



A Sandstone Wetland.

Whilst Sandstone has a number of dams, manmade storage facilities for water, the presence of a wetland is fairly recent in Sandstone's history.

This beautiful wetland, in our picture gallery, is adjacent to the Sandstone main complex and it has never been as full as it is now, not in the 25 years since the farm was purchased.

A wetland is a distinct ecosystem that is flooded by water, either permanently (for years or decades) or seasonally (for weeks or months). Flooding results in oxygen-free (anoxic) processes prevailing, especially in the soils. The primary factor that distinguishes wetlands from terrestrial land forms or water bodies is the characteristic vegetation of aquatic plants, adapted to the unique anoxic hydric soils. Wetlands are considered among the most biologically diverse of all ecosystems, serving as home to a wide range of plant and animal species. Methods for assessing wetland functions, wetland ecological health, and general wetland condition have been developed for many regions of the world. These methods have contributed to wetland conservation partly by raising public awareness of the functions some wetlands provide.

Sandstone Estates is blessed with a very viable climate cycle for the growing on arable crops and for the keeping of livestock. Water of course lies at the heart of this success. In the last few years we have seen an unprecedented improvement in ground water conditions and this manifests itself in the strength of our wetlands. The wetland appearing in the picture above has been known to dry out completely in past years. Certainly, during winter, it normally would have lost a lot of its volume following the summer rains. However, this year, the rainfall continued much later than normally experienced. This means our wetlands are completely full as shown in this picture. This creates a superb habitat for a wide range of water fowl, aquatic creatures and so on.

Farming today is all about the health of one's soils and the health of one's operating environment. It is pleasing against the background of the urgent need for the natural rehabilitation of our planet to take place to see that this is certainly underway at Sandstone Estates (Pty) Ltd. In fact the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) highlights the needs for returning many parts of the environment to natural eco systems to assist in mitigating climate change. It highlights a frightening statistic that mankind is currently using 1, 6 times the resources that can be sustained by nature. Take a look at the UNEP on the following link.

<https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/un-calls-countries-meet-commitments-restore-one-billion-hectares>

Sandstone's wetland may be a small contribution in the world scheme, but we are doing our part.