

New Bell B30E boosts Tipperary's production

We live in a smart world. We have smartphones, smart TVs, smart applications for this and that and we're constantly being told to not work harder, but smarter.

Working smarter is being embraced by the younger generation as we see when chatting to Hayden Potgieter, the third generation of a dynamic family who believe in making full use of all the resources their farmland on the banks of the Vaal River can offer.

A 20-something Hayden, along with his parents Brad and Bridgette, run their farm called Tipperary, which lies close to Riverton, just north of Kimberley in the Northern Cape. The family cultivates mixed crops and raises Beefmaster cattle. Making full use of their land they also mine alluvial diamonds in old gravels near the banks of the Vaal River.

Hayden had a short stint playing rugby in New Zealand after school and then went on to complete a challenging commercial helicopter pilot's license before joining his parents on the farm.

"All credit to my dad who has already proved how smart he farms," Hayden says referring to the centre-pivot irrigation systems spread across the farm that irrigate lands at set frequencies, so ensuring sustainable crops.

"His analytical thinking also saw him buy a Finlay 883+ Heavy Duty Screen from Bell Equipment some years ago, which ensures that only the potential diamond-bearing gravels are hauled to the pans with oversized material staying in the mining pit from where it forms the basis of our rehabilitation."

Rehabilitation of mined areas is taken seriously at Tipperary as often those areas are planted with crops which creates a win-win situation.

"As is the case with food security, we need to go bigger and smarter and the same applies to alluvial diamond mining where we need to process more tons of gravel to make it a feasible and sustainable exercise," Hayden continues. "Nobody in farming or mining needs to be reminded of exorbitant increases in the cost of capital equipment, fuel and labour. "We've used Bell Articulated Dump Trucks (ADTs) through the company's B, C, D and most recently E-series, and our current Bell B25E ADT has given us superb service with high mechanical availabilities," he adds.



Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Eric van der Merwe (left), with Hayden Potgieter.



“Higher than normal rainfall during the past summer saw our diamond production severely curbed and we decided that the only way to catch up, would be to move more tons through the Finlay 883+ Screen, which would ensure an increased potential in production because when chasing these elusive little stones, one is never sure.”

To move more tons necessitated getting another haulage vehicle. Brad and Hayden agreed that the way forward should see them buying a larger ADT, which they found in a Bell B30E ADT. “Eric van der Merwe, Bell Equipment’s Sales Representative in Kimberley, somehow found a new Bell B30E ADT for us as we realise that with the world re-awakening after the pandemic, Bell ADTs are in high demand,” Hayden says. This latest addition to their fleet of earthmoving equipment was delivered at the end of May 2022.

“We’ve been impressed by the many ‘smart’ innovations this Bell B30E ADT boasts and the first that comes to mind is the service reminder that the Bell Fleetm@tic® monitoring system offers, along with a host of other features that ensure the ADT is operated safely.

“As our screened gravel material is already at a size of minus 40mm to zero, we can be assured of a proper 16 to 17-cubic metre heaped load that already exceeds that of the Bell B25E ADT.

“The haul distances between mining areas and the pans vary but should never exceed 10km and even though the Bell B30E ADT is very new, we don’t expect it to exceed fuel burn of more than 12 litres an hour, which fits our business plan nicely. This means that in time, we should lower our production costs.”

Tipperary’s new Bell B30E ADT was bought with a standard 12-month or 3 000-hour warranty and even when their older equipment bought from Bell Equipment is out of warranty, all servicing and repair is still entrusted to mechanics from the company’s Kimberley branch.

“I was thrown into the ‘deep end’ of both the farming and mining operations on the farm, and it was a case of sink or swim,” Hayden says smiling. “I firmly believe though that with my parents’ caring mentorship and us embracing smart technology as we’re doing with state-of-the-art equipment from Bell Equipment, we’ll continue to push boundaries and improve production as is our generation’s duty.”

