

# Kenneth Botha



## Career in Animal Science

Kenneth Botha was born in Bloemfontein, South Africa, where he matriculated in Bloemfontein in 1985. He obtained his **B.Sc. Agric.** (Animal Science) degree in 1990 and his **B.Sc.Agric. Hons.** (Animal Nutrition & Physiology) degree in 1991 from the University of the Free State. In 2018 he completed his **M.Vet Sci.** (Veterinary Science) degree (*cum laude*) in the Department of Animal Pathology at Onderstepoort, University of Pretoria, with the title “Osteochondrosis in Cattle in Southern Africa”.

He started his animal science career in 1992 at the S.A. Holstein Association as Technical Advisor and was later promoted to the Manager responsible for Research and Development. The USA Holstein Association invited him to join their Knowledge Exchange program during 1994 where he gained a lot of experience in applied science on dairy farms.

He joined OTK Feeds, now AFGRI Animal Feeds, in 1995 as a Technical Dairy Nutritionist and was later promoted to Technical Director: Ruminant Nutrition, mainly responsible for managing the ruminant technical team, product development, research, innovation, training of the marketing and technical personnel, on-farm nutrition advice to leading dairy farms, and liaison with industry organisations and research companies around the world. During his career at AFGRI he was honored to be invited to participate in many ruminant nutrition research projects with the globally renowned R & D team of Nutreco in the Netherlands.

In 2011 he started **NutriGenics**, a nutrition company with the main goal to supply differentiating animal feed products to the dairy, sheep and other ruminant operations. This includes strategies and solutions to decrease production costs and improve profits at major dairy and sheep operations. During 2014, Kenneth became a shareholder in **Kaonne Investments**, a South African Agri Business company, and was appointed a Board. His main focus and contributions are towards ruminant nutrition and support to feed manufacturers, dairy and sheep farmers.

In 2015 he received the Animal Feed Manufacturers Association’s **Technical Person of the Year** award for his scientific and commercial contributions in the South African Animal Feeds industry.

## Science and Industry contribution

Despite spending a large part of his career in the commercial industry, Kenneth still produced many international and local scientific, semi-scientific and other publications and gave numerous presentations internationally and locally. These include 89 popular press articles, 11 scientific and six co-authored publications, mainly on ruminant nutrition, veterinary science and management. Besides being a commercial researcher, he always makes it his duty to train farmers and young animal scientists on how to apply research on farm thereby ensuring that full value is added to the Southern Africa commercial feed and livestock industries.

He was actively involved in getting animal scientists in South African feed companies to register as professional scientists in SACNASP, thereby promoting the Animal Science profession in that industry and giving it a similar professional status than the Veterinarian profession. He was also a Board member of the South African Society for Professional Animal Scientists and played a key role to get this society integrated with the SA Society for Animal Scientists.

He was further involved by the SA Veterinary Council to get Animal Scientists and Ruminant Veterinarians to work closer together on dairy and beef farms. At the same time, he also played a role in getting the Ruminant Veterinary Association of South Africa to accept registered animal scientists as members in their organisation. Furthermore, he gave numerous presentations at the Ruminant Veterinary Association of South Africa’s annual congresses focusing specifically on ruminant nutrition and osteochondrosis.

Kenneth is also part of the Dairy Industry’s research and development panel with the aim to improve the South African dairy industry and do local research to make South African dairy farmers more cost competitive. While involved in the Industry, he continued to contribute to Animal Science by sharing his 28 years’ experience of applied science and operational feed milling experience to add value to many areas within the Southern African livestock industries.

Kenneth lives his passion for farming through his own intensive precision farming sheep operation, Argos Farms, since 2012 in the Free State, where many research trials are done to help farmers and animal scientists to improve sheep farming in South Africa.

## Contribution to Scientists and Companies:

Kenneth is actively involved:

- Through external teaching of post graduate students
  - As external advisor to many research projects at the ARC, Universities and nutrition companies
  - As external advisor to many industry and commercial research groups
  - As referee of scientific articles for Scientific and Semi Scientific Journals
  - As referee of scientific articles in popular magazines
- In the AFMA technical committee to assist with many ruminant related issues as well as the “new Animal Feeds Bill”.
- Member of the AFMA blood meal technical committee that wrote and implemented a full traceability protocol to enable South Africa to get their BSE status back and get the industry to export meat to the EU again.
- With the animal feeds and veterinarian team (Onderstepoort) to find solutions for the Ostrochondrosis problem on Southern African livestock farms.
- In the AFMA technical sub-committee to establish new ruminant nutrient requirements as minimum standards for Act 36.
- Teaching many animal feed company’s technical and marketing personnel on ruminant nutrition.
- To development of various added value Animal Nutrition products and concepts to improve the efficiency of ruminant farms.
- Training and mentoring new industry nutritionists (AFMA members) during the past 17 years in ruminant modelling, formulation and other aspects to add value to their respective companies and clients.

## Some Highlights

Some achievements to the animal feed industry was Kenneth’s involvement with teams to bring the following innovation to South Africa to add value to ruminant farms:

- Commercialization of “bypass proteins” to enhance milk and meat production.
- The application of ruminant models into the animal feeds industry (AMTS and NDS models)
- The use of amino acids in ruminant feeds
- Training young nutritionist on ruminant models
- The starch research project which was funded by the Netherlands for the South African maize starch project and then used to improve animal models to enhance performance on dairy farms in South Africa. Kenneth was actively involved to get this R35-million project approved and completed.

He also created the first “Ruminant Formulation Workshop” during the 2020 AFMA Forum Symposium to bring the newest feed technology to the Southern African nutritionist with the aim to enhance their nutrition knowledge to improve animal performance and efficiencies.

## Contributions to Science and Industry bodies:

- Served as Committee member on various AFMA (Animal Feed manufactures Association) technical committees.
- Served as Member of the AFMA Symposium and Forum organizing committee
- Served as Board member of the Society of Professional Animal Scientists
- Served as Chairman and Board member on the previous Highveld branch of SASAS for many years
- Served as member of the South African Society of Professional Scientist’s Board
- Vice Chairman of SA Society of Professional Scientist’s Board
- SAASAS congress organizing committee
- Serve on the Milk Producer Forum’s Committee for Research and Development
- Served as a Council Member of the Ile de France Sheep Breeders Association
- Judge of MPO Farmer of the Year award for nutrition for almost ten years
- Served as member of the SA Studbook Elite herd committee