

# Matriarch Slew Loader makes sense for Jaranza Boerdery



**When the manager of the sugar cane division of a large commercial farm under irrigation decides that a wheeled slew loader is an all-round more economical option as a loading tool than an excavator-based machine, one should sit up and take notice.**

Hennie Gerber manages aspects of sugar cane cultivation and harvesting at the operations of Jaranza Boerdery in the Nyoni area near Komatipoort. The sugar and other crops are all under irrigation and the cane benefits from sub-surface “fertigation” where fertilizer is mixed into the water irrigation feed that goes directly to the roots of the cane plant through drip irrigation lines that lie between 20 and 25cm below the soil’s surface.

Cane under this type of sub-surface irrigation delivers good yields and it is proving popular in these ideal cane-growing areas where water is readily available. With the irrigation pipes running along infield ridges, slight changes to traffic management and loading tools come into play as the ridges cannot be crossed at will and row widths have to be adhered to.

“We used to load our cane using an excavator-based loader which worked well apart from the obvious capital cost implication and relative difficulty when wanting to move the machine over longer distances - where a low-bed truck-trailer combination is necessary,” Hennie says. “When we heard that other nearby growers like Hennie Davel and Crookes Brothers had recently acquired Matriarch Slew-Loaders and we saw the machines working, we were very keen to learn more.”

Hennie believes nothing beats first-hand knowledge and Jaranza Boerdery were able to secure a demonstration model Matriarch ULTeco 5 to demonstrate what it could do.

“When we saw the machine working, we were sold on it immediately and knew it would suit our cane harvesting methods and traffic management perfectly,” he adds.

“We were especially pleased that our operators, who had previously worked on the excavator-based loader, took to the Matriarch so seamlessly,” Hennie says. “This is because, as in an excavator, the operator faces the load all the time and the controls are in much the same pattern.”

He continues: “Other important features that we’ve found is the Matriarch’s mobility and very frugal fuel burn of between 3,8 and 4,2 litres of diesel per hour – I know because I personally keep strict control over the refueling of the machine.”

Jaranza Boerdery’s Matriarch ULTeco 5 Slew Loader had done slightly more than 1 200 hours in the first four months of being on the property. It easily manages the farm’s daily allocation to the mill of 250 to 300 tonnes of cane.

“The Matriarch ULTeco5 has been a revelation for us here at Jaranza Boerdery,” Hennie says. “The machine is so easy to run and maintain with very few electronics to make the life of a cane grower difficult and it fits our rows perfectly which is a big plus factor for our irrigation driven operation.



*From left: Peter Bell of Bell Equipment with his son Ashley Bell of Matriarch with Hennie Gerber, Manager: Sugar Cane at Jaranza Boerdery and Jan Basson, owner of Jaranza Boerdery.*