to Quail Valley Farms in Blountsville, AL. They were the hosts of the 2019 Alabama Connection Sale which we would be attending the following day. The evening before the sale, we had an opportunity to view the cattle that went on sale and we had a wonderful dinner. All the stops were pulled out with a live band from Tennessee and Honeysuckle Vodka. The standard for the rest of the Congress was set.

The next morning, we returned to Quail Valley Farms for their annual Alabama Connection Sale which also included Tinney Farms, Grandview Farms and Grey Oaks Farm. This Sale is in its 31<sup>st</sup> year and is the Santa Gertrudis breed's first 100% DNA-genotyped sale. The offering of this sale was 80 registered females, 50 data-proven bulls and 50 SG-influenced crossbred females. Prices were good for profitable Santa Gertrudis genetics.

After the sale, we visited Tinney Farms in Hanceville, AL. They are strong believers that the show ring can be used as a great marketing tool and produced 12 national champion bulls and females. Tinney Farms are also participating in Gain Tests and had multiple winners in various gain tests and also won ranch-to-rail awards for highest ADG and feed efficiency. We capped off the evening with some catfish for dinner and Snake Handler beer.

The next morning, we concluded our stay in Alabama by visiting Grandview Farms in Haleyville, AL. Delmo Payne, the owner's goals are to improve the genetics and EPDs of his cattle. They use mainly AI and embryo transfers on their animals, but recently found that in-vitro fertilization technology to work well.

After visiting Grandview Farms, we took the trip down the Mississippi River to Gulfport. We stayed the night at the Island View Casino and after a rather successful night of Blackjack and Roulette, it was time to hit the road again.

The next Ranch we visited was the Cotton Branch

Plantation in Smithdale, MS. Their breeding program is built around its foundation herd sire, Grizzly 3308. Growth is very important to Cotton Branch Plantation. Bull calves that make the grade participate in a 112-day gain test, which begins 30 days after weaning. The calves are limit fed a 12% protein ration twice daily and they aim for 3 to 3.25 pounds per day.

After a wonderful day at Cotton Branch Plantation we were on our way to the biggest party of the trip- New Orleans, Louisiana.

After a good night out in Bourbon Street, we started off our 2-day *Santa Gertrudis Growing Globally Strategic Planning Session*.

The 1<sup>st</sup> session started with the delegates giving feedback on the influence of Santa Gertrudis their own countries. The delegates were as follows:

- Australia: David Greenup
- Brazil: Gustavo Barretto & Luiz Marques Jr.
- New Zealand: Terence Gubb
- South Africa & Botswana: Abri Lock
- Zambia: Keith Clubb
- United States: John Ford

A new vision statement was created and is as follows: ***"Santa Gertrudis Is the Beef Breed Driven by Versatility and Economically Relevant Traits to Meet Global Protein Needs in A Sustainable Manner."***

We also had sessions in smaller groups to discuss several global issues to the beef industry, using the SWOT-analysis. During these informative sessions, we also had some excellent speakers helping us as Santa Gertrudis breeders going forward. The speakers were:

- Jennifer Houston, National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA)
- Dr. Adolfo V. Sanchez, Red Doc Farm
- Kenny Staufer, Neogen Corporation
- Matthew Garcia, Ph.D., Utah State University
- Ryan Rhoades, Ph.D., Colorado State University
- John Genho, Neogen Corporation

We capped off New Orleans with a boat trip on the Mississippi River and also a very entertaining Second Line Parade with drums and trumpets, all in honor of the Santa Gertrudis Breeders Globally.

After an amazing couple of days in New Orleans, we departed to the Wiley Ranch in Effie, LA. There was a big build-up before our anticipated visit to this Ranch, as Erik Wiley has been on the Local News channel, KALB, promoting the World Congress. We arrived with lots of fanfare with the News team, scholars, other local farmers and the Wiley's welcoming us. They are now the largest Santa Gertrudis breeders in Louisiana and have set personal benchmarks to ensure they fit the Data Driven/ Profit Proven image of the SGBI.

We concluded our stay in Louisiana with a long trip down South to Dallas, Texas.

When we were in Dallas, we went to the State Fair of Texas, where we watched the Pan-American Santa Gertrudis Championships. The number of animals on show was about the same as our local Vryburg and Bloemfontein Show. The animals were of good quality during this show. During the State Fair, we experienced real American fun, like Pig Racing, Joyrides, Smoked Turkey Legs and other fantastic Fair foods and beer. After the Santa Gertrudis Show, we were hosted by Fulton Farms at the Briscoe Carpenter Livestock center for a light lunch. We departed the following day to San Antonio, TX.

San Antonio was a very enjoyable city with a rich American history. We visited several historical sights including the Alamo, Texas Ranger Museum and the Briscoe Western Art Museum, which has 3 levels. We were hosted at the art museum for dinner and had the opportunity to enjoy amazing paintings, Native American artifacts, stagecoaches, saddles, sculptures and a spur collection dating back to 1790.

We were on our way to King Ranch, the birthplace of the Santa Gertrudis, after having a great time in San Antonio. The excitement on the way to Kingsville was great. The ranch was founded in 1853 and developed the 1<sup>st</sup> Santa Gertrudis in the 1920s. Today, they are one of the few operations that conducts within-herd EPD calculation, enabling them to continuously upgrade and improve its purebred Santa Gertrudis herd. We were happy to visit the King Ranch Museum, the impressive King Ranch property and to have dinner at the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Center.

We departed to the San Jose Cattle Co. in Riviera, TX. They farm in a semi-arid region with Santa Gertrudis and Texas Longhorns. They strive to produce functional cattle bred in the old tradition using today's ideas and technology. The operation has produced cattle that have been competitive and productive in the pastures as well as the show ring.

After visiting San Jose Cattle Co., we drove down to Louise, TX., to visit the Townsend Cattle Co. The Townsend herd is 100% DNA tested and utilizes an extensive embryo transplant program with a select number of elite donor cows, using AI and natural service sires. While EPDs are integral in their breeding process, cattle must also have phenotypic correctness. We had quite a rough ride down to College Station that evening after the bus's aircon broke in the extreme Texan humidity. We ended up driving with our Emergency Exit windows halfway open for approximately 4 hours.

In College Station, we visited the Texas A&M University which educates about 80 000 students. We had another

2-day workshop at Aggieland. During our time here we evaluated live animals and beef carcasses, discussed the fabrication for added value, the factors impacting cattle value, genetic and animal breeding toolbox and a Santa Gertrudis improvement plan. We also visited Trans Ova Genetics and the Genetic Development Center to learn more about embryos and growth tests. We were well informed the following lecturers at the TAMU faculty:

- G.C. Lamb, Head, Department of Animal Sciences.
- Dan Hale, Ph.D.
- Davey Griffen, Ph.D., Extension meat specialists.
- Reinaldo Cooke, Ph.D., International Beef Academy Director.
- Ron Gill, Ph.D., Associate Department Head.
- Andy Herring, Ph.D., Animal Breeding and Genetics Professor.

After 3 days of being students again, we headed to the Urbanosky Ranch in Plantersville, TX. Jerome Urbanosky, the owner and founder, founded Urbanosky Ranches at the age of 15 in 1969 when he purchased his first Santa Gertrudis heifer. Today he remains dedicated to produce high-quality seedstock for purebred and commercial cattlemen. Urbanosky Ranch is innovators and is the first Santa Gertrudis Ranch to have a cloned Santa Gertrudis, offer sexed female semen and have an online production sale.

After our visit we headed to Bay City, where we visited Wendt Ranches. The ranch was started in 1954 by Dan Wendt and his father R.A. Wendt Ranches are currently run by the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> generation. We were hosted by the Wendt's and Kubecka's the evening before their NuGen sale. We had a ride on the back of a trailer to see their cattle in the fields. We had nice dinner and a band capped off a good night before sale the following day.

We attended the Nugen Sale which included Wendt Ranches, MC Ranch and Goodin Farms. The offering consisted of 100 females and 14 bulls. There were exceptional animals on sale and it reflected on the prices they received. The highest priced bull was \$15 000 and female was \$8000.

We ended our tour on a high during the closing ceremony at the Run and Gun lodge in Bay City. The following morning the bus took us all to Houston International Airport from where we departed to our homes. The Southern African contingent will not be making any bus trips soon after travelling almost 3600 miles ( $\pm$  5800km) in 17 days.

We would like to thank everyone involved in organizing such an amazing trip and World Congress.