

Camp Carriers has sweet success in Swaziland with UltECO 6 Slew Loader

A massive investment by the European Union to stimulate the development of small-scale sugar farmers in Swaziland has had a positive ripple effect beyond agriculture alone.

The positive effect has been so successful that it is being described as a dream project for any agency planning economic and social upliftment as most people in the St Philips and Maphobeni areas of that country are now employed and making a sustainable living. Making this type of statement is Graham Camp, Managing Director of Camp Carriers Truck & Plant, a man who has experience of creating his own luck through perseverance and commitment of self-employment, and who has positioned himself to also benefit from the surge in small-scale sugar cultivation.

“Demand from existing transport clients saw us venture into plant hire in 2014 and two years later we bought a Bell 315SK Tractor Loader Backhoe (TLB) from Charlie Boucher at Bell Swaziland to complement our fleet of excavators and dozers,” says Graham. “And when the water from the newly constructed Lusip Dam started

flowing along recently completed canals and irrigating the sugar in this area, I knew that adding sugar loading equipment to our machine fleet was the way to go as the cane has to be harvested regularly, which would mean a loading tool paying for itself in due course.”

According to Graham, he had the opportunity to see a demonstration of the new Matriarch UltECO 6 four-wheel drive sugarcane slew loader and this convinced him that it would be the preferred loading tool for the relatively flat sugarcane lands in the St Philips area.

“As we already had a solid relationship with Bell Equipment, we were heartened by the fact that the Matriarch equipment was being marketed, supported and maintained by the company. Given that the local cane would have five re-growth cycles, we felt comfortable financing the Matriarch UltECO 6’s purchase over five years.”

“Other important factors that played a role in our decision were the Matriarch’s high reaching capability, excellent fuel consumption and extremely competitive pricing.”



Charlie Boucher, Team Leader of Bell Equipment Swaziland and Graham Camp, Managing Director of Camp Carriers Truck & Plant.



Graham points out that as most of the irrigation is done by way of centre pivots, the adjustable wheel-widths on the Matriarch UltECO 6 enables the machine to comfortably run in the rows without damaging the roots of the cane. In other areas where sub-surface irrigation piping is used, the slew loading action of the Matriarch prevents damage to the infrastructure by the machine again staying in the rows and not encroaching onto the plants’ roots.

“Having experience of hiring plant makes one realise that any piece of equipment is only as good as its technical back-up,” Graham adds. “Due to high demand for our Matriarch loader, its 500-hour service seemed to come up in almost no time and it was comforting to know that we could rely on Bell Equipment Swaziland to do the necessary with suitably trained mechanics and all the consumable parts at hand. We know that adhering to scheduled maintenance routines is key and this translates into fuel burn of between 5 and 6 litres an hour, which is pleasing and keeps cost per tonnes in check.”

Camp Carriers Truck & Plant’s Matriarch Slew Loader is used around the clock to load trucks hauling tandem

trailers with cut cane from the area. Graham believes that his operators will soon be proficient to meet the 55 to 70 tonnes an hour, which is within the design capacity of the machine. The cane gets supplied to the sugar mill at Big Bend, in most cases a trip of 30km in one direction. The Matriarch operators speak highly of the excellent LED lighting the machine has for the loading tasks at night.

“I’ve been especially impressed with the hands-on approach representatives from both Matriarch and Bell Equipment have taken in visiting my operation,” Graham says. “Ashley Bell, Matriarch’s Marketing Manager, really listens when we give him feedback and is open to suggestions on improving the machine’s capabilities and efficiencies.”

“These are just a few of the reasons why we’ll be looking to add another Matriarch UltECO 6 in the near future as the real benefits of the European Union’s massive investment come to fruition with more and more sugar cane that will all need to be harvested and loaded.”