



# Bell brings Weskus Meganisasie onboard in Western Cape

Nicky Russouw's purpose in life is to empower people, which is why at the height of the initial panic that accompanied the first lockdown period in South Africa in 2020, he had his younger members of staff at all their branches, come in to work to still service the company's large farming customer base.



"Dealing with customers in agriculture and seeing the bigger picture that people have to eat, it was imperative for us to keep working, first with our younger staff until every member of our staff was involved as an essential service provider," he says. "It was important for us to be available to our customer base as it was the wheat-planting season, and this positive attitude and commitment changed our collective mindset to overcome a host of challenges brought on by the pandemic."

Nicky is the Managing Director and a partner of Weskus Meganisasie in which his family have a 50% shareholding with the other 50% owned by Rovic Agri. Rovic Agri is represented by Willem Buys and Lindsay Green.

Nicky regards himself as a 'son of the soil' and was schooled at the Labori High School in Paarl after which he obtained a tertiary qualification in Marketing at the Cape Peninsula of Technology. "My dad had worked for a distributor of a well-known agricultural tractor brand and grew up on a farm in the Porterville district where my love for the land found its roots," he tells us. "After graduating I went to work for the distributors of Landini tractors and learnt a lot from them."

In 2007, Nicky was given the opportunity to own a Landini tractor dealership in Vredendal and Piketberg and so his own business, Weskus Meganisasie, came into being.

"We entered into an equal partnership with Rovic Agri in 2020 and this saw us moving our head office to Malmesbury while opening yet another branch in Ceres," Nicky explains. "In agriculture, we have a far closer relationship with our customers as we visit them on their farms and in their homes and learn firsthand of their hardships and good fortune too."

Weskus Meganisasie has one sales representative in each of its four branches with sufficient spares for

**Nicky Russouw, Managing Director of Weskus Meganisasie.**

the various brands that they represent. Should a specific spare part not be available in one branch, an inter-branch swap can be done quickly to reduce a customer's machine or implement's potential downtime.

Each branch also has qualified technical personnel with the head office at Malmesbury boasting four with an apprentice in training, Piketberg has three, Vredendal has two and Ceres one, respectively. Having enough qualified technical staff has been a major factor in growing the company's reputation as a service-driven business that will be there for its customers no matter the hour of the day or day of the week. As Nicky emphasises: "When your customer is preparing land for planting and his equipment needs urgent repair late on a Saturday afternoon, you make sure that you can repair it right there and then."

"We're particularly excited at being able to now also present the Bell and JCB range of agricultural products in our offering as we feel there has long been a gap in the market for these specialised types of products," Nicky says smiling. "I can tell you that in the local vernacular, any Backhoe Loader is simply referred to as a JCB which should tell you a lot about the

popularity and visibility of the JCB brand and we're proud to be associated with such terminology."

"Farmers who have JCB Backhoe Loaders will tell you of their true value in a wide range of applications from building and maintaining farm roads and culverts to dams and cleaning irrigation furrows plus a whole lot more. We also know that the newer models have improved ergonomics and systems in the cab that reduce operator fatigue and lead to safer operations."

Nicky is of the opinion that the range of JCB Loadalls is going to be particularly popular with farmers for a wide number of uses from loading and stacking bales of winter feed to handling bulk bags of fertiliser and a host of other uses in-between.

He adds that another reason for feeling positive is the fact that JCB's distributor in South Africa, namely Bell Equipment, has already built a solid understanding of the local agricultural environment even if it is focused more on that of sugar and forestry. Bell Equipment through its wide and well-established dealer network knows the local conditions and challenges that many farmers face.

"We have plans to interact with our customer base to see what the most popular applications would be for JCB Backhoe Loaders and JCB Loadalls and use this information in our social media marketing drive, a part of technology that we've fully embraced as it works for us," he says.

Bell Forestry & Agriculture Business Development Manager, Charles Inggs, shares Nicky's enthusiasm when he says: "We as a company are as excited to have Nicky and his dynamic team at Weskus Meganisasie onboard as they have built a brilliant reputation within the area which we believe has played a huge part in their many years of success."

"With this solid reputation coupled with their four branches located in strategic areas, we as Bell Equipment Forestry & Agriculture are extremely excited about the opportunities that lie ahead. Weskus Meganisasie is already well equipped to support and service the existing machines running in the area as well as being ready and able to grow both the Bell and JCB brand names into market leaders."

