

Koos hits the headlines



By
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HUNDREDS of metres of film have been exposed, scores of blisters raised and much sweat shed — as newsmen from all over South Africa have converged on Waterloo, a farm near the Northern Cape town of Vryburg — all because of a young baboon called Koos.

The excitement stems from a rumour, started about six weeks back, that Koos is a dab-hand at herding goats.

I investigated, and found that journalists have been doing more herding, of both baboon and goats, than has Koos. He's simply joined the herd.

Trips

The hardest worker on Waterloo since Koos first appeared has been herdsman David Arkoi (17), who has had to make up to three trips into the hills each day to rustle up the baboon and herd for cameramen, in addition to his normal

The baboon who stirred up a storm

herdsman's duties.

David doesn't mind, however, as Johannesburg journalists and film men tip well, especially if they are lucky enough to spot the baboon, and are even more generous if they have been lucky enough to photograph him within herding distance of a goat. It all makes for a good story . . .

There are unanswered questions about Koos. How did he arrive on Waterloo? The nearest troop is 20km away. Mrs Marie Sussman, wife of farmer Isaac of Waterloo, believes Koos is an escaped pet.

But for a pet, he is very shy. He will let no one within about 70 metres, and when a camera clicks he is off into the bush.

Rex Sevenoaks, a veteran freelance journalist who has been watching Koos for about two weeks, once saw him maul a nanny goat. But just once. So love does not seem the motive.

Preens

Koos splashes his companions from their water trough on hot evenings. He preens them, and nibbles the ticks he finds. He has been seen to ride on the backs for short distances. He cante

Herdsman David on the job