



'Hay day' for Trekland as Bell and JCB's latest agriculture dealer

Some eighty kilometres southeast of Johannesburg lies the town of Balfour. It wasn't always called that having started out its life as the proclaimed town of McHattiesburg, after Frederick Stuart McHattie who owned the farms on which the town lies. The town was renamed to Balfour in 1905 after a visit by the then Prime Minister of England, Arthur James Balfour.

This, however, matters little to one of the largest family-owned businesses in this thriving town, which is mostly supported by the agriculture of the area and by a nearby gold mine. The agricultural dealership, Trekland, was founded on 1 November 1991 by Gert Diedericks after he had worked for a national brand of agricultural equipment distributors for several years.

"Our father, Gert, saw a gap in the local market for the supply and maintenance of agricultural equipment and, with his background knowledge of the industry, took the risk of opening a business to service the local farming community," says Gerrit

Diedericks, who along with his younger brother, Theo, now manage Trekland in Balfour. "Theo joined the business as an apprentice diesel mechanic when he left school and I spent 15 years as a detective in the South African Police Services before joining the family business."

Gerrit now takes care of equipment sales and the financial side while Theo oversees the vast technical division comprising the workshop, mechanics, and a comprehensive parts department.

"I, along with three colleagues working as sales representatives, visit farmers and farmer's days in our area to stay in touch with new

equipment sales and backup," Gerrit says. "We sell a lot of European-built equipment such as the Claas range of combine and forage harvesters and their tractors and associated implements."

"We see our appointment as Bell Forestry & Agriculture and JCB Agriculture dealers as a welcome opportunity to further extend our offering to our already established farming customer base and believe that only good can come of this."

Gerrit makes the point that as farming practices become more scientific, they've noticed a trend that farms are becoming more mechanised. He believes this is

where the JCB range of machines, especially the various JCB Backhoe Loader and Loadall models, will come into their own.

"We see so many farmers with Backhoe Loaders now maintaining their roads, drainage and stormwater canals and culverts, irrigation systems, and a whole collection of ever-increasing tasks for these versatile machines. Add to that the wider loading advantages the range of JCB Loadalls can give farmers who run feedlots, dairies, and studs, you soon realise that it's nigh impossible to sustain the increased food production that a growing population demands without mechanising."

Gerrit mentions that no matter how well any machine is designed and built, it will always need

maintenance and some repair or replacement of parts that have known lifespans. This is where his brother, Theo, comes into the picture.

"Theo, being a qualified diesel mechanic, has the background knowledge of what can go wrong at the best of times. He keeps his expert hands on our technical department, which is the mainstay of our business as we know that the proven technical backup our farming clients receive today sells the next machine tomorrow."

Trekland boasts a huge light-filled workshop where no fewer than 18 qualified mechanics ply their trade. They currently have four apprentice mechanics learning the ropes of which Gerrit's son, Werner, is one. Trekland has two low bed trailers for bringing

equipment into the workshop, but when field service is needed they have 15 fully equipped bakkies for use by the mechanics to get to outlying farms and sites. Supporting the technical teams is a substantial parts stockholding covering the consumable and replacement parts needs for the various brands Trekland represents.

"We've been impressed by the amount of information there is about the Bell and JCB brands of machines and their various models. We believe that with easy online access, our mechanics will soon get to grips with the 'where and how' of these new machines," Gerrit adds. "We're also looking forward to showcasing a JCB 3DX Pro Backhoe Loader and a JCB 530-70 or similar Loadall at the annual 'Hay Day', which is held on a farm in our district."



Brothers, Theo (left) and Gerrit Diedericks, together manage Trekland.