

NAMPO reinforces its place as a top-class local exhibition

When the NAMPO Harvest Day was first held on a farm outside Bloemfontein in June 1966, there were only eight exhibitors and 203 visitors. By 2018, those numbers have grown considerably to boast 746 exhibitors of which Bell Equipment was proud to be one.

This year, no fewer than 82 817 visitors arrived at NAMPO Park outside of Bothaville in the Free State, now the permanent home of this world-famous event. Most of those visitors arrived in vehicles but over the four days that the event ran in mid-May, some 361 fixed-wing aeroplanes and helicopters landed at NAMPO's own airfield. There were 76 exhibitors from outside South Africa.

We asked Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Rickus Erasmus, who is responsible for the Kuruman and Wolmaransstad areas, what makes NAMPO important for Bell Equipment to attend. Rickus, working closely with Raj Singh and other members of the Bell Marketing team, has had the onerous task to organise the Bell Equipment exhibition at the event for the past several years.

"I believe that we need to be visible, especially to a fast-changing agricultural market which is mechanising rapidly. I feel this is the right place to show farmers and the broader public that we're not just about mining and construction," Rickus said. "NAMPO is an excellent platform to showcase many of our products that perhaps don't have direct links to agriculture but could be seen to fill gaps that farmers may have encountered."

Rickus said that when speaking to farmers at NAMPO, ideas are shared that are taken back to the Bell factory and converted into working solutions. He refers to the Afrikaans saying of "n boer maak 'n plan' which means 'a farmer makes a plan' and by the same token, the modern Bell Equipment also 'makes a plan' just as its legendary founder, Irvine Bell had. And look how that has turned out.

The Bell Equipment exhibition featured no less than three variants of Bell Equipment's three-wheeled machines namely a Bell 225F Logger, Bell 125F Cane Loader and Bell 225F Forklift. The Bell 1734AF Tractor drew much

attention as did a Bell 670G Grader, L1204E Wheeled Loader and Bell 315SL WorkPro Tractor Loader Backhoe.

The Matriarch Skogger timber extraction and loading machine and the FASTfell felling and bunching machine made their NAMPO debut on the Bell stand after the company's agreement with Matriarch Equipment was expanded in July 2017 to include forestry equipment.

The Matriarch range is well suited to Southern African timber conditions and contractors with lower production targets and higher cost sensitivities. The equipment complements Bell Equipment's existing range, enabling the company to provide solutions that meet customers' needs as they move from manual to fully mechanised operations. Bomag, Kobelco and Kamaz products were also well represented with the Kamaz Dakar Rally truck drawing many admiring glances and questions.



Stefan and Antonette Smith with Zoey Botha and Stefan Smith Jnr, all from Jan Kempdorp.



Frikkie and Willa Jacobs of Makwassie with Anita and Pieter Pansegrouw of Wolmaransstad.



Pierré and Elaine Gous from Sesfontein in Gauteng try on some Bell clothing.



Jac Steyn, Steven Marnewick, MJ Ferreira and Flip Hennop, all from Pretoria.



Potchefstroom College of Agriculture students Charmaine Molefe (seated), Precious Baliso, Ramakokovhu Masindi and Matambela Zwavhudi.



Pieter Bosch (Bell Equipment Sales Representative Tzaneen) with Gerrie Pieterse from Pretoria and Francois du Toit from Heidelberg.

