

Namibia Equestrian Federation AGM
1 August 2009
Chairman's report

Ladies and Gentlemen

We can look back at a very successful year for show jumping, dressage and endurance riding. The past year had its highs and lows and its ups and downs, but I believe there were more ups than downs and more highs than lows. This situation bodes well for the future of our beloved sport.

This year NAMEF had, for the first time in the history of jumping and dressage, hosted a one day workshop where various topics were addressed. The topics were:

- Organising of shows
- Show jumping
- Dressage
- New grading system
- Equitation
- Feedback from the survey conducted amongst members

Before the workshop was designed, a questionnaire was sent out to all the clubs and the findings collated into a report. With this information, NAMEF got a clear picture of the road to follow for the future of our sport. The workshop proved a success and helpful to those who attended. As we have received overwhelming positive feedback regarding this initiative, we shall offer such workshops on an annual basis.

NAMEF had introduced a new grading system, which is proving to be very successful, although we are still in the pilot year. It is encouraging to see that there are some of our riders and club committee members who are genuine in their efforts to help our sport advance. They are the ones who will address their concerns and give suggestions in a positive and professional manner through to NAMEF. NAMEF appreciate the input of all those concerned.

Relationships with NERA were strengthened and there are plans to host joint tournaments. The fact that we have a world champion in Michelle Kunzle went a long way in helping to draw attention to our sport, and it opened opportunities for NAMEF to interact with the Namibia Sports Commission, the NNOC and the Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture.

A definite highlight was Michelle Kunzle who won the World Championship in Santiago. It is also commendable that she shares her experience that she has gained with some of our younger riders. A big thank you to Michelle.

NAMEF also congratulate Sylvia Snyman who qualified for this year's championship and we wish her all the best. There is no reason why we cannot have the world champion again. We are looking forward to follow Sylvia's achievements as we have followed Michelle's. I trust that this coming weekend Namibia will have another qualifier for the World Championship.

Each tournament that is hosted by our clubs is a highlight. Congratulations and thank you to all the clubs who hosted tournaments. We know the hard work that goes into it and very often it is an unthankful task.

There are a few pressing areas which need to receive NAMEF's attention as a matter of urgency and will be a priority for the next year. I believe these are:

- The development of judges and course builders
- The development of announcers
- The development of other officials who are needed to make our tournaments successful
- Modernising and adapting the constitution to be aligned with new issues and procedures in accordance with good practice

To all our judges, course builders, coaches and officials;- Thank you for your input and hard work into the sport. I think that very often our judges do not feel appreciated, due to various reasons. I want to assure the judges that NAMEF may not always say so, but we always appreciate your hard work, dedication and commitment. Without you the riders would not be able to practice their sport and it is high time that the riders start showing their appreciation and due respect to our judges.

The rather less positive aspects of our sport remain those individuals who question, in a very degrading and aggressive way, everything which others are trying to do for the sport. I guess we will always have these selfish, egotistical persons with us and I want to motivate those who are doing good not to get discouraged by these persons.

Ladies and Gentlemen, after all is said and done, I honestly think that we can say that the equestrian sport, notably show jumping, dressage and endurance, is alive and well. When someone like H.R.H Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein, the President of the FEI, knows about Namibia and some of our achievements, we must be doing something right.

Then, to conclude I want to thank the committee for their hard work and long hours that they are dedicating to NAMEF and the horse sport. It is a thankless job where we get more criticism than appreciation, but yet they continue. It is not often that one sits on a committee where you can look forward to a meeting. I know that I, and the members of the NAMEF committee, look forward to our meetings. It is like family members coming together and our deliberations generate a tremendous amount of positive energy. I want to challenge our clubs to make use of this positive energy that is at your disposal.

I thank you