

Ponki Makinita decided early in life to invest his monthly salary in cattle rather than in a bank. Today he breeds cattle and grows crops in the Marico bushveld of South Africa's North West province. He told his story to PHIRI BOSIGO.

Why **MAKINITA** only uses quality



Working as a truck driver in Johannesburg in 1969, Ponki Makinita bought his first cow with money he received in his first pay packet. Initially his father helped him by looking after his cattle.

By 1977 he had already purchased almost 100 head of cattle and had come to the conclusion that he would get nowhere if he were to continue farming on communal land. He found and hired

Ponki Makinita's cattle recognise him.





cattle

Some of Ponki Makinita's Brahman cattle in the veld.

a farm from a white farmer, and relocated his stock. Makinita also invested in quality bulls and cows to improve his herd.

During 1983 an opportunity presented itself and he was able to lease a farm from the Bophuthatswana government. Five years later, in 1987, Makinita got Klipbult, the farm he now owns, when it became available for hire for a period of seven years. In 1993 he was able to buy it. He paid a deposit of R100 000 and received a loan from Agri Bank. At that stage, he already had 300 breeding cows.

In 1995, after looking seriously at his situation he concluded that the loan he had from the bank was placing him un-

der great pressure and restrained him from moving forward. He decided to retain 100 of his best cows and sold the rest for an average of R2 200 each. He paid off his bond and could develop Klipbult; he continues to finance many of his business ventures with money he got from the sale of his cattle.

His herd now consists of more than 300 white Brahman and Braunvieh, which he crosses to increase the weight of his weaners, before selling them to the Kanhym feedlot. 🌐

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FARMING SA ASKED HIM A FEW QUESTIONS:

FSA: When did you decide to introduce quality cattle into your herd?

PM: Ever since I was a young boy, I have dreamed of owning beautiful, healthy cattle. Whether a cow is ugly or beautiful, it eats the same amount of grass, but your potential income is more than twice the price if you have a quality animal.

Many farmers from all over come to my farm to buy my quality cattle. It is sometimes not necessary to take my cattle to auctions, because people like to come and buy them on my farm.

FSA: Why do you also farm with Braunvieh?

PM: I used to milk them and sold the milk at my shop in the village. I also found Braunvieh crossed very well with Brahmans. The cross calves get to a higher weight at weaning at seven months than the pure Brahman calves. I mainly sell the bull calves and keep the females to breed, which makes economic sense. The crossed cows produce a great deal of milk and are good mothers that can raise 220kg weaners in five to six months.

FSA: Why do farmers from Botswana and the Marico prefer to buy bulls from you?

PM: I believe it is because I have quality cattle and I give the farmers good service. They know they can always come back to me, because I make a point of stocking the best animals that have a good temperament. My cattle are also used to the heart water area and they acclimatise easily in this region.

FSA: What advice can you give to people who want to start farming?

PM: Start as soon as possible. Cattle will never let you down, especially when you look after them. Do not wait too long to buy yourself a farm. Be wary of loans and pay them off as quickly as possible.

