

# **THE ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF NATAL**

## **2010 ROYAL SHOW**

### **FINAL PRESS RELEASE**

The 2010 Royal Show ended on a grand note on Sunday, 6 June, with the Ukhozi FM concert.

Some 21 000 visitors attended the occasion, including the premier, Dr Mkhize. Whilst the numbers – condensed into the main arena - appear to be daunting, the audience, as in past years, was well behaved and a good time was had by all.

The final weekend of a Royal Show is primarily concert orientated and both the Royal Rock concert with Watershed, Wonderboom and others on Friday evening, 4 June, as well as the Royal Bollywood Extravaganza on Saturday evening, 5 June, were deemed to have been an outstanding success.

The Royal Rock, in particular, attracted an audience of 6 750, making it one of the largest events catering specifically for the student community in the last five years and certainly one of the largest concerts of its kind in South Africa.

From an agricultural perspective, the show had over 2 000 animals on site through to Thursday, 3 June, and breeders and farmers from as far afield as Namibia have without exception confirmed that the show exceeded every expectation. From a livestock and equipment perspective, the Royal Show is indisputably the premier agricultural event in the country today.

The visiting public appeared to have enjoyed the show, as vindicated not only by one-on-one research, but by way of several complimentary letters appearing in the KZN mainline press media.

The one area which continues to cause consternation relates to visitors attending the show from far afield on the final Sunday. At this time they understandably expect to see a traditional agricultural show, but are instead exposed to a venue focused largely on a concert, with no livestock and an exhibitor base gearing for breakdown.

Despite the final Sunday's programme having remained unchanged for 20 years (and the fact that the organisers make every effort to disseminate appropriate information via the broadcast and press media), this continues to prove a vexing issue.

In an effort to achieve a win-win, the Royal will continue to work on this aspect going forward.

Although a formal on-site survey to determine exhibitor reactions did not take place in 2010 and has been replaced with an e-mailed questionnaire, initial indications point to a largely satisfied mix of participants. As at this time we have received 110 responses to the 380 e-mails sent, with 75% rating their experience above 70% in terms of expectations having been met.

Both the military tattoos, as well as the Lipizzaner display with Jannie Moolman and Nedine Blom received extensive approbation, with many rating both events as world-class.

Total Royal Show attendance was 146 031, compared to 131 060 in 2009.

Despite the increase in numbers, there was a marked decrease in the number of high school children visiting the show on the designated days (Wednesday and Thursday); probably due to early exams, necessitated by the World Cup.

National and local media coverage was extensive and apart from numerous references in magazines and free weeklies, I can confirm that the show was alluded to in the mainline media as follows:

Lotus FM, Ukhozi FM and RSG - 72 occasions

East Coast Radio - 76 occasions

Independent Newspapers (The Mercury, Daily News, Independent on Saturday, Post, Sunday Tribune and Isolezwe) - 79 occasions

The Witness - 92 occasions

Pleasingly, the show received SABC and E TV coverage (by way of the news, as well as the early morning agricultural programme) on four occasions.

Also, the Financial Mail, regarded by many to be one of the country's top publications, devoted close to a full page to the Royal Show and referred to the event as '*on a par with if not better than the Rand Easter Show of old ...*'.

All-in-all a pleasing event - deemed by the agricultural community in particular to be of national importance – in respect of which KZN can be justifiably proud.