

ORV upgrades its Loadall telehandler and joins the Bell family



A fourth generation of passionate Karoo livestock farmers is doing more than making hay while the sun shines, turning high-quality crops grown along a major river into nutritional animal feeds, and using a world-class machine to unload raw products and load ready feeds for wide distribution.

Prieska in the Northern Cape is situated on the banks of the Orange River, South Africa's biggest and longest river that gives life to this arid province. Along its banks, farmers grow wheat, maize, lucerne, and grapes. Three generations back, during the days of controlled agricultural markets, the Botha family needed lucerne for their animals in the Karoo.

But as the adage goes, nothing succeeds like success, and soon the feed that the Botha's produced for themselves under the name Oranjerivervoere (ORV) was sold to other livestock farmers in the area with the company's products now spread across the whole of South Africa and into Namibia.

"Ours is a real family business with my dad, Johan, still keeping an

overall eye while I look after the production plant. My brother Jan-Philip manages the agriculture and our sister Jacolize, an accountant, sees to the finances and administration," Johan Botha Jnr tells us. "As we are livestock farmers ourselves and know what feed keeps our animals in peak condition, our products are constantly evolving, and we rely on animal nutritionists to develop feeds that will benefit the needs of each livestock farmer and have each animal develop to its full genetic potential."

The Botha family has erected an impressive plant to produce the feeds on the outskirts of Prieska. The plant runs around the clock for five days of the week as a constant movement of truck and trailer traffic brings in raw materials and takes ready products away for

distribution. Central to this activity is one yellow machine that is constantly on the move, unloading trucks, feeding raw material into the plant, and again loading trucks.

"We've used a JCB 531-70 Loadall for the past three years to do all the material handling and loading in the plant and decided it was time to replace it with a newer model," Johan Jnr says. "Our policy is to limit such a machine to three years of constant usage and that machine had exceeded that time. Such was the quality of its design and build, we felt it natural to replace it with a similar machine, which is ideally suited to our purposes."

Johan mentions that in a 24-hour cycle, the JCB 531-70 Loadall would typically be used for 10



Johan Botha Snr (left), Bell Sales Representative, Eric van der Merwe (centre), JCB Operator, Johannes Mokete (in the cab) and Johan Botha Jnr (right).

hours. This would involve unloading big bales of lucerne and bulk bags of wheat, maize stover, and urea with the bags weighing up to 1,2 tons. Big bales of lucerne stacked seven high would be fetched from an exterior shed to feed into the plant.

"We've found that one of the really big advantages of the JCB

531-70 Loadall is its tight turning circle enabled by the three-mode steering that allows the machine to place bulk bags into tight spaces. The crab motion of the machine is a definite advantage and stacking big loads up to seven metres in height is a bonus while not forgetting its interchangeable tools like quickly swapping out the bucket for a set of forks."

Other stand out features of the JCB 531-70 Loadall are the single-lever control, standard 4x4 configuration for superior traction, heavy-duty axle tips that help to absorb the enormous stresses generated during continuous movement of heavy materials, and daily checks and lubrication operations that can be done at ground level.

"The wheat and maize stover, along with the lucerne that we use for the feeds, creates a very fine fibre-based dust and were it not for the reversible fan on the JCB 531-70 Loadall that clears the radiator, we'd be in real trouble here, especially during our hot summers," Johan Jnr says. "That is why we're strict on the

preventative maintenance we do ourselves while leaving the major servicing to mechanics from Bell Equipment working out of the Kimberley branch of the company."

"While mentioning the latter, we're very happy to now be dealing with Bell Equipment as the official

distributor for JCB equipment. We can say that dealing with Sales Representative, Eric van der Merwe, when purchasing the new machine, and Shaun Malan and his maintenance teams, has been a positive experience and we look forward to continuing this business relationship."

