

PRESENTATION TO MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE ON PROFESSIONAL AND RECREATIONAL HUNTING

Date: 11 August 2005

Venue: Pretoria

Limpopo Carnivore Association (LCA)

Introduction

Large carnivore farming, and in specific lions, started in the early seventies. The initial lion farmers developed the breeding of lions to the level of expertise currently experienced. The same situation developed with the elephant and rhinoceros at a later stage.

The relevant government institutions took active part in the earlier development of the lion breeders as experienced today. There was a lack of continuity and/or cohesion after the moratorium in the late nineties.

The above-mentioned moratorium was the result of the Cook Report, something each and every industry experience one or other time. The public was sensitized to the unprofessional activities and in some cases illegal activities taking place. The same happened with the hunting of frozen cheetah in the late and early seventies. To blame lion breeders per se is irresponsible and unprofessional and not

addressing the needs of the reality in the wildlife industry.

The lion breeders developed a specific activity of the wildlife industry on their own, an activity with a specific niche and need. The expertise is situated within the wild life industry (read lion breeders) itself and not with government or other non-governmental organisations.

The wildlife industry wants to further contribute to the knowledge base on captive bred lions and their utilization, but a deadlock seems to have been reached with certain organs of state in some provinces.

It is with great anticipation that LCA participates as bona-fide organisation as carnivore breeders in the same way as EMOA is accepted as well as other organisations in the wild life industry.

Terms of reference

The LCA is representing the carnivore breeders of Limpopo province.

This presentation is done on behalf of the 32 carnivore breeders in Limpopo province.

Many, if not all breeders, are directly or indirectly involved in the wild life industry.

Situation

The industry

There are an estimated 2,500 lions in breeding facilities.

The average lions facility comprises of ± 40 lions.

The localities are distributed in the rural-mostly in game farming areas.

The game farms are used in most cases for various forms of ecotourism.

Knowledge gained on breeding, conditioning and captive behaviour is exclusively made available by the lion breeders.

A data base on facts is available as experienced over 35 years.

Financial implications

Feeding

Each lion consumes ± 3 kg meat each day, e.g. ± 7 ton of waste meat per day for 2,500 lions. The waste meat originates from abattoirs, butcheries and die-offs in both the stock farming industry as well as the wildlife industry. No previous permanent use for the waste meat could be found, only a certain amount were used in related wildlife activities, e.g. vulture restaurants and croc farming, the rest had to be disposed of in ways that didn't create and pose health

hazards as happened in the past.

The waste meat capitalized to the amount of ± R2-00 per kg. (R15, 000-00 per day) money not being available previously. This extrapolates to a capital worth of R5,475,000-00 directly available per year. This is not taking into consideration the costs for abattoirs; butcheries etc. disposing of the waste meat in cases where the meat was not being recycled to the lion breeders.

Manpower

To manage 2500 lions in breeding facilities a minimum of 250 persons is necessary. The skill levels range from unskilled to skilled lion managers and professional persons from related supporting activities, e.g. veterinarians, game capturers, scientists etc. This contributed to the establishment of new education curricula at tertiary institutions.

Off late the ecotourism industry developed into new ecotourism destinations where the big five could be experienced in various ways. This created a complete new level of manpower needs.

Related activities

Ecotourism

The ecotourism industry developed with specific needs for consumptive-and non-consumptive utilization. Some of the needs are to display lions in controlled environments for visiting tourists.

Hunting

Lions from breeding projects provide \pm 250-300 hunts. Calculated at 200 male lion hunts an estimated R 21,000,000-00 with 50 females at R 1,750,000-00 is the estimated gross income from these carnivore breeding projects.

For the Professional hunter (PH) an additional 10-15% is can be added to the above amounts. The PH also employs a large number of skilled persons, e.g. trackers, guides, skimmers, chefs, etc.

A lion takes approximately 5 days and is facilitated by the Hunting Outfitter at an estimated cost of \$ 400-00 per day. This amounts to another R 3,500,000-00 per year.

Biodiversity implications

Game farming as practiced in the South African wildlife industry presently, should be seen as a farming activity and not as a preservation project.

The rationale from the lion breeder's perspective is that lions are a renewable resource that can be utilised within parameters, the same as cattle, impala, ostriches and crocodiles.

Lions bred and rehabilitated can be hunted under extensive circumstances that provides in a specific need. To date the hunting of lions is limited in South Africa due to their financial implications on game farms as free roaming lions. Hunting under controlled situations is a viable option with financial benefits and has the benefit of reducing the risk of impacting on the natural gene pool that is found only in the, limited, larger National-, Provincial and Private Parks-, Reserves, Ranches and farms.

Conclusion

This presentation to the panel is greatly appreciated and is seen and surely experienced as a win-win approach;

The acceptance of carnivore breeding as a financial asset to the South African, and in specific Limpopo province, wildlife economy will create more welfare; The utilization of carnivores as a sustainable resource

is an integral part of the Game farming enterprise as no carnivore hunter comes to hunt a carnivore alone but also a spectrum of herbivores.

The accumulated knowledge of LCA members is available to be used for the wildlife industry as a whole.

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