

# DT Farming Trust has endless uses for JCB 3DX Plus



Sven Röhrs, co-owner of Drakensberg Agricultural Services (left) with Harry Braithwaite (5) and Ross Braithwaite standing at the shale borrow pit.

*It is human nature to want to describe what uses there are for any mechanised equipment that looks and works differently from normal agricultural equipment on a farm. Near Winterton, in the picturesque foothills of the KwaZulu-Natal Drakensberg, a young farmer though poses a different question when he asks: "What can this machine not be used for?"*

Dieter Schröder has been farming in the area to the immediate west of Winterton since 1995. He first farmed only cattle but has since expanded the farm to now include crops like maize, soya beans, wheat, potatoes, and cabbages. His farm, under the name of DT Farming Trust, also grows seeds for sweetcorn, pumpkin, and butternut.

"We supply cattle we've fed in our own feedlot to abattoirs and having a feedlot implies, amongst other uses, that mechanised help will be needed to ensure manure is removed and the area is kept as hygienic as possible," says Ross Braithwaite, Dieter Schröder's son-in-law who is married to his daughter Nicky. "Despite our high annual rainfall in this area, we use centre-pivot irrigation, which entails creating and maintaining infrastructure for the irrigation

system and again, having mechanised equipment to do this effectively is a must."

Ross goes on to explain that although they had in the past used bucket and fork attachments on their agricultural tractors, the power needed to effectively move earth and pick up loads was not forthcoming. Renting in the plant to do this was expensive, not always available when urgently needed, and not always reliable.

"What we needed on this farm was a dedicated backhoe loader and, after much consideration and research, Dieter and I decided in the final quarter of 2022 to buy such a machine," Ross says. "We came very close to buying a rival machine when I spoke to Sven Röhrs, who along with his father, Leon, owns Drakensberg Agricultural Services, which is

literally situated next door to our farm. They had, at that point, just been appointed the official dealers for Bell Equipment Forestry & Agriculture and JCB Agriculture in our area and could supply us with a market-leading JCB Backhoe Loader, which, with a very competitive price, turned out in reality to be our first choice."

With financing in place, DT Farming Trust took delivery of its JCB 3DX Plus Backhoe Loader in late October 2022 and as Ross says with a satisfied grin, they have not looked back since.

"As mentioned before, we generally have a high rainfall which often causes muddy underfoot conditions, and the power and 4x4 traction on the JCB 3DX Plus is simply great," Ross says. "The four-in-one clamshell bucket is so handy as one can pick up





pipes with it and while we haven't yet pinned down the fuel consumption, we believe it's not breaking the bank."

Ross, echoing the thoughts of the JCB 3DX Plus Backhoe Loader's operator, says the controls are soft and responsive and he took to the new machine quickly. Other tractor drivers on the farm are

keen to also gain experience with the Backhoe Loader and have eagerly gathered around the machine when its easily accessible service points were shown.

"We get chicken manure brought from nearby poultry farms that is combined with cattle manure from our feedlot. The JCB 3DX Plus Backhoe Loader is used to blend

the manure and load it into spreaders prior to planting," Ross adds. "We also use it to load lime into spreaders or into tractor-drawn dump trailers in preparation for planting crops."

"We maintain our own roads on the farm and have a shale borrow pit where we loosen the shale with the backhoe on the machine and

the operator loads it using the front bucket, a very quick and effective operation."

During its 12-month warranty period, DT Farming Trust's JCB 3DX Plus Backhoe Loader will be maintained by mechanics from Drakensberg Agricultural Services

under the watchful eye of Sven Röhrs, who is a qualified diesel mechanic. Ross is adamant that with their solid business relationship built over many years, he and Dieter are confident of good parts availability and proven technical backup from Drakensberg Agricultural Services.

"With its many features and great power, you simply cannot call the JCB 3DX Plus a budget or entry-level machine," Ross says emphatically. "This is the best value for money machine on this farm by far and I still ask, what can it not be used for?"

