



# Livestock and WILDLIFE integration in AFRICA

- By Martin Joubert, Full Blood Genetics

Throughout the ages there has been conflict between farmers and conservationists when wildlife and livestock have competed for resources such as grazing, land and water.

Ankole are hardy cattle that are able to survive in game reserves, national parks and conservancies alongside wildlife. Hardy African breeds such as Ankole cattle are leading the initiatives which promote the mutually beneficial coexistence and dynamic farming of livestock and game species together, when in the past livestock and game were always farmed separately.

The most well-known reserves that house Ankole cattle are Lake Mburu National Park, Ziwa Rhino

Sanctuary in Uganda and Ol Pejeta Conservancy in Kenya. Ankole are kept at Ol Pejeta alongside lions, leopard, cheetah, rhino, buffalo, hippo and elephant. At Ol Pejeta a model has been proven where in a savanna ecosystem in central Kenya, wildlife and livestock co-exist in a mutuality beneficial relationship. Treating livestock for ticks offers the benefit of removing the loads of these external parasites from the grass landscape. There are financial benefits from wildlife, through eco-tourism and from livestock through food production, which result in stronger economic viability and stability for an “agri-tourism” conservancy than when income is attained from only one source. Ol Pejeta integrates cattle with

wildlife and uses livestock as a means to manage and utilise the land more effectively. The cattle graze on the plains of Ol Pejeta and at night, the cattle are herded in a predator resistant boma enclosure. Ol Pejeta employ 100 cattle herders; one for every 60 head of cattle. The herders know the terrain very well and spend all day out in the bushveld with the livestock, herding them to water points, pasture and back to the boma at night. The management of wildlife and livestock together can simultaneously improve human health and wildlife conservation. The cattle are guarded by experienced Masai herdsman and Ankole cattle have never succumbed to predation in the history of their existence on the reserve, whilst lions, leopard and cheetah have killed other local cattle housed in the reserve. The Ankole cattle have become experts at using their horns to protect themselves. The Masai herdsman have described how the cattle will gather in a circle with their horns all facing outwards and calves protected in the centre of the circle. This is what makes it impossible for predators to take advantage. The Ankole's high intelligence has assisted them well in their survival.

These cattle are very tick resistant and need to be dipped half as often as the other local cattle. They are also more resistant to ECF (East Coast Fever), transmitted from buffalo to cattle. At Ol Pejeta Ankole cattle are a tourist attraction and have been rated the third most popular animal to see after the last northern white rhino and lions.

Over the past 10 years, Ol Pejeta has proven that wildlife and livestock integration is beneficial to the habitat, soil, fauna and flora of the game conservancy.

High density grazing of cattle fertilises the soil and breaks up the hard ground in times of drought. This allows a regrowth and rejuvenation of grass in these areas, which attracts herbivores from all over the Conservancy. Ol Pejeta's Ecological Monitoring Unit has set camera traps in the areas where the cattle have grazed and recorded a substantial amount more herbivores in these areas than others, where cattle have not grazed. The challenges faced by this integration of livestock are predation from big cats and tick-borne diseases carried by wildlife, particularly buffalo. Ol Pejeta only loses around 1% of its livestock to predators each year.



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