

# the bulletin

Forestry & Agriculture Edition - VOLUME 1 - 2023



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**Cover**  
On show at NAMPO 2023 and powered by the well-proven John Deere 6.8l turbocharged engine and the latest electronically controlled Allison transmission, Bell Series V Tractors are built for the long haul and deliver exceptional comfort and fuel efficiency.

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# JCB LOADALL LIFT HIGHER REACH FURTHER WORK FASTER



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## insight



**On** behalf of the Bell group, it gives me great pleasure to present our special NAMPO edition of the Bell Bulletin, which is focused entirely on agriculture and forestry.

It has been a year since we established Bell Forestry & Agriculture, our dedicated business unit, and became the distributor for JCB Agriculture in South Africa. We are already seeing the benefit of expanding our product range and getting closer to our customers in these industries through our growing dealer network.

In this edition, you will meet our newly appointed independent dealers. Importantly, they are all well-established businesses that are well-respected within their communities and share the same customer-centric focus. We are extremely proud to have them on board and wish them all the best with their Bell Forestry & Agriculture and JCB Agriculture dealerships.

They share the same enthusiasm about the JCB Agriculture range, especially the JCB Backhoe Loaders and Loadalls, and we look forward to bringing you more customer testimonials about these machines, and more.

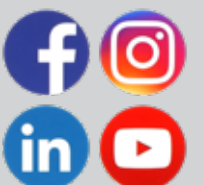
Be assured that we and our dealer network are committed to guiding and supporting your business. We trust that you will enjoy NAMPO and we thank you for your interest in Bell Equipment.

Leon Goosen  
Group Chief Executive Officer

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# Leading wine estate thrilled with their new JCB 3DX Plus

Francois Malan is by his own admission a top gear man. This doesn't mean that he's addicted to a popular motoring show on British television but rather that he insists that the surface condition of the roads on his family's well-known wine estate must be such to allow him to drive in any vehicle's top gear.



And for this he believes he has a JCB Backhoe Loader to thank.

Francois and his brother, Johan, own and manage the Simonsig Wine Estate near Stellenbosch, in the heart of the picturesque Cape Winelands. Francois is the viticulturist and Johan the winemaker. The estate has been in the Malan family since 1942 when Francois and Johan's late father, Frans, arrived there. Frans Malan is credited with first making the now famous Kaapse Vonkel wine in the

Méthode Cap Classique bottle-fermented style and being one of three well-known wine makers to collectively establish the Stellenbosch Wine Route.

"The majority surface area of our land is given to our vineyards on two properties," Francois says. "This implies that we have many tractors and other mechanised equipment in constant movement on the estate, but the one that sticks in my mind is our JCB Backhoe Loader."

Francois recalls that they first bought a JCB 3CX Backhoe Loader in 2002 and it soon made its mark as the most important machine on the entire estate. "This JCB Backhoe Loader was known as the 'lifesaver' on the estate as when any tractor or sprayer got stuck, especially in our wet Cape winters, the JCB Backhoe Loader would be there to pull it out of the mud."

"I must also pay homage to that machine's permanent operator,



**(From left): Jan Coetzee (Van Breda Agri Sales Manager), Francois Malan (Simonsig Wine Estate Co-owner), Pieter Williams (Simonsig Backhoe Loader Operator), Joris Jacobs (Van Breda Agri Director) and Braam van Aarde (Simonsig Wine Estate Workshop Manager).**

the late Vaaltyn Moos, who sadly passed away in 2022 at the age of 74. He was a real artist with the machine, and he devised ways to use the JCB Backhoe Loader to maintain our roads by bringing in fill material and compacting it, sloping the sides so that water could run off the surface."

"He found a way to efficiently extract wooden support poles by using a sling over the front bucket when we replanted vineyards and he could stack fruit crates in the narrowest of spaces using the forks on the machine."

Simonsig's JCB 3CX Backhoe Loader was eventually sold out of hand with what Francois believes to be in excess of 20 000 hours on its clock, with the search for a replacement machine having started in 2015.

"We visited the NAMPO Agricultural Show in 2015 and were somewhat overwhelmed by quotations from a variety of suppliers," he says. "The backhoe loader market is clearly a very competitive one but two main factors persuaded us to stay with the JCB brand that we knew so well."

Francois says what stood out for them was the longevity and

versatility they enjoyed from their first JCB 3CX Backhoe Loader, which clearly showed the quality of its design and build. Then there was the almost irresistible financial incentive offered by their JCB dealer, Van Breda Agri, with the backing of JCB in South Africa and a leading local banking group, which they felt they would have been foolish to ignore.

"We were pleased when our new JCB 3DX Plus Backhoe Loader was delivered in December 2022, in good time for our harvesting season, and we were impressed with the many new and improved features on the current model," Francois says. "JCB seems to have paid particular attention to operator comfort and, as the machine is often deployed in remote areas of our estate where the operator works alone, it is particularly pleasing to know that operator fatigue can be reduced."

"Our new backhoe operator, Pieter Williams, reports that he took to the new machine quite quickly, that the controls are responsive while the visibility of the work area from the air-conditioned cab is excellent and the new JCB 3DX Plus runs much quieter."

Being used to seeing JCB Backhoe Loaders work in diverse conditions

from digging graves to backfilling pipelines, the sight of this bright yellow machine starkly contrasted against the rich plum colours of grape skins exiting the grape pressing plant was an unusual one. The ease though with which the operator loaded the mass of organic skins and stalks onto a trailer for eventual use as compost was impressive as the JCB 3DX Plus has an adequately tight turning circle to work safely within areas where people move around as well.

Francois and his team also enjoy the JCB LiveLink telematics system that will in due course remind them of upcoming maintenance milestones, so ensuring that warranties stay in place, which will in turn benefit the longevity of the machine.

"We're confident that given our good experience with our first JCB Backhoe Loader, we've made the correct choice in staying with the JCB brand. Having the dealer, Van Breda Agri, with whom we already have a long relationship, right on our doorstep in Stellenbosch gives us the confidence that this JCB 3DX Plus Backhoe Loader is going to outlive the previous one and ensure that our road surfaces keep us going in top gear," he says.



# Versatile JCB Loadall improves efficiencies at Goedgevonden Farm

*When Piet Badenhorst asked his former school friend, Alec Pieterse, what the most versatile piece of mechanical equipment was he had ever owned, the answer was quick and to the point, a JCB Loadall and Piet, by his own admission was sold on the idea.*

Piet, his wife Marieta and son Baltus, are the third and fourth generations respectively growing essential crops on their family farm called Goedgevonden in the Delareyville district near Schweizer-Reneke, in South Africa's North West Province. Soybeans are their biggest crop, with maize and sunflowers making up the rest. The family also breeds Bonsmara cattle and Merino sheep.

"Cultivating soybeans is a relatively new crop for us and we've had successful crops since starting with it seven years ago," Piet tells us. "It's also the crop that has shown

the biggest increase in the world as its uses are varied due to its high protein content, which makes it ideal for cattle and chicken feeds and takes away the fish smell that some poultry had being fed with fish-meal."

Soybean plants are known to put nitrogen back in the soil by converting nitrogen in the atmosphere through a mutual effort between micro-organisms in the soil and nodules on the plants' roots. Interestingly, this process is known as symbiotic nitrogen fixation and reduces the fertilisers needed, although no planting

season can really be kicked off without first applying some fertiliser when preparing land for planting.

"When the planting season starts, things happen very quickly and we have to have all our mechanical and organic ducks in a row," Piet explains. "We used to load fertiliser using an auger system from a trailer into the feed hopper on the tractor-driven applicator that distributes the fertiliser, but it was a very slow process, and we were always keeping an eye open for a more efficient system."

While researching the market, Piet came across an online platform which featured the recent 2022 NAMPO show and there he discovered Loadalls made by JCB for which Bell Equipment is now the South African distributor. Piet was familiar with the JCB brand as he had recently bought a JCB 3DX Backhoe Loader which was proving invaluable on the farm, especially when used in repairing and maintaining roads and irrigation infrastructure plus a myriad of other uses.

"I then spoke to my old school chum, Alec Pieterse, who owns a JCB 531-70 Loadall and he could not stop listing the things that he can do with this very versatile machine," Piet continues. "As it happened, Rickus Erasmus, Bell Equipment's Sales Representative for our area, was also at school with us and it was easy to get the correct information from him on which JCB Loadall would be best suited for our varied farming operations."

Rickus suggested Piet look at the benefits the JCB 535-95AG Loadall as its boom, boasting a long 9,5 metre reach and 3,5-ton carrying capacity, could be just the versatile tool that the Goedgevonden Farm needed where loading and stacking was concerned.

"Since we took delivery of our JCB 535-95AG Loadall in June 2022, we've used it mainly on two fronts, namely unloading and loading 1-ton bulk bags of fertiliser from our suppliers and into the applicators and stacking big round bales of hay in easily accessible storage areas for winter feed for our Bonsmara cattle," Piet says. "The process of loading fertiliser into the tractor-mounted applicators has speeded up so much as the JCB Loadall easily manages the 1-ton self-loading bulk bag, which opens at the bottom with something akin to a drawstring and the whole bag is emptied at a much faster rate than the old system allowed." Piet and his operators have high

praise for the machine's simple controls and tight turning circle as both sets of wheels respond to steering. This has the benefit of not encroaching onto ploughed land. The interchangeable tools of forks for slinging the bulk bags, a large bucket for handling bulk commodities and a self-made skewer for handling the hay bales, all detach and attach easily which adds to the JCB 535-95AG's versatility and saves valuable production time.

The JCB 535-95AG Loadall was bought with a standard warranty of 12 months and unlimited hours and is linked to the JCB Livelink monitoring system. While under warranty it will be serviced by mechanics from Bell Equipment's nearby Wolmaransstad branch.

"We can already see how much time this JCB 535-95AG Loadall is saving us as we can unload fertiliser bags so much quicker off the trucks that deliver them and load our tractor-driven applicators in no time at all," Piet says. "Time is a critical factor in our short planting season and this machine is creating more of it for our benefit."



**(From left): Vorster Snyman, Tiaan Boshoff, Baltus and Piet Badenhorst, Jandré Nieuwoudt and Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Rickus Erasmus.**



# Timrite grows its fleet with Bell Forklift and JCB Wheel Loader

*A marked saving in fuel consumption has justified the purchase of new and more efficient material handling equipment for a Mpumalanga-based manufacturer of timber products.*

The Thebe Group of companies owns, amongst many other entities, three sawmills that supply specialised timber products for use in mining support systems. The mills also produce structural timber and that used in furniture manufacture and are situated at Bushbuckridge, White River and Kemp, just outside of Piet Retief. It was at the latter where we met with Emmanuel Sithole, Saw Mill Manager for that Timrite mill.

"We buy in timber from local and distant larger growers, some from neighbouring Eswatini, and work exclusively with *Eucalyptus grandis* and *dunnii* hardwoods," Emmanuel explains. "At this mill,

80% of our production gets used for mining support timber and the rest as wet off-saw timber, meaning it's not dried and is then used for the wooden pallet market."

*E.grandis* and *E.dunnii* is sold in tons as opposed to softwoods like pine that is sold in cubic metres.

The Timrite mill specifies that its raw timber be cut to 2,4 metre lengths and the taper should not exceed 0,8cm per metre in length. This leads to uniformity in production, which the mill regards as an important quality aspect. A standout feature of the mill's use of its precious resource is that no part of the log is wasted. "What we

don't use for either mining support timber or pallets, meaning chips and sawdust, is sold to a nearby particle board mill, which turns those smaller bits into chipboard," Emmanuel adds.

He goes on to explain that Timrite creates three different sets of mining support timber products at his facility, namely packs, trims and splits which all differ in lengths and thicknesses. These are then transferred (in component form) to another division of the company that creates the various formations of mine supports such as the Timrite Apollo Mat and Timrite Lexus Mat and sells these on to mining houses. These mine supports are



**Timrite Saw Mill Manager, Emmanuel Sithole (left), and Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Daniel van Huyssteen, with some miniature samples of the Timrite Apollo Mat and Lexus Mat support packs.**

used in especially deep gold mines in the Free State, North West, and Gauteng.

"We form the backend of the supply chain while our sales department, which deals with the mining houses, is referred to as the frontend," he says. "Our colleagues in the frontend also test the timber for strength and coat it in a fire-retardant solution."

When raw timber arrives at the Timrite mill, it is unloaded from trucks using an overhead crane. All other handling of the 2,4m logs is done using two Bell 220A Loggers. "These two Bell 220A Loggers are at least 10 years old and have been well used in that time as we have a policy of getting the maximum out of our mechanical equipment, really sweating each machine," Emmanuel says with a smile. "The longevity of these Bell Loggers is great testament to the machine's proven quality in design and build as they simply keep soldiering on."

Early in the second half of 2021, Timrite decided to replace two older machines, a rough terrain forklift and a wheel loader fitted with a quick-attach bucket and fork option. These had become uneconomical to operate further and were sold out of hand.

"The long-standing and solid relationship our company had forged with Bell Equipment stood us in good stead as we could confidently turn to Bell Equipment's Sales Representative in Nelspruit, Daniel van Huyssteen, for advice on what the company could offer us," Emmanuel says. "Daniel listened to what our needs were and suggested the Bell 225F three-wheeled Forklift and the JCB 422ZX Wheel Loader with their respective 3,5 ton and 6,6 ton lifting capabilities."

The equipment was ordered in July 2021 and delivered two months later in September.

"We use the Bell 225F Forklift to move strapped packs of processed timber to the export yard where it is stacked. The terrain is uneven and even muddy in the wet season, but the traction those big front wheels on the Bell Forklift deliver sees it trundling along effortlessly," Emmanuel says.

Timrite currently use their new JCB 422ZX Wheel Loader to move and stockpile around 100 tons of woodchips every day. They have plans to convert the front frame to be able to swap between a bucket and a set of forks quickly as different needs arise.

"Having new equipment is great as one is assured of sustained uptime, but I feel it would be amiss not to mention things we noticed immediately such as the noise levels that are much less on especially the Bell 225F Forklift," Emmanuel says. "That new Yanmar engine is really quiet and that is also why the very audible reverse siren is a great safety feature."



Emmanuel is of the opinion that the extended service intervals, now at 500 hours, will provide for more productive time. Centralised grease points lower down on the machine are easily accessible and the Bell design engineers have reduced the vibration in the machine.

"You would appreciate that fuel consumption is a major overhead for us but we've been pleased to see that both the Bell 225F Forklift and the JCB 422ZX Wheel Loader each use at least one litre of diesel less per hour than their predecessors which, at current utilisations of 1 000 hours per year

per machine, is a huge saving in diesel to us and will have a direct and positive impact on our operating costs."

The Bell 225F Forklift has been returning fuel consumption figures of 3,5 to 4,5 litres per hour and the JCB 422ZX Wheel Loader, 6,5 to 7 litres.

"Our operators took to the new machines seamlessly and comment on how much smoother and responsive the controls are in both," Emmanuel says. "Another

big plus for us is the fact that Bell Equipment has a branch with mechanics and a good parts holding on our doorstep in Piet Retief, and our experience of the

company's service of late has been nothing short of phenomenal."





# Eswatini's Top Technics expands with Bell Loggers and Skogger

*When Cedusizi Dlamini wanted to start his own forestry contract harvesting business, he turned down a lucrative loan offer from a family member as he didn't want to risk any disharmony in his family that loaned money may cause. Instead, he did it the hard way, paying back a substantial loan from another party over a mere twelve months.*

But that was all a while ago and today Cedusizi and his young company, Top Technics, are enjoying the fruits that diligent labour and commitment bring.

"The day I left school in 2007 I joined my brother, Thulani Khumalo, who worked as a supervisor for a forestry company here in Eswatini, in the forest working as a general labourer," Cedusizi says. "This taught me a lot and I learnt about hard work

before embarking on tertiary study in electrical engineering a year later."

Cedusizi qualified as an electrical and electronics engineer from the Eswatini College of Technology in 2012 at the end of a three-year course.

In his first permanent position he worked as an office clerk for six months before his employer realised that, given his previous

experience in forestry, he was being under-utilised. He then became the operations manager for the company's silviculture division where he stayed for three years. "While serving this company I learnt a lot about hard work, managing money and importantly, what makes a forestry business successful."

"After those three valuable years, I joined a silviculture contractor for a year at Usutu Forests," Cedusizi

continues. "It was around this time that I put into place plans to create my own company and Stephan Olivier, the Project Manager for Peak Timbers Limited at that time, gave me that opportunity when he tasked me to salvage all timber left over from a devastating fire that had swept through the Piggs Peak area in 2016."

But employing even only 15 manual labourers called for immediate cash flow and considering that he'd have a period of at least two months with no immediate income, Cedusizi faced a financial crisis. Nonetheless the brother of a friend looked at his business plan, cash flow predictions and general enthusiasm and decided, after much discussion, to loan him the money he needed for start-up. This substantial amount though had to be paid back within 12 months, which was also the length of his first probationary contract from his clients.

"I managed to pay back that loan over 12 months in 2018 and now had the benefit of a positive credit score with the bank, which would stand me in good stead going

forward," he says. "By 2019, I started the process to buy my first new Bell 225F Logger from Bell Equipment in Eswatini, which turned out to be the first machine of the new Bell F-series Logger range in the Piggs Peak area."

"I chose a Bell Logger because that is the only logger you see offering sustained service in our forests all over Eswatini. They just never seem to have an end and there are some very old machines around as well, which says a lot for the brand."

In 2020, he bought a Bell 225A Logger on the pre-owned market that had worked for 8 000 hours, feeling confident that should that machine need a further overhaul, it would be possible due to its sturdy design that made this feasible. This machine was followed six months later by another new Bell 225F Logger.

From salvaging burnt timber, Top Technics received a full commercial harvesting contract working in Eucalyptus when new owners took control of the timber



**Cedusizi Dlamini (left), owner of Top Technics, with Charlie Boucher, CSC Manager of Bell Equipment Swaziland.**





plantations in that area and Cedusizi could now properly plan for capital expenditure with longer contracts in place.

The year 2021 saw Cedusizi really expand his fleet of timber handling machines from Bell Equipment when he bought a third new Bell 225F Logger and a Skogger after receiving a contract that demanded increased production. These machines were ordered in October and delivered in November the same year.

"We generally harvest and extract during daylight hours only," Cedusizi explains. "We have six chainsaw teams felling the

Eucalyptus trees and the Skogger then extracts these full tree lengths to a roadside depot. Here a Bell Logger will be used to arrange these full tree lengths that are cross-cut to a variety of lengths, depending on the order and these vary from 2,4 metres to 14 metres. The Bell Logger then stacks the cut timber into various stacks determined by their lengths."

Cedusizi is full of praise for the difference the Skogger has made to his operations. "I'm grateful to Charlie Boucher of Bell Equipment in Matsapha for the valuable advice he gave me around the benefits of owning a

Skogger, especially from a safety point of view, a subject we take seriously," he adds. "Processing at roadside, where there is enough space to work safely, is now possible because of the Skogger's ability to extract the full tree lengths."

Cedusizi is considering adding a winch to the front of the Skogger for use in the steeper compartments that they encounter in the Piggs Peak area.

Although his fuel credit limits stipulate a maximum daily fuel consumption, neither the Bell 225F Loggers at 7 litres an hour or the Skogger at 7,5 litres an hour exceed this limit.

"It's reassuring to know that one can rely on Bell Equipment, which is not far away, for technical backup and servicing with a good

parts holding," Cedusizi says. "With the level of service that we get from Bell Equipment, I feel as if the mechanics, Russell Myburg and Christos Ginn, have been allocated to us exclusively."

The next piece of equipment Cedusizi plans to buy will be a 13-ton Excavator with a harvesting

head and he is taking a keen interest in the Kobelco SK135SR Excavator as a carrier. He also currently runs a used skidder and a 35-ton rigid timber truck that transports timber to mills and end users.





# Cousins succeed at contract harvesting with Bell forestry fleet

*What do a pharmacist, an agronomist and an accountant have in common barring the fact that they are all related as cousins? Probably nothing you'd say unless all three are partners in a business venture such as that doing contract forestry harvesting, which started out as a timber transport company.*

The idea of buying a truck to haul timber came about during informal discussions in December 2017 between Kholiwe Shabangu, the pharmacist, Maswazi Mkhathswa, the agronomist and Jabulile Kunene, the accountant.

"I had spent some 12 years working for a forestry company here in Eswatini and, as a minor director, held a minor shareholding," says Maswazi Mkhathswa, the 'thorn' amongst his two partner 'roses'. "I had this dream though of being self-employed and when Kholiwe suggested we buy a truck to do timber haulage, I supported the idea wholeheartedly."

"Maswazi at first wanted to do contract work for Jabulile and I but we insisted he be a part of the partnership as well because we

saw the value that he would bring," Kholiwe says. "In the end, it merely took a phone call from Maswazi to make it happen and we had a five-year contract to haul timber for the company he had worked for."

The young company, called Khojama Investments, bought its timber truck in January 2018 and started hauling harvested timber from forestry areas in the west of Eswatini to a large sawmill at Bhunya, a distance of some 30km. The three partners soon realised that they were ready to take on bigger things and when Maswazi approached the forestry manager of their client, he offered them a contract doing thinnings where selected younger pine trees are removed to stimulate growth amongst the remaining trees.

"By May 2018 this new contract was in place, and we were tasked with delivering 2 000 tons of pine thinnings a month, which was a daunting task as we were working manually," Maswazi says. "We decided then to rent two Bell 225A Loggers and a Skogger from a forestry plant hire company and, although it was expensive, it got us going which meant we had cash flow and we started building up a credit score with the bank."

"Looking back, the two Bell Loggers and the Skogger saved the day and our future reputations, as we could realistically not have sustained our production in any other way!"

Typically, Khojama Investments would deploy three chainsaw teams into a compartment where



**Maswazi Mkhathswa (left), Kholiwe Shabangu and Bell Swaziland's Charlie Boucher.**





the trees to be felled would be marked. A Bell Logger would pre-bunch the felled trees which would then be extracted by the Skogger to roadside, where the other Bell Logger would stack the timber. Here it would be cross-cut into predetermined lengths and stacked again using the Bell Logger.

"Our plan was to buy our own equipment and we started this process by paying a deposit on two Bell 225F Loggers in January 2019," Kholiwe says. "In May 2019, our dream came true when we took delivery of two new Bell 225F Loggers and we have high praise for Charlie Boucher and his team at Bell Equipment in Eswatini for making this happen."

Mechanics from Bell Equipment's Eswatini branch at nearby Matsapha serviced the Bell Loggers while they were under warranty and have continued this service for major servicing. Khojama Investments attends to minor servicing now that the Bell Loggers are out of warranty.

In August 2020, Khojama Investments' thinnings contract changed in that their clients no

longer wanted the felled timber cross-cut at roadside but hauled to the mill in full tree lengths where another contractor would do the processing. "We thought at first that this would ease the pressure on our production, but the opposite happened as our clients doubled our production targets. By mid-2021 we realised we would need to buy our own Skogger to meet the demand," Maswazi says. "We subsequently ordered a new Skogger from Bell Equipment in June of that year, and it was delivered in October 2021."

Khojama Investments now runs two shifts in their thinnings operations, one from 6:30am to 3:30pm and the second from 4pm to midnight, which means that high mechanical availabilities and utilisation of their mechanical equipment is called for.

Despite this, their Bell 225F Loggers use diesel at an average of 5 litres an hour while the Skogger runs at between 6,5 and 6,8 litres an hour with both types of machines' fuel consumption well within the fuel cap that is set and monitored by their clients.

"Safety in the forest is a big concern for us and our clients, and the lights, especially on the Bell Skogger, make for good visibility and safe operations," Kholiwe adds. "But more impressive is the level of service we get from Bell Equipment at Matsapha when even at 4am one phone call to Charlie Boucher ensures that a mechanic is on his way to us quickly."

Kholiwe also says that should parts not be available immediately, Bell Equipment ensures that they arrive within 48 hours at the utmost and so minimises the downtime of their equipment. Both she and Maswazi echo that communication between themselves and Bell Equipment is clear and the latter is always prepared to listen.

The young company's third partner, Jabulile Kunene, was attending to other matters on the day of the interview but both Kholiwe and Maswazi say that she shares their dream list of a feller buncher and a processing head mounted on an excavator carrier as the next equipment to acquire. We're confident that with their drive and energy, they won't need to wait long.

# 'Tree'mendous solutions

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**Strong Reliable Machines  
 Strong Reliable Support**





# Kobelco and Bell are a winning combination for J & B Timbers

*Barend Steenkamp faced a somewhat unique problem in his felling, extraction and loading of pine thinnings operation in forests in the west of Eswatini. His contract called for full tree-lengths, up to fifteen metres long, to be loaded onto specialised stinger-steer truck-trailer combinations, but there was not enough space in the narrow roads between forest compartments to do this safely.*

Barend is the fifth generation of farmers in South Africa's landlocked neighbouring country. His family first farmed dairy but, starting small, moved into timber harvesting in 2010. While still farming with livestock, this new arm of the business, J & B Timbers, has grown exponentially since then.

"Our client, a large timber grower and sawmilling group, had amended our current contract to now process full tree lengths on a deck near the mill," Barend explains. "Their thinking was that they wanted to harness the biomass that is traditionally left in the compartment after felling, extraction and cross-cutting, in one place which is near the mill. In that way, they could also possibly utilise this

biomass, in which they now saw value, as fuel for power generation. Removing the biomass from the compartment would also reduce the fuel load that forest fires thrive on."

"Added to this was the thought that the recovery of saw-wood, the most valued commodity, would be increased through easier handling on the deck close to the mill."

This meant that instead of cross-cutting the felled tree at roadside, the full tree-length would now be transported to a specialised open area or deck as it's called, near to the mill, where the full tree-lengths would be processed by removing the branches which form the biomass and doing the cross-cutting there.

"We were using a Kobelco SK210LC-10 Excavator carrier fitted with a MT600 grapple to load timber but, because of the narrow road, we could not turn the

Excavator at ninety degrees to the truck to load the full tree-lengths safely," Barend continues. "This is when I took a design idea to Justin Bell, Product Designer of Bell Equipment's Forestry and Agriculture division, to see if we could fit a hydraulic heel to an extension on the MTR600 grab to steady the bunched timber and so create a steady fulcrum to do this safely while loading full tree-lengths.

"The almost similar knuckle-boom concept has been widely used in the forestry industry in both the USA and New Zealand," says Justin Bell. "This means that we didn't have to reinvent the wheel so to speak but rather make adjustments to what was at hand and create a live heel, which is different from the stationary heel on a knuckle-boom loader."

According to Justin, one such major consideration was to lengthen the dipper on the excavator with a nose cone to





accommodate the standard bucket cylinder of the Kobelco SK210LC-10 Excavator whilst still achieving the required heel range of motion, making aftermarket support of the complete product easier.

"Both static and dynamic (live) heels are in use globally, and whilst it would have been quicker and simpler to bolt or weld a static heel onto the dipper of the Kobelco SK210LC-10 Excavator, the live heel certainly provides a wider range of operating configurations for the tight space constraints Barend had to deal with."

drawings for this innovative project and despite the challenges, took it in his stride.

"We now have a pretty smooth flowing felling, extraction and loading operation of pine thinnings in the forest thanks to these applied innovative ideas," Barend continues. "This came about as a result of higher tonnages as stipulated by harvesting contracts, and as always, we make every effort to comply and do it safely, as this is our livelihood."

J & B Timbers uses a Bell MT50FH Single-stem Feller Buncher head fitted to a Kobelco SK135SR Excavator to fell trees as the

Justin commends Maxwell Quarmby, one of Bell Equipment's young design engineers, who in consultation with himself produced both the design and



flexible boom quickly reaches into areas where a traditional felling machine can't always go. Again, this Feller Buncher head came about as an idea that Barend had brought forward after using the Fastfell and this particular model is the first one that the Forestry and Agriculture division of Bell Equipment had produced.

The same machine then places the felled trees in piles in the compartment from where a Bell Skogger extracts them to the road where the Kobelco SK210LC-10 Excavator, fitted with the live heel attachment, loads the full tree-lengths onto the stinger-steer trailers.

The average fuel burn on the Kobelco SK210LC-10 Excavator comes in at 10,8 litres an hour and that of the Kobelco SK135SR at 9,8 litres an hour of which both figures fit comfortably into the business plan.

On the processing deck, J & B Timbers deploys three Kobelco SK260LC-10 Excavators fitted with third party processing heads to strip the branches and bark and cross-cut the timber into predetermined lengths. Currently, the three Kobelco machines

produce 18 000 tons of timber a month and run an average of 18 hours in a 24-hour cycle.

"These Kobelco SK260LC-10 machines are phenomenal and seem to idle along while producing more than enough hydraulic flows to efficiently drive the processing heads at sustained mechanical availabilities," Barend says. "And their added benefit is that they do all this running on average at 8% cheaper than competitor machines in the same mass class."

"Kobelco have got this right by creating a simple machine with far less electronics," he adds. "Let it be said though that none of this sustained performance would be possible without the non-stop great service that we get from Charlie Boucher and his entire team at Bell Equipment in Matsapha."

Barend makes special mention of Bruce Larkan, Bell Equipment's Product Support Representative who happens to live near to J & B Timbers' operation and stops off every second day on his way home to check the condition of the various machines or to drop off service kits or essential consumables.

When asked about the company's replacement based on machine hours, Barend says: "Our policy would stipulate 20 000 hours, which is high but which we're confident of getting due to good design and build of especially the equipment we buy from Bell Equipment, and due to diligent and preventative maintenance which we see to ourselves, with Bell Equipment's support. Our next machine purchase will be another Kobelco SK260LC-10 Excavator fitted with a third party processing head to replace an older machine that has given us 14 000 hours of great service. The older machine will get its original bucket back and we'll take it to the farm where it will do maintenance earthworks."

Barend is adamant that machines from Bell Equipment provide the backbone of his timber harvesting, extraction and processing operations and this is evident in the number of such branded machines the company owns. The fleet includes no less than eight Bell Loggers, a Fastfell, three Skoggers, one Kobelco SK135SR, three SK210LC-10s and now four SK260LC-10 Excavators with a variety of heads.



**From left: Mandla Nkosi Dlamini, Charlie Boucher (Customer Service Centre Manager: Bell Equipment Swaziland), Salpelo Dlamini, Barend Steenkamp (MD: J & B Timbers), Brian Sibandze, Edmund Bothma, Mcolisi Sibanyoni and Victor Kunene.**



# Backhoe Loader saves the day for Wait & See Holsteins

*The heavy summer rains in early 2023 caused many inland dams to overflow and South Africa's largest reservoir, the mighty Gariep Dam, was not spared either. A large portion of its water flows via the Fish River Tunnel into the Eastern Cape's Great Fish River causing that waterway to come down in spate and this has potential catastrophic downstream effects for the farmers along the river's banks.*

One such farm is the internationally known, Wait and See Holsteins, where the Sieberhagen family has been farming with registered Holstein cattle since 1933. The present owner, John Sieberhagen, is the fourth generation of the family and farms this land near Mortimer, some 30km south of Cradock, with his wife Pam and their son Henry. The milk that their large

herd of Holsteins produces is transported to both Port Elizabeth and East London in bulk tankers every day. Pedigreed cattle are sold throughout South Africa and exported to various African countries regularly.

"We realise our farm has an unusual name and the legend goes that when my great-grandfather and his son, our

grandfather, bought this land after relocating here from Carnarvon in the Northern Cape, they were told they would not make it," John recalls. "To this, they apparently replied, 'Let's wait and see', and so the farm was named."

Wait and See's current milking herd numbers some 550 cows and twice a day these animals walk from the various fields where they graze to the milking parlour. Along the way they pass over a low-water bridge that fords the Great Fish River. As a result of more water being released from the Gariep Dam, the river brought down much debris by way of tree branches and some whole trees that clogged up the bridge and made it impossible for the cows to pass over it.

"You'd appreciate that apart from supplying milk being our livelihood, 550 or any number of cows that are in a production cycle cannot

not be milked twice a day as that could potentially lead to all sorts of complications with the health of the animals," John explains. "We were almost in a real bind but fortunately help of our own doing was at hand."

The Sieberhagens had over time consecutively bought used backhoe loaders that they had used for seven to eight years respectively but had always found used machines to have hidden faults that were not evident when bought and which caused much heartache, expenses, and downtime later on. When their last used machine stopped being

economical to repair at 10 000 hours early in 2022, they knew it was time to consider possibly buying a new backhoe loader as it was such a valuable piece of equipment to have on their farm.

"A backhoe loader on this farm digs and loads every day and having a 4x4 machine is non-negotiable, but we also have other unusual uses for it," says Henry. "We distribute cattle feed with it, lift bulk bags of fertiliser when preparing for the planting season, and use the machine as a form of therapy for downer cows to lift them into a standing position from where they can gradually recuperate."



**Henry Sieberhagen with Ollie the Border Collie (left), Simon Dwani (Backhoe Loader operator) and Pam Sieberhagen with Maia the Border Collie.**





According to Henry, the backhoe loader is often used to manoeuvre their centre pivot irrigation rigs out of muddy patches as well.

When researching the wider backhoe loader market, the Sieberhagens came across Bell Equipment as the official distributor for the JCB brand of backhoe loaders and other machines. "This resonated with us as during the recent time when we didn't have our own backhoe loader and we hired in similar machines on a plant hire basis, which was expensive, we often received JCB 3DX Plus 4x4 machines and they worked very well," John says. "We subsequently requested a

quotation for the same model from Bell Equipment South Africa and the company's Sales Representative in Port Elizabeth, Tom Swartz, responded very quickly."

Having arranged their own financing, Wait and See's brand new JCB 3DX Plus 4x4 Backhoe Loader was delivered in December 2022 and their Machine Operator, Simon Dwani, took to the new machine quickly. By all accounts, he really enjoys the JCB 3DX Plus's smooth controls, air-conditioned cab, and radio, which keeps him company when working on far-flung areas of the farm.

"When the Great Fish River came down in spate recently, we could confidently deploy our JCB 3DX Plus Backhoe Loader to clear the bridge of debris and, with its all-wheel drive traction, know that our operator Simon would be safe as well as the machine was not hampered at all by water flowing

over the top of the bridge," John says. "In doing so, our milking herd could safely pass over the bridge twice a day and our milk production went ahead uninterrupted."

The Sieberhagens are pleased with the service they've enjoyed from

Bell Equipment's branch in Port Elizabeth and have high praise for Mechanic, Daniel van der Walt, who keeps his hand on their JCB 3DX Plus Backhoe Loader.





# JCB 530-70JR LOADALL

## MORE RELIABILITY

Designed to JCB's global standards and built to last, the 530-70 is the perfect machine for tough manual handling applications and environments.

## MORE COMFORT

A clear digital display and well-designed cab ergonomics, ensure the operator is comfortable and in control at all times.

## MAXIMUM VISIBILITY

Tinted laminated windows provide sun protection and greater all-round visibility.





# Bell Forestry & Agriculture appoints its first independent dealers

Bell Equipment Forestry & Agriculture is in the process of expanding their distribution and support network where they have recently appointed a dozen independent dealers covering 19 branches. This is part of the company's strategy to expand its existing product offering with the JCB Agriculture range and create new markets in agriculture, where it is already an established and respected supplier to the sugar farming and forestry industries.

Bell Forestry & Agriculture Business Development Manager, Charles Inggs, said: "As a group, our strategy is to develop a strong dealer network that is dedicated to servicing and supporting the Agriculture and Forestry industries. We believe that by appointing additional independent dealers, these are dealers and outlets over and above the existing Bell branches, will give us better coverage throughout the country ensuring dedicated service and support directly to our farming and forestry customers. This includes the areas that are vast and where machine populations are low."

"This industry focus and dedication is critical to the appointment of the dealers where our products are complementary to their existing product line with the intention of

giving the customer peace of mind in terms of his equipment decisions.

"We have appointed dealers with a proven ability to service the various sectors and who already have an existing loyal customer base. Importantly, these businesses are owner-operated dealers with a like-minded approach; they understand their customer base and understand what is required in terms of service and support."

"Nationally our network is still far from being complete. However we are extremely excited to have the newly appointed dealers on board and are looking forward to the possibilities and opportunities that their dedicated focus will bring to our partnership and customers."

Bell has strategically focused on the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape and North West provinces due to their existing large population of equipment and will look to Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and the Free State to ensure the most comprehensive dealer footprint across the country's major agriculture and forestry areas.

In addition, Truck and Tractor Specialists in Polokwane, has been granted the dealership for JCB Agriculture in that region.

Visit [bellequipment.com/forestryag/en-ZA](http://bellequipment.com/forestryag/en-ZA) for full contact details of our Bell Forestry & Agriculture outlets.



Dege Trekkers  
Upington  
Northern Cape



EdgeQuip  
Tsitsikamma  
Eastern Cape



JBJ Machinery  
Schweizer-Reneke &  
Hartswater  
North West



JWL Landbou  
Voorsieners  
Ermelo & Standerton  
Mpumalanga



Landmeg Landini  
Cradock  
Eastern Cape



Truck and Tractor  
Specialists  
Polokwane  
Limpopo



ALM Tractor World  
Sasolburg  
Free State



Alpha Agri  
Middelburg- Mpumalanga  
Groblersdal - Limpopo



Drakensberg  
Agricultural Services  
Winterton  
KwaZulu-Natal



Van Breda Agri  
Stellenbosch & Calendon  
Western Cape



Warmbad Landini  
Bela-Bela  
Limpopo



Weskus  
Meganisasie  
Vredendal, Piketburg  
Ceres & Malmesbury  
Western Cape





# ALM Tractor World thrilled with Bell dealer appointment

*The planets must have been aligned on the day in 2022 that De Wet Dannhauser, Sales Manager at ALM Tractor World, called Charles Inggs to enquire about whether Bell Equipment, the South African distributor for the well-known JCB brand of yellow metal, perhaps needed an outlet that focused on agriculture.*

The reason is that on that day, De Wet Dannhauser was on Charles Inggs' list of prospective dealers to call to find out whether ALM Tractor World would be interested in being a dealer for the well-known machine brand's agricultural division.

Charles Inggs is Bell Equipment's Development Manager for the Forestry and Agriculture business and his huge responsibility of late is

to find dealers to distribute and service the company's agriculture-focused equipment.

ALM Tractor World was founded by three business partners in April 2015 and the first letters of their names have been used to name the Sasolburg-based agricultural equipment dealer. Louis Claassen, one of the three founding members and a leading commercial farmer, is now the sole

owner. The Claassen family has farmed land in the Wolwehoek area close to present-day Sasolburg since the early 1900s. Louis has grown the farming side to also cultivate potatoes and pecan nuts in the Vaalharts area of the Northern Cape. Known for the precision farming methods that he applies, his son, Louis Claassen Jnr was recently awarded the title of Potato Seed Producer of the Year.



"As an established dealer in the agricultural space, distributing and servicing strong brands to mainly crop farmers, we're ideally situated to serve a loyal customer base in an approximate 100km radius from Sasolburg," De Wet tells us. "This would include the farming areas around Heilbron, Frankfort, Heidelberg, the south of Johannesburg, Parys and Vrededorst."

"Our 33 strong staff under the experienced eye of our Dealer Principal Mike Friedman, works out of large premises in Sasolburg where we have a light-filled showroom, expansive parts storage and workshops that reminds one how beneficial it is to have more than adequate workspace."

De Wet goes on to explain that they have seven field service units that travel to service agricultural equipment on farms, and a workshop staff complement of 11.

"We had always wanted to sell a reputable brand of yellow machines that would complement our agricultural range and were delighted when Charles Inggs informed us that we had been selected as a dealer for Bell Equipment Forestry & Agriculture," De Wet adds. "Further motivation had been provided by a colleague, Johnny Scholtz of JBJ Machinery in Schweizer-Reneke who encouraged us to try and obtain a dealership arrangement with Bell Equipment as the distributors for JCB Equipment, two companies he has high regard for."

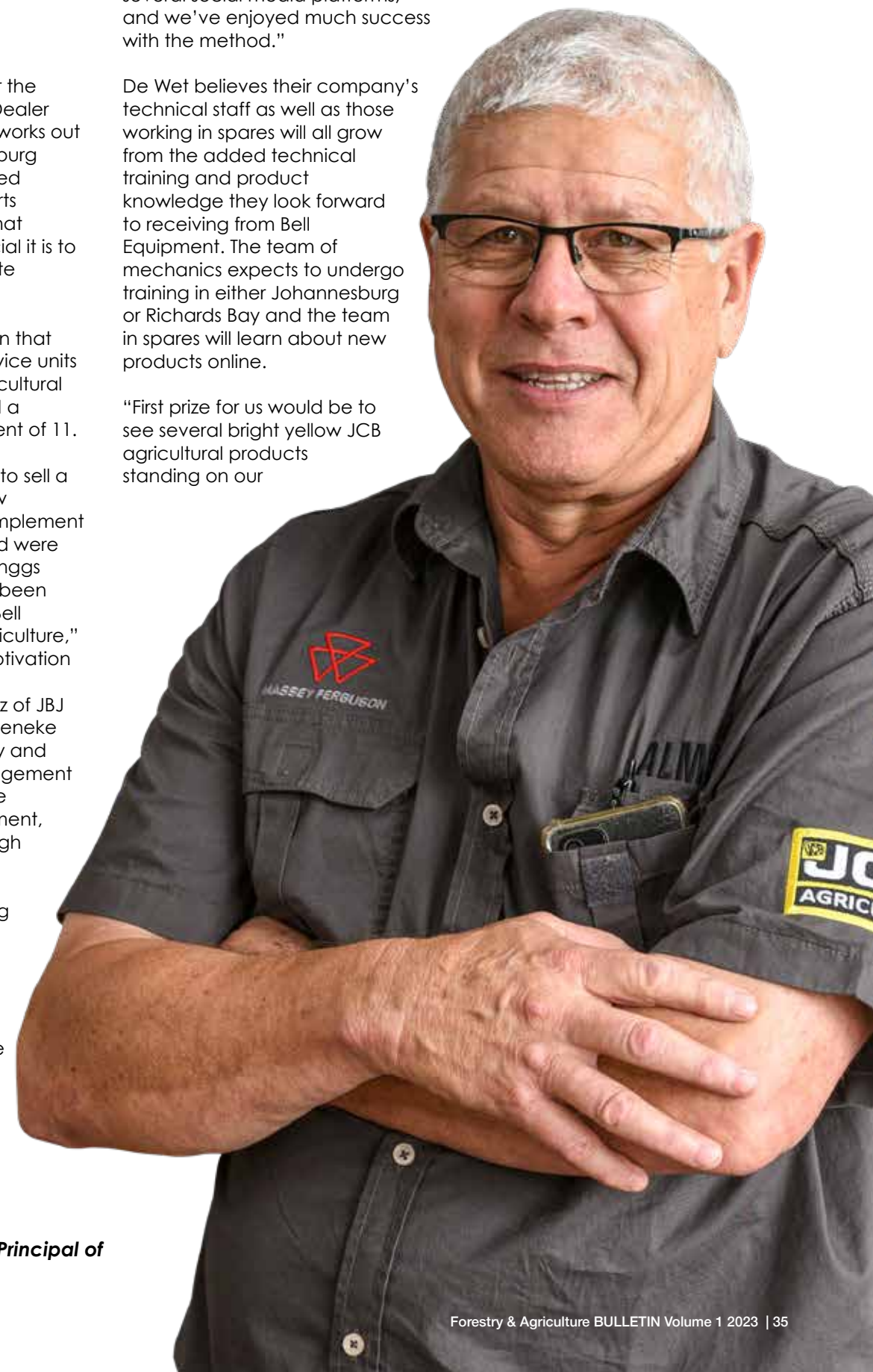
Ironically, soon after being appointed by Bell Equipment as a dealer, ALM Tractor World sold a JCB 3DX Pro Backhoe Loader to a customer who saw it standing in the showroom. "This we see as the start of a thrilling ride for us as we believe there are huge gaps in

the agricultural equipment market that could be filled by the likes of the JCB Loadalls, Wheel Loaders and even Skid Steers," De Wet enthuses. "As a company, we've moved with the times and reach our large and growing customer base with weekly marketing campaigns that we put out on several social media platforms, and we've enjoyed much success with the method."

De Wet believes their company's technical staff as well as those working in spares will all grow from the added technical training and product knowledge they look forward to receiving from Bell Equipment. The team of mechanics expects to undergo training in either Johannesburg or Richards Bay and the team in spares will learn about new products online.

"First prize for us would be to see several bright yellow JCB agricultural products standing on our

showroom floor, as we believe this makes any piece of equipment that much easier to sell and, with the sound reputations of Bell Equipment and JCB so well established, we see a win-win situation for all concerned."



**Mike Friedman, Dealer Principal of ALM Tractor World.**





# 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."







# Upington dealer thrilled to retain JCB product line

*Seen from the air, the mighty Orange River snakes its way across the arid Northern Cape Province while on its banks, emerald green vineyards and orchards belie the harsh sunlight that creates so much sweetness in the various fruit grown here.*

The crown jewel of this hot province is undoubtedly Upington where we find Dege Trekkers, a well-established outlet selling premium brands of machines and implements used mainly by the hardy farmers of the area.

"Dege Trekkers was founded in 2012 by its present owners, Hendrik and Aletta Dege, and we currently have a staff complement of 17, which includes people who work in administration, sales, parts and the workshop," says Cobus van Niekerk, Dege Trekkers' Sales Manager. "Our workshop is particularly important to us and here Hendrik Dege keeps his hand on the quality of work we've built a name on, along with two qualified mechanics and five assistant technicians."

Apart from a wide variety of well-known brands in the agricultural space, Dege Trekkers has, since its inception, sold equipment made by the proud British company, JCB, which is now being distributed and backed in South Africa by Bell Equipment.

"We've always been proud to be associated with quality products such as those made by JCB as they add value to our offering to our wide and established customer base who support us from as far as 300km away," Cobus adds. "Our business relationships with our customers are based on mutual trust and respect and we have our loyal customers coming back time and again because they know our knowledgeable staff won't let them down."

Dege Trekkers' mechanics do field servicing as well and regularly travel in a radius of 300km or more from Upington.

A large holding of especially JCB replacement parts, service kits and consumable spares means that owners of JCB equipment minimise their downtime.

"Having had an established relationship with the JCB brand, we were especially pleased when Bell Equipment approached us to ascertain whether we'd like to continue selling JCB equipment to which we obviously let out a massive combined 'yes please'," Cobus says smiling. "We're excited at the prospect of selling the great JCB brand

under the umbrella of a truly South African stalwart company that Bell Equipment is and embracing both cultures."

According to Cobus, the flagship yellow machine model in their area is the JCB 3DX Backhoe Loader which farmers favour and use for a myriad of uses like mixing and preparing feed for livestock, loading Alfalfa bales (considered high protein fodder), fixing roads, culverts and irrigation infrastructure and general farm work. Some farmers dredge canals with the backhoe and remove alien vegetation that threatens the free flow of life-giving water to crops, animals and humans alike.

"Our mechanics and colleagues working in parts have been impressed with the online training Bell and JCB have rolled out with prospects that regular training and product updates will be a continuing process," Cobus adds. "In this way, there is constant learning and skills transfer which

aids personal growth in the workplace and benefits everyone concerned, especially our customers."

Dege Trekkers has made a point of showing off their JCB machines to the public with displays and this leads to enquiries that turn into sales.

"There are a great number of positives to having the Bell Equipment and JCB brands associated with Dege Trekkers. We know our strong brands and we

certainly know our customers inside out and the peace of mind that they need on their farms, orchards and feedlots. The peace of mind is created by the machines as they simplify the work and that in turn sees our loyal customers enjoying their labour. This we believe will lead to many additional sales," Cobus says.

**Aletta and Hendrik Dege.**







# People buy from people at Van Breda Agri

*Startling similarities exist when one compares how Kobie van Breda started his business in a farm workshop near Banhoek in 1984 to that of Irvine Bell doing the same, some thirty years earlier in 1954 near Empangeni.*

Today, the late Irvine Bell's company Bell Equipment, although now a large multinational company, has not lost its personal touch much the same as Kobie van Breda's Van Breda Agri has kept in close touch with its customer base in the Cape Winelands and Southern Cape.

And the two companies share a common goal of selling and servicing agricultural equipment, with Van Breda Agri having been appointed an independent dealer to sell Bell and JCB agricultural equipment.

Kobie van Breda had qualified as a diesel mechanic before setting up his own workshop on the family's farm near Banhoek, which lies in a postcard picture-like valley

between Stellenbosch and the village of Pniel. Repairing agricultural equipment fitted Kobie's DNA but he wanted more out of life and soon picked up that the many wine and fruit farmers in the area were fervently hoping someone would start importing narrow-built tractors that could fit comfortably between the vines and fruit trees as normal agricultural tractors were too wide.

"Kobie hit on the idea to import 50 Lamborghini tractors from Italy that were specifically designed to be narrow and to draw equally narrow trailers on which crates were loaded that would contain the harvested fruit," says Joris Jacobs, Financial Manager and a Director of Van Breda Agri. "Since moving the business from the farm

to our current base in Stellenbosch in 1992 we've acted as dealers for a number of agricultural tractor and implement ranges."

Van Breda Agri's head office in Stellenbosch is ideally situated on the left-hand side of a busy thoroughfare that enters the historic town from the Klappmuts side, the same road that allows access to many famous wine estates. The building houses administrative and financial offices, a showroom, a large parts department and a workshop. Three sales representatives operate out of here and nine mechanics maintain and repair machines on site and infield, when necessary, in a radius of around 150km.

In addition, Van Breda Agri has a fully-fledged branch in Caledon, in the Southern Cape, where yet another three sales representatives operate from, backed up by four mechanics, administrative staff and a parts department.

"A large percentage of our customer base cultivates grapes for wine, deciduous fruit, citrus, blueberries and pecan nuts and to combat the many insects that plague this industry, these growers need to diligently spray insecticides on their vines, trees and bushes," Joris says. "To this end, in 2012 Kobie started experimenting with building our own branded sprayer and here again, we're involuntarily reminded of the same innovative thinking that Bell Equipment and its founders applied so many years ago."

"The first Van Breda sprayers were towed behind a tractor but with unrelenting research and development, this has now evolved to include a self-driven model that is raised to enable it to straddle vines and other trees up 1,8m in height."

Van Breda Agri's sprayer division is housed in another part of Stellenbosch where it is headed up

by Michael van Wyk who is assisted by Raymond McKenzie and Rens Joubert, a mechatronics engineer. While the designs remain in-house, the best components are sourced worldwide, and the sprayers are sold through a network of dealers across South Africa.

The company's innovative thinking, however, does not end there as Van Breda Agri has entered discussions with training institutions to explore technical and mechanical training for agri-workers, small-scale and emerging farmers in hydroponics and aquaponics and to also understand the rudiments of mechanisation in agriculture.

"We're excited at the thought of giving something back to the community with skills transfer and training," says Jan Coetzee, Van Breda Agri's Sales Manager. "We'd like to teach people who already work in agriculture, or who are engaged in small-scale subsistence farming, to do it better and plan to add courses in repairing mechanical things like tractors, water pumps and other basic agricultural systems."

"We want to be more than just a tractor or an implement dealer as this company has a face," Jan

adds. "We don't have a 'call-centre' mentality here because people know Kobie, Joris and everyone who works within the company – people can buy from people."

Joris and Jan are equally upbeat about the prospect of now offering their established customer base the full range of Bell and JCB range of agricultural equipment as they have already proved by supplying the world-renowned Simonsig Wine Estate with a JCB 3DX Plus Backhoe Loader.

Equally excited is Charles Inggs, Bell Forestry and Agriculture Business Development Manager who says the following: "Van Breda Agri have put their promises of sales into action early on by already selling our branded equipment into their region and we're confident that this is the start of a valuable business relationship for all concerned."

"As both Bell and JCB are established brands focused on our customers and growth, we're happy to have chosen Van Breda Agri to further grow our brands as well as their own and believe that the synergy that our similar histories create will be a lasting one."



**From left: Jan Coetzee (Van Breda Agri, Sales Manager), Kobie van Breda (Founder and Managing Director, Van Breda Agri) and Joris Jacobs (Financial Manager, Van Breda Agri).**







# Providing solid service is Edge Equipment Specialists' mantra

*When Danie Scheepers and Mike Cowie first started developing the concept of opening an outlet that would serve amongst others, the forestry industry and dairy farmers in their area, their collective thoughts told them that they wanted to be more than just a chainsaw dealer.*

This brand development had started in 2021 and in that same year, despite the restrictions placed on supply chains by the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, they opened their outlet. Clearly visible from the N2 highway outside Tsitsikamma, bold signage tells passers-by that this is the home of Edge Equipment Specialists.

Danie Scheepers was born into the forestry contract harvesting industry, learning about its methods and challenges from his father, Koos Scheepers, in the forests of Mpumalanga. In 2012, Danie and his wife, Yolandi, founded their own contract harvesting company, Enviromech Logging, in the Tsitsikamma area. Through sheer hard work, dedication and tenacity they have not looked back.

Mike Cowie's family hails from Kitwe in Zambia, although he was

born in South Africa. After school he successfully studied towards a qualification in the hospitality industry where he worked for some years and managed a lodge at Oyster Bay. A radical change of direction saw him joining a dealership selling forestry products for 10 years during which time he also gained valuable insight into the citrus growing industry all over the Eastern Cape.

"Where I'm a QBE person, which means 'qualified by experience', Mike's strength is his attention to detail in sales, after-sales service and his sound knowledge of precision farming methods," Danie explains. "We jointly believe that my 30 years' experience in forestry and Mike's abilities that set him apart from others in sales and service, create the perfect synergy for us to create a successful business. Hence our name of Edge Equipment Specialists."

"As our name implies, we sell and service a range of recognised brands for the forestry and dairy industries which are both huge in our area," says Mike. "This range includes chainsaws, brush cutters, tillers, mowers, augers and blowers".

Edge Equipment Specialists also stock construction equipment such as plate compactors, concrete saws, rollers, core drills, and polishing and floor grinding equipment.

"We were particularly pleased when, in September 2022, we were appointed by Bell Equipment to be the Bell Equipment Forestry and Agriculture dealer as well as the JCB Agriculture dealer. This gives us access to a fine range of both agriculture and forestry products manufactured by Bell and JCB," Danie adds. "Products such as JCB Backhoe Loaders, Loadalls and

Skid Steers all have a place within our industries and coupled with our knowledge of Bell Equipment's own forestry products, we feel we can now offer a complete package of larger equipment to our wide customer base."

A JCB 3DX Pro Backhoe Loader flanked by Bell and JCB teardrop banners is on a prominent eye-catching display outside Edge Equipment Specialists' imposing premises.

Other specialised forestry products from Bell Equipment that will be available to customers include the company's legendary tri-wheeled Loggers, Timber Trucks in the T302E and T403E ranges, Fastfells, Skoggers, Logpros and a range of grapples and felling heads.

Edge Equipment Specialists serves a range of customers in agriculture and forestry which stretches from the Gamtoos River in the east to Knysna in the west and Willowmore to the north.

Mike is adamant that no product, big or small, should be sold without its owner having the confidence that it can be maintained or repaired. "We plan to grow our business by growing our technical

knowledge and our technical personnel, which is a scarce commodity these days," he says. "The old adage of solid service selling a second tool or machine holds true and we have all grasped that mantra as well."

Danie is philosophical when he says: "One's ambition demands quick growth but that doesn't necessarily equate to strength. Like a tree, the slower grower produces strong wood and it's our responsibility as the 'jam' between the consumer's expectations and the manufacturer's ability to bring it all together.

Honesty, moral and ethical values all play their part, and the integrity to walk away from a transaction where these standards can't be met is what matters."

Seeing is believing and sensing the happy faces of Edge Equipment Specialists' personnel gives us confidence this company is here for the long haul.

**Danie Scheepers, Co-owner of Edge Equipment Specialists.**







# JCB machines seal the deal for Drakensberg Agricultural Services

*"We don't think there is a better Backhoe Loader or Loadall on the market than those made by JCB, and we would have said that even if we weren't the official JCB Agriculture and Bell Forestry & Agriculture dealer in this area."*

These are the words of Sven Röhrs, who along with his father Leon, owns and operates Drakensberg Agricultural Services in picturesque Winterton, in the foothills of the KwaZulu-Natal Drakensberg. Leon Röhrs had farmed dairy, beef, and crops in this area until 2004 when he sold his farm and worked in the agricultural chemical field for a while. He opened his business Drakensberg Agricultural Services in 2008.

Sven had worked in agriculture in the USA for three years after

finishing school. He gained valuable experience of agricultural methods before returning to South Africa and qualifying as a diesel mechanic after joining his father in the business.

"When Bell Equipment's Forestry and Agriculture Business Development Manager, Charles Inggs, approached us in the second half of 2022 about becoming a dealer for Bell and JCB branded equipment, it was the option to sell JCB equipment like the Backhoe Loaders and

Loadalls that attracted us," Sven says. "Our appointment was formalised in the fourth quarter of that year, and we haven't looked back since."

Drakensberg Agricultural Services serves a vast geographical area that stretches as far as Warden in the Free State, Kokstad in southern KwaZulu-Natal and Colenso, Weenen and even Greytown towards the east of the province. Five mechanics are kept very busy with more work being allocated to field service than in the company's

well-appointed workshop in Winterton. Sven mentions that they are well-equipped with modern diagnostic equipment, which does not detract from level heads applying common sense when needed.

"Many of our existing customers have older JCB machines and it's pleasing to note their relief when they realise they no longer need to battle to find essential replacement parts as our parts stock-holding of especially JCB parts, consumables and service kits is comprehensive, to say the least," Sven adds. "Our mechanics and personnel working in parts are enjoying ongoing training in what makes the newer JCB models work, and this information is available online and around the clock."

Human nature lends itself to curiosity and it's no different when people want to see what new JCB Backhoe Loaders and Loadalls look like, as Sven explains: "From the day we were appointed as Bell Forestry and Agriculture and JCB Agriculture dealers, we've had either a JCB 3DX Backhoe Loader or one of the popular Loadalls on display at our premises and this has piqued many an existing and new customer's interest. This has led to many enquiries and happily so, some sales."

Drakensberg Agricultural Services recently sold a JCB 531-70 Loadall to a feedlot in the area and a JCB 3DX Backhoe Loader to a local farmer.

"We are keen to tap into an alternative market. When a

farmer is not buying an agricultural tractor or new implement, we'd like to sell him a JCB machine, which in turn gives us a longer benefit with the machine's lifetime revenue like servicing and parts," Sven says. "The irony is that many farmers freely admit they don't know how they had managed before they had either a JCB Backhoe Loader or Loadall, as when they have this equipment respective tasks for the machines seem to appear out of nowhere."

In addition to selling equipment and providing mechanical support, Drakensberg Agricultural Services also does contract harvesting of wheat, maize and soya as well as contract planting of summer crops like maize and soya.



**The father and son team of Sven (left) and Leon Röhrs.**







# Warmbad Landini looks forward to growing its customer base

*"A farmer without a JCB Backhoe Loader can't call himself a real farmer" is what William Fullard believes and he should know as most of the customers of their family business are farmers around the town of Bela-Bela, previously known as Warmbaths.*

Warmbad Landini, as the name implies, supplies agricultural tractors and implements to the farming community not only in the immediate vicinity of this pretty Bushveld town in Limpopo Province but in a radius of some 400km, even as far as Botswana. The business is now in the hands of a brother and sister team, William Fullard, and his sister, Magdarie van Niekerk, who are the third generation to run it.

"Our late grandfather, Dirk Becker, started Warmbad Landini here in Bela-Bela in 2006 and he still worked here every day until a week before his death in 2021 at the wonderful age of 80," William tells us. "The example he set for us all lives on in the business where we're committed to live up to his standards of good business practices through integrity and honesty and above all, looking after our customers."

"We employ 22 people and we run a busy workshop where two qualified mechanics and two apprentices, who have almost qualified, see to servicing and repair of tractors and implements that come into the workshop," William adds. "We're talking to two young men at the moment who wish to become apprentices and we're looking forward to taking them in, as the field service we offer our customers is a very good learning ground for any aspirant mechanic."

Warmbad Landini's mechanics do huge mileage and even cross the international border into Botswana to service some of their customers' machines.

"Our association with Bell Equipment's Forestry and Agriculture division is fairly new as we were approached early in

January 2023 to be part of this great team and its world-famous brands," William says. "It's an opportunity we've been looking for as many of our customers for example, when needing a machine with earthmoving capabilities, have gone to our competitors and once that happens, you stand a very real chance of losing that customer completely."

William's enthusiasm is palpable when he says that with them now having access to especially the JCB Backhoe Loader range, with its proven reputation and very definite earthmoving capabilities they should retain many customers and add more into the mix. They have subsequently issued a string of quotations to current and new customers and are eagerly awaiting the decisions.

"In our area there are many varied types of farming operations from beef, crops, some big seed growers to game farms, but they all have one thing in common – they all have infrastructure, roads, irrigation ditches, farm dams, culverts and many other earth-based structures that need to be maintained. As farms get bigger and labour gets more expensive, a versatile tool such as a JCB Backhoe Loader comes into its own and that's where I come from when I say a farmer without such a machine is not a real farmer."

William is of the opinion that the same can be said of the many varied uses a JCB Loadall could offer from handling bulk bags of seed and fertiliser to pallets with tanks of liquid pesticides and bales of animal fodder.

Although Warmbad Landini is one of the most recent additions to the Bell Forestry and Agriculture network, the company's mechanics and parts personnel have fully bought into the online training given on technical and parts matters. William and his team have been impressed with specific portals that allow them access to talk to JCB personnel about specific challenges they could encounter, which has given them the reassurance that they won't be alone in tackling unfamiliar technical territory. This again is all in the name of putting the care of their customers first.

**Magdarie van Niekerk and William Fullard.**







# TTS Plant keeps the JCB flag flying in Polokwane

*When two brothers in Limpopo's provincial capital, Polokwane, saw a gap in the market for the repair and servicing of construction and agricultural machines, little could they know that some twenty-eight years later, they would be part of a distribution network of market leading JCB yellow metal equipment as well.*

Johan Venter had qualified as a surveyor and civil engineer while his younger brother, Danie, had technical skills as a diesel technician. Together these energetic and ambitious siblings had the urge to be self-employed and set about opening their own business, Truck & Tractor Specialists, trading as TTS Plant.

"This was in 1995 and our aim was to service the market with repair and maintenance of construction and agricultural equipment as there seemed to be no one else doing that here in Polokwane,"

Johan Venter says. "An agency for an Indian-built truck series landed with us, which we ran for 18 years before selling it to another company."

Johan runs the marketing, sales, and finance of the company with Danie in charge of the workshop, field-servicing, and parts department.

"In 2004, we were fortunate enough to secure the rights to sell and maintain JCB construction equipment from the previous South African distributor," Johan says.

"We sold many JCB construction machines, especially Backhoe Loaders as this machine had proved itself to be the market-leading Backhoe Loader in the country over a long period."

According to Johan, JCB's equipment aimed at the agricultural sphere entered the South African market in 2017 and in 2022 TTS Plant eagerly took on an additional agreement to include this equipment in their offering as it had long been their dream to fill those gaps in agriculture.

TTS Plant runs a comprehensively equipped workshop at their Polokwane premises where four qualified mechanics with six trained assistants see to customers' repair and maintenance needs. The company boasts three fully equipped vehicles for field servicing that covers the entire Limpopo Province and three sales representatives drive equally far on their marketing rounds.

"When the JCB distribution agreement for South Africa changed hands just more than a year ago, we did our homework and heard that Bell Equipment would be the new licensee, which was good news to us," Johan adds. "We went and signed a memorandum of understanding with Bell Equipment so that we could continue selling and servicing JCB equipment as before. This agreement was formalised in November 2022 when we met with Charles Inggs, Bell Equipment's Business Development Manager: Forestry & Agriculture."

"We are proud to say that we could therefore seamlessly continue with our service in both sales and servicing to our loyal existing and growing customer base. This in effect makes us the longest serving JCB agent in the whole of South Africa."

Johan mentions that their top selling JCB Backhoe Loader has been the JCB 3DX Plus model but cautions that the JCB 3DX Pro machine is fast gaining ground as it has more features while being extremely operator-friendly, leading to less operator fatigue and safer operations. Both machines have all-wheel drive.

Sales of JCB Loadalls, especially the JCB 530-70JR model are increasing steadily as more farmers look to increase their mechanisation and with the multi-purpose functions of this machine, it is predicted to be a winner in the agricultural market as it's priced well. Although sales of JCB Skid Steers are slower, more

farmers specifically are recognising how these compact machines can be best used for a variety of tasks as they can be fitted with other tools like mulchers and augers. TTS Plant has found that the higher specified JCB 155T3 Agri Skid Steer sells better due to its bigger engine producing the desired hydraulic oil pressures to run add-on tools.

"To say we're excited at the prospect of working with Bell Equipment would be an understatement," Johan says. "We've been impressed by the level of support we're getting from JCB through Bell Equipment, which we've never experienced before. This gives us so much confidence for sales and technical support as it creates a win-win situation that benefits us but ultimately our all-important customers."



**Brothers, Danie and Johan Venter from TTS Plant.**





# Former JCB dealer pleased to be back in the fold

*When Johnny Scholtz and his company, JBJ Machinery, couldn't sell any more of his favourite JCB machines due to local distribution rights changing hands to Bell Equipment, he so missed the experience that he actually wrote a letter to Lord Anthony Bamford, the Chairman of JCB, to plead his case.*

JBJ Machinery was founded in 2008 in the vibrant North West Province farming town of Schweizer-Reneke. Of the three founding partners, only Johnny has remained, and one would be hard pressed to find a more passionate ambassador for the JCB brand.

"When we first started the business our main target market was the 2 000 or so alluvial diamond miners scattered across the veld between Schweizer-Reneke and neighbouring Wolmaransstad and Bloemhof," Johnny says. "For many years, this area was at the epicentre of the alluvial diamond

mining industry and many, many people made and lost their fortunes here."

Johnny recalls that the unofficial capital of this diamond mining area was a settlement called London, close to Schweizer-Reneke. "Our local alluvial diamond miners were mostly gentle people with an abhorrent distrust of those who hailed from the big cities like Johannesburg. We had a captive market for those wanting to buy especially JCB Backhoe Loaders as they were seen as the most versatile earthmoving tools on the smaller diggings. Virtually every miner had one."

Having been a diamond digger himself for around 15 years, Johnny knew his target market and their thinking, and he then expanded his horizons further when he started farming beef, maize, and soya.

"When the government changed the regulations for mining, and treated everyone as if they were large mining houses, even the smallest of alluvial diamond miners were saddled with licensing fees, environmental permits and having to make collateral investments equaling the cost of what the rehabilitation of their mining sites was thought to be. The alluvial diamond mining industry just collapsed and of the original 2 000 miners we are now left with possibly 30, a very sad state of affairs as thousands of jobs were forever lost in the process," Johnny says. "That is when we, as the only local JCB dealer, had a paradigm shift and turned our focus to the agricultural market, which fortunately is quite strong in the whole of the North West Province as this is maize country!"

As JBJ Machinery sells many agricultural tractors and associated implements, the company's six mechanics travel far and wide to offer field service, which also benefits the owners of JCB Backhoe Loaders and Loadalls in their area. Servicing is done right up to the border with Botswana

and into many areas of the Northern Cape and the most part of the North West Province.

"We can proudly say that what brings new customers to us, and regular returns of existing customers, is that we're known to be experts on all manner of JCB equipment, especially on Backhoe Loaders," says Johnny. "We're a passionate family business as my wife Elma, son Hendrik and son-in-law Danie Schönfeldt all work here."

"When we lost the dealership due to the distribution rights changing hands we were heartbroken to say the least, but then about a year later we were approached by Bell Equipment's Forestry and Agriculture Business Development Manager, Charles Inggs, to find out whether we'd be interested in acting as a dealer for Bell Equipment and it was like being given a second chance at life. We were overjoyed and we're still so excited at the prospect," Johnny says. "If you consider that in 15 years we sold 165 JCB machines it should tell you how we feel about this brand."

He adds that many of their customers on large commercial farms, like those growing pecan nuts in the Hartswater irrigation area where JBJ Machinery also has a small branch, have multiples of JCB Backhoe Loaders and Loadalls. They fit innovative tools onto these machines like rotary saws that are used to prune the pecan nut trees to

heights of seven metres so that all the trees in a row can get enough sunlight. Farmers and owners of cattle feedlots favour the Loadalls for the ease with which they move bales of lucerne and handle bulk bags of fertiliser, tanks of pesticides, and big bags of seed in the planting season as the modern trend seems to be in bulk packaging of late.

"We're also proactive in showing off our products. Apart from the JCB machines standing outside our premises in Schweizer-Reneke, we will also exhibit at the nearby Migdol Agricultural Show when we'll take along a JCB 3DX Pro Backhoe Loader and a JCB 530-70JR Loadall. We're positive

that the latter machine is going to be a winner with local farmers because it is priced just right."

We quietly asked Johnny whether the letter to Lord Bamford had the desired effect but it seems that they had the wrong e-mail address and were never sure whether the letter reached him. But, as a fellow countryman of the JCB Chairman had said some four centuries earlier, "All's well that ends well....". We are here today with JBJ Machinery firmly ensconced to once again become the leading dealer in JCB equipment in the North West Province and its passionate owners really believe that all will be well with them and this fine yellow brand.



**From left: Elma and Johnny Scholtz with Danie Schönfeldt and Hendrik Scholtz.**





# 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 Marlie 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 000m<sup>2</sup> workshop in Middelburg and 800m<sup>2</sup> 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.







# Landmeg Landini grows their one-stop-shop with Bell and JCB Agriculture

*"We believe that farmers and other customers working in the farming space would prefer to buy their equipment, spares and related accessories from a 'one-stop shop' such as the one we own in Cradock," says Jean Nel. "It is also here at Landmeg Landini that customers have access to the full range of Bell and JCB Agricultural and Forestry products."*

Jean and his older brother, Rudi, are two of four business partners who own Landmeg Landini, a business that essentially focuses on farmers and customers working within agriculture and related fields. Both brothers have tertiary qualifications in agricultural management from Saasveld Agricultural College in George, which has enhanced the grounding and love of the land they had received from their parents who farmed near Coligny in the North West Province.

"Rudi and I had both worked in different agricultural fields before embarking on being partners in Landmeg Landini," Jean says.

"Rudi had owned his own company, Rudi Nel Trading, which sold used agricultural tractors and implements, and I was the Area Manager for the Northern, Eastern and Western Cape for a division of Illovo Sugar that sold chemicals derived from the sugar industry before I had a stint in citrus farming and selling agricultural equipment."

In 2016 the Nel brothers were approached by Riaan Pretorius, owner of Lezmin Landini in Kirkwood and Kenneth Thatcher, the owner of Sun Valley Transport also in Kirkwood, to see whether they would be interested in a business partnership to distribute

the well-known Landini agricultural tractor range and other branded implements. Research had shown that opportunities for two such dealerships existed in Humansdorp and Cradock respectively and Landmeg Landini was subsequently launched in these two towns.

"Rudi is acting as General Manager and oversees our workshops and personnel of both branches and I look after marketing and sales," Jean explains. "Here in Cradock we have a small but dedicated team who are passionate about what they do."

The Cradock team is headed up by Pieter Williams, the Branch Manager and he is assisted by Hannelie Ferreira in accounts, Curwin Bishop in parts and Mechanics Gerrie Pienaar and Henk Human in the workshop who mentor their apprentice, Gerrit van der Colff.

According to Jean, farmers in the Cradock area cultivate mainly cash crops, maize, lucerne and wheat, and have dairy herds. Many bale their own winter feed, with the handling of large bales into storage and loading onto trucks always a challenge.

"This is where I believe the JCB range of Loadalls is going to come into its own and fill a distinct gap with no less than four machine models," Jean says. "The same can be said for the JCB Backhoe Loader range. I know of farmers who, once they have either of

these machines, are adamant that they don't know how they had survived without them."

Jean foresees the JCB Backhoe Loader range selling well with it always being available to comfortably handle a myriad of tasks on any commercial farm, from building and maintaining farm roads, culverts and drainage to clearing irrigation system and digging trenches. Owning such a machine negates the risk of getting a similar or older pre-owned machine, which may at times be unreliable.

"We're excited at the prospect of now selling and servicing both our mainstay Landini agricultural tractor and other implement ranges coupled with the renowned Bell and JCB ranges of agriculture and forestry equipment and we're confident our niche market will be enhanced by the 'one-stop shop'

concept," he says. "We firmly believe that superior after-sales service is what sells the next piece of equipment and our personnel have bought into this philosophy as well."

Landmeg Landini prides itself on the fact that no matter what time of the day or night a customer calls for emergency repairs, their rate stays the same with no additional charges levied on after-hours work.

Jean is also proud of his company's outreach programme where they regularly visit the well-known Marlowe Agricultural High School in Cradock to demonstrate to the learners the practical methods of calibrating planters and fertiliser sprayers, and how to set up other implements that enhance precision farming methods.



**Jean Nel (left) Director of Landmeg Landini with Pieter Williams, the Cradock Branch Manager.**







# JWL Landbou Voorsieners sells Bell Logger for a unique application

*As commercial farms in South Africa are getting larger and smaller farms are getting fewer, the one factor that keeps growing consistently is mechanisation. And in both Ermelo and Standerton, a dealer who is a distributor and an importer firmly believes it is the local farmer's partner in mechanisation.*

JWL Landbou Voorsieners was founded in Ermelo in 1991 by three original partners. The company is currently jointly owned by two silent partners and the Managing Director, Werner Nel, who tells us a bit more about its history: "The business was started when the founders saw a need for a reliable distributor of agricultural tractors and related implements with associated technical backup in this area," he says. "I joined the business in 2008 and in 2016, we established a fully-fledged branch in nearby Standerton to give us more coverage of the area."

Werner Nel is a graduate industrial engineer and holds a master's degree in

business leadership (MBL) from UNISA's Business School. He is, by his own admission, passionate about agriculture, especially the mechanisation side of the discipline.

"As our name implies, we're a supplier to agriculture and our business stands on two pillars with the first being a dealer in Massey Ferguson and Fendt tractors and a host of related implements and the second pillar, an importer of agricultural equipment not covered by the former distribution agreement, which we distribute ourselves within a set target area,"

Werner says. "We employ 44 people spread across our head office in Ermelo and branch in Standerton."

Apart from the sales and distribution side of the business, Werner emphasises the fact that reliable technical support is a key driver of what makes the business sustainable and benefits its customer base. "We run two fully equipped workshops with comprehensively stocked parts departments as we believe when a machine is sold, it should be fully supported," he says. "Experience has taught us the valuable lesson that reliable

technical support of a first machine sells the following one."

"In this regard, doing business with integrity is what counts," he continues. "Imagine it's planting time and a customer has a planter that needs urgent repair. You need to do your utmost to get that implement up and working again, to put the long-term benefit to the customer first, as in this case if he could not plant his maize, he has no chance of a harvest and therefore no income."

During the second half of 2022, Charles Inggs, Bell Equipment's Business Development Manager: Forestry and Agriculture approached JWL Landbou Voorsieners to ascertain whether they would be interested in being a distributor of Bell and JCB branded equipment in the agricultural space.

"We keenly took the opportunity to become a dealer for both the JCB Agriculture and Bell Forestry and Agriculture ranges as we foresaw it would enhance our offering to our large agricultural and industrial customer base," Werner says. "It's an unassailable fact that as commercial farms become bigger

with added mechanisation, so more yellow metal gets added. You'll find that even though a farmer may not have owned, for example, a Backhoe Loader before, once he has it, it digs and loads every day."

JWL Landbou Voorsieners put their words into action by recently selling a Bell 225F Logger to a property developer who incidentally also farms. The customer is developing a truck-stop in Volksrust and is using 30 000 concrete railway sleepers as a form of paving for the forecourt where the trucks will park. To handle these cumbersome sleepers easily and safely he bought a Bell 225F Logger.

"We were particularly pleased with the sale of this Bell 225F Logger as it's the first machine of its kind to be sold by our new Forestry and Agriculture dealer network into an unusual application to boot," says Charles Inggs. "We're confident that this will be the first of many more

yellow metal machines that JWL Landbou Voorsieners will deliver into their customer base and while we wish them well, we also want to assure them of our solid support from both Bell and JCB Agriculture."

Werner believes his sales force, mechanics and staff working in parts all stand to benefit from the arrangement with Bell Forestry and Agriculture. "We are supporters of our people learning new things that will see them expanding their knowledge and undergoing personal growth, which benefits them personally, our business and ultimately our customers," he says.

**Managing Director of JWL  
Landbou Voorsieners, Werner Nel.**





**BOMA BRAAI KIT**



**R2 100<sup>00</sup>**

**BILTONG CUTTER**



**R1 200<sup>00</sup>**

**THERMAL TUMBLER**

METAL  
BRONZE / GOLD



**R130<sup>00</sup>**

**TRUCKER CAMO CAP (U-FLEX)**

NET BACK WITH ADJUSTABLE STRAP  
GREEN



**R180<sup>00</sup>**

**ROUND PEAK CAP (U-FLEX)**

ADJUSTABLE CLIP AT THE BACK  
NAVY / GREY



**R200<sup>00</sup>**

**SAFARI HATS**

STONE / NAVY



**R130<sup>00</sup>**

**LEATHERMAN WAVE**



**R3 000<sup>00</sup>**

**BELL KNIFE**



**R200<sup>00</sup>**

**LEATHER WALLET**

BLACK



**R560<sup>00</sup>**

**MENS CANVAS JACKET**

OLIVE  
SIZE: S - 5XL



**R760<sup>00</sup>**

**MENS K-WAY SOFTSHELL JACKET**

BLACK  
SIZE: L - 2XL



**R1 090<sup>00</sup>**

**LADIES K-WAY SOFTSHELL JACKET**

BLACK  
SIZE: L - 2XL



**R1 090<sup>00</sup>**

**COOLER BOX**

GREEN (45 LITRE)



**R2 300<sup>00</sup>**

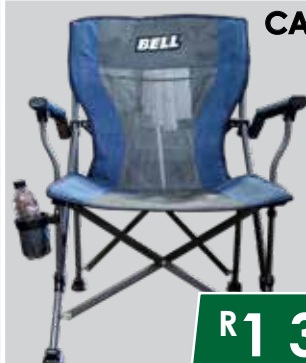
**COOLER BOX**

BLUE (25 LITRE)



**R1 550<sup>00</sup>**

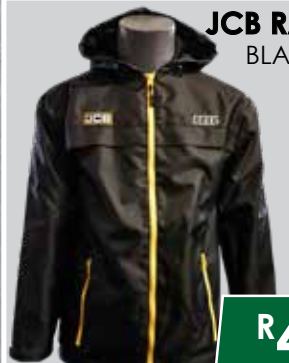
**CAMP CHAIR**



**R1 300<sup>00</sup>**

**JCB RAIN JACKET**

BLACK & YELLOW  
SIZE: S - 5XL



**R450<sup>00</sup>**

**JCB BOOTS**

TAN  
SIZE: 6 - 13



**R1 866<sup>00</sup>**

**JCB BOOTS**

BROWN  
SIZE: 6 - 13



**R1 300<sup>00</sup>**

**KOBELCO EXCAVATOR**

SCALE MODEL



**R2 700<sup>00</sup>**

**ADT B60E**

SCALE MODEL



**R1 300<sup>00</sup>**

**JCB 3CX**

SCALE MODEL



**R1 400<sup>00</sup>**

**BELTS**

BLACK/BROWN  
LEATHER STITCH/  
BURNISHED



**R270<sup>00</sup>**

**VELDSKOEN**

YELLOW  
SIZE: 5 - 11



**R960<sup>00</sup>**

**FS3 PULL-UP**

BOOT STC  
BROWN  
SIZE: 6 - 13



**R1 080<sup>00</sup>**

**WOODEN LOGGER**

SCALE MODEL (COLOUR)



**R550<sup>00</sup>**

**WOODEN TRACTOR**

SCALE MODEL (COLOUR)



**R450<sup>00</sup>**

**MULTI-PUPOSE MAT**

BAR MAT, GAMER MAT,  
MOUSE PAD OR  
DESK MAT



**R250<sup>00</sup>**

**BELL**  
**PROMO SHOP**

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