



Alpha Agri excited to add 'yellow metal' to its offering

Tiens de Bruin sees big potential for especially JCB's Backhoe Loaders, Skid Steers and agriculturally specified Loadall equipment in his company's agricultural target market and he and his young team are excited at the prospect of selling and backing this new equipment offering.

Tiens is the Managing Director of Alpha Agri, which has a head office in Middelburg, Mpumalanga and a branch in Groblersdal in neighbouring Limpopo Province.

"We started Alpha Agri in June 2014 in Middelburg and by the time we were well established in July 2021, we opened a branch in nearby Groblersdal, which is a real farming town surrounded by many large properties under irrigation," Tiens says. "In Middelburg the business is shared between me and three minority shareholders and in Groblersdal, my wife Marie and I carry the can."

Alpha Agri is an agricultural equipment dealer on one hand but has broken the mold of the traditional dealer-technical support-parts supplier model of old by also importing implements and distributing them. "We import a unique range of

agricultural implements from Argentina and distribute them with full parts and technical support and we're proud of this offering," Tiens adds. "As a combined team of only 24 people made up of both our branches, we're a young vibrant crowd in touch with new technologies and marketing strategies and are constantly thinking out of the box about how to best apply what we know while keeping our collective minds open to constant learning."

Alpha Agri's exports the Argentinian products even further and has established ready markets in most of the sub-Saharan African countries.

"We're proud of our technical expertise and our vast 2 000m² workshop in Middelburg and 800m² workshop in Groblersdal bear testament to this," Tiens adds. "Most of our customers know that any piece of equipment is only as good as its technical backup, and we're committed to making sure that customers' investments give them a solid return by keeping them running with genuine parts fitted by qualified mechanics."

Alpha Agri has three qualified mechanics and three assistants in Middelburg and two mechanics and two assistants in Groblersdal with two apprentices looking to qualify in 2023 and one in 2024.

"We're especially proud of our workshop being SETA registered, which gives us and our customers the added assurance that training of the highest levels takes place on our premises," Tiens says. "We also offer field servicing in a radius of approximately 150km around each of our workshops respectively and have vehicles that are fully kitted out with everything a mechanic working on a remote site may need, including advanced diagnostic equipment."

"All our mechanics and parts personnel work on tablets and have access to the JCB support portals which offer around the clock advice and information as it's needed. Three of our mechanics have first-hand knowledge of previously working on JCB equipment with other companies and for them the prospect of doing it again is almost like a home-coming."

According to Tiens, he and his colleagues have in the past, had informal discussions with Charles Inggs, Bell Equipment's Business Development Manager: Forestry and Agriculture about the possibility of becoming a dealer aimed at the agricultural market. This mutual interest was formalised in January 2023 and as Tiens mentions, it could not come at a better time.

"We, as Alpha Agri, are one of three major players in the agricultural space in Middelburg and the other two entities both have access to construction-based equipment such as backhoe loaders and other machines. With us now having access to JCB's range of legendary tough and durable yellow metal equipment, we're equally confident of retaining and

even gaining market share which excites us," he says.

Tiens mentions that since joining the Bell Forestry & Agriculture and JCB Agriculture dealership team, they've put out quotations on a JCB 3DX Backhoe Loader destined for a farm under irrigation near Groblersdal as well as a JCB 155T3 Skid Steer which is expected to have an interesting deployment in a soya bean processing plant.

Tiens de Bruin,
owner of Alpha Agri.

