

# The Bulletin

Forestry & Agriculture Edition - VOLUME 1 - 2026



Strong Reliable Machines  
Strong Reliable Support

**BELL**

# SMALL WITH A BIG HEART



The JCB Skid Steer offers a significant advantage over the competitors. The side entrance cabs are much safer and ensure the operator doesn't need to climb over the bucket to get inside.

**CONTACT YOUR NEAREST **JCB AGRICULTURE DEALER** FOR MORE INFORMATION.**

FOLLOW US ON    

Email: [forest.agri@bellequipment.com](mailto:forest.agri@bellequipment.com)  
[www.bellequipment.com](http://www.bellequipment.com)

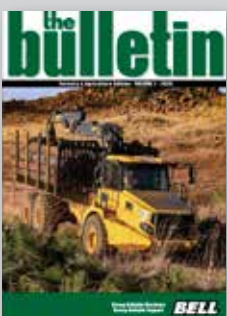


Bell-2134

# contents

---

Timber Forwarder is a 'dream come true' for EMK Investments.....	6
JCB 3CX Pro features impress Aldabri Vervoer .....	10
Eensgezind Farm adds a second JCB 530-70 to its fleet .....	14
Bell 225F Forklift is a nimble solution for Bredasdorp Steenwerke .....	19
JCB 3CX Pro proves a worthy addition to Droëvlei Farm's fleet .....	22
No rest for JCB 530-70 Loadall at Hunter's Rest Farm .....	26
GJ Filter & Sons upgrades its fleet with Series 5 Haulage Tractors .....	28
JCB Loadall makes light work of spreading fertiliser .....	32
Cane Loader safety and fuel economy impress Illovo Sugar .....	36
New JCB 3CX Pro features impress on Owen Peters' farm .....	40
Bell TF302E ticks all the boxes for Welverdiend Forestry .....	44
Muirlands invests in JCB 535-95 Loadall for efficient maize handling .....	48
NCT Richards Bay rebuilds with Bell after massive fire .....	52
Loyal Bell timber customer Kanyi Ilanga Trading celebrates 21st anniversary .....	56
FMS appointed new dealer in Winterton .....	60
Promo Shop .....	62



## Cover

A timber contract harvester in Mpumalanga is discovering first-hand that a Bell TF302E Forwarder is the most cost-effective solution for productive timber extraction and forwarding, particularly in the rainy season. Read the full story on page 6.

## Published by

The Marketing team for Bell Equipment customers and friends worldwide.

E: [bulletin@bellequipment.com](mailto:bulletin@bellequipment.com)

W: [www.bellequipment.com](http://www.bellequipment.com)



# GET A GRIP

Trust Bell Equipment's range of forestry attachments for quality handling solutions – locally produced with the strength and reliability to handle the toughest applications and deliver exceptional productivity.



Contact your nearest Bell Dealer today to see what we can offer.

**Strong Reliable Machines  
Strong Reliable Support**

**BELL**

2567

# inside track

South African farmers have never shied away from tough seasons, and 2026 should be no different. While several sectors and regions face challenges and uncertainty, the resilience, adaptability and long-term thinking that define our farming community remain as strong as ever.

Foot and mouth disease (FMD) and other livestock issues are deeply concerning on a national scale, and one can only hope that the rollout of FMD vaccinations gathers momentum and farmers, in particular, can rebuild their herds with the genetic diversity they require.

Closer to our factory in KwaZulu-Natal, the sugar industry, is under immense pressure given Tongaat-Hulett Limited's ongoing financial woes and the increase in imported sugar that flooded the local market in 2025. It goes without saying that the impact on rural communities in northern KwaZulu-Natal would be devastating if a sustainable solution is not reached timeously.

These pressures are compounded by climate extremes, with parts of the Eastern Cape experiencing drought while parts of Mpumalanga recover from floods, as well as ongoing uncertainty around export tariffs and their impact on key export markets such as the United States.

In these uncertain and stressful times, farmers can be assured of the support of Bell Equipment and our Forestry & Agriculture dealer network. Falling interest rates and more stable inflation have created a better financing environment, and we remain committed to providing you with a total package – from our diverse range of Bell and JCB products to our comprehensive aftermarket offering – all designed to deliver maximum value on your farm.

We take pride that our Forestry & Agriculture products are designed for the South African industry – to be affordable, durable solutions with lower operating costs. We have a keen eye on the aftermarket space, too, to ensure we can provide you with exceptional parts and service value. Our BETA Parts



range, for example, has grown to include BETA engines to provide a wider basket of affordable parts and components to help keep your machines running, even when budgets are tight.

We look forward to catching up with you at our Bell stand at NAMPO, Bothaville and planning for better seasons ahead.

Ashley Bell  
Group Chief Executive Officer

## Stay in touch

Dealer Outlets



Facebook



Instagram



LinkedIn



YouTube



# Timber Forwarder is a 'dream come true' for EMK Investments

**The area around eMkhondo (previously Piet Retief) in Mpumalanga is known for its high rainfall. While this makes for a good environment to grow timber, it doesn't always bode well for when that felled timber needs to be extracted from compartments in the wet weather.**

This is what Ewald Klingenberg experienced first-hand when he started doing contract timber harvesting on a larger scale. Ewald is part of the fifth generation of German settlers who originally came to this southernmost part of the picturesque Mpumalanga Province as missionaries and ended up farming a variety of crops and cattle. Ewald is the third generation to actively farm on Farm Alma and he and his wife, Marlies, cultivate crops like maize, soya, macadamias and timber on

their farms close to eMkhondo. They grow eucalyptus and black wattle. The entire farming operation operates under the name of EMK Investments (Pty) Ltd.

"We had first bought a Bell 225A Logger in 2009, but it was only in 2016 that we started harvesting for other growers on a small scale," he tells us. "We however saw a gap in the market in 2023 and started doing contract timber harvesting on a larger scale.

"That Bell 225A Logger has now surpassed 40 000 hours of service and we replaced its Deutz engine at around 30 000 hours, which clearly shows how durable Bell Loggers are. This durability is also the reason that we bought the newer Bell 225F Logger in March 2024."



**Daniel van Huyssteen, Bell Sales Representative (left) chats to Ewald Klingenberg, owner of EMK Investments (Pty) Ltd.**



*“The machine’s fuel consumption has been a pleasant surprise, considering the volumes it carries, with 11 litres an hour when working on flat sections and going up to 14 litres an hour when working in steeper terrain.”*

Ewald's timber harvesting teams normally work on between four and five sites, employing motor-manual harvesting techniques where the felling and cross-cutting of trees are done with chainsaws. Extraction, indexing and loading are done mechanically. The company currently uses eight Bell Loggers in these operations, three of which it owns and five are hired in.

“On the extraction of timber, we've been using Bell 1206 Haulage Tractors drawing single-axle trailers, but with the extended rainy season that we have, which generally lasts from October to May, infield conditions and roads between the compartments often become very slippery, slowing down production,” Ewald explains. “This is why, in November 2024, I attended an open day at Bell Equipment's Mbombela branch, where I got a closer look at the Bell TF302E Forwarder and found out what makes it so sought-after in the timber industry.”

This convinced Ewald that the Bell TF302E Forwarder was the way to go in terms of cost-effective and productive timber extraction and forwarding and, with financing in place, he placed an order for the machine with Bell Equipment's Sales Representative, Daniel van Huyssteen, in January 2025. The Bell TF302E Forwarder was duly delivered on 1 April 2025 and put straight to work.

“Our initial target was to extract 5 000 tons of timber a month, and using the Bell TF302E Forwarder we soon saw that by running two eight-hour shifts we would be able to comfortably double that volume,” Ewald says smiling. “We do, however, try and stay with daytime shifts only and find that, with the efficiency of the Bell Forwarder, production targets are met as our average hauls from infield to roadside depots are usually between 500 metres and two kilometres at most.”

Pointing out the advantages of the Bell TF302E Forwarder, Ewald says: "When the compartments are wet, we found that using the combination of Loggers and tractor-trailers to extract timber infield churns up the underfoot conditions to the extent that it becomes one big slippery mud bath. The Bell TF302E Forwarder, though, has such even torque-distribution through its three axles and low ground impact that the soil disturbance is minimal even when it operates in all-wheel drive mode.

"Then, with the long reach of its crane, which can extend to 7,2 metres, it need only stay in one row but can reach into two further rows on either side. This again reduces ground impact and subsequent soil disturbance."

He also points out that when production in one compartment has slowed down for whatever reason, the Bell TF302E Forwarder can quickly be rerouted to another compartment where felled timber is ready to be taken to roadside depots.

"The machine's fuel consumption has been a pleasant surprise, considering the volumes it carries, with 11 litres an hour when working on flat sections and going up to 14 litres an hour when working in steeper terrain," he explains. "Our first month of production was a little slow, with our two operators finding their feet with the machine, but we expect that an average of 300 hours a month should see us comfortably meeting our production targets.

"The service that we've received from Bell Equipment's branch in eMkhondo has been fantastic and this gives us the assurance that our timber-handling equipment serviced by Bell Equipment is in the best hands with obvious long-term advantages.

"At times I have to pinch myself that we actually have a Bell TF302E Forwarder as it really is a dream that has come true for us and its production data will greatly assist us in tendering more accurately for future contracts," concludes Ewald.





# JCB 3CX Pro features impress Aldabri Vervoer

**You never have work for a backhoe loader until you buy one and then you wonder how your business had ever survived without it.**

These are the words of the owner of a JCB 3CX Pro Backhoe Loader, who uses it extensively in his agriculture-focused transport business as well as on his farm in the picturesque Eastern Free State.

Born and bred in the Free State, Gabriele Labuschagne attended the University of the Free State where he obtained a degree in Agricultural Economics. At first he gained much work experience employed in cold chain supply before joining the marketing department of one of the largest banking groups in South Africa. He then subsequently joined a group offering financial and analytical

services to farmers before a gap in the agricultural market got his adrenaline going.

“Since I was a small boy I’ve been fascinated by trucks and trucking, and in 2002 I started a transport business with a focus on transporting agricultural commodities like lime, fertiliser and potatoes,” he tells us when we meet at the company’s head



office in Bethlehem. "The Eastern Free State is known for its high rainfall and good crops but these crops drain the soils of nutrients and farmers need to replenish the soil with, amongst other things, large amounts of lime and fertilisers."

Once soil analyses have been done in preparation for new crop plantings, Gabriele's substantial fleet of drop-side tipper trucks, working under the name Aldabri Vervoer, fetches lime from various parts of the country and distributes that, and various fertilisers in bulk and bulk bags, to the company's clientele.

"Running drop-side tippers fulfils a dual role, as the trucks also carry goods on pallets, such as bagged fertiliser, that we transport from the Durban harbour," he says. "The skill lies in having your trucks running with full loads in both directions."

Some of those loads consist of agricultural lime, which is a loose commodity and is loaded mechanically, normally using a backhoe loader. "When Bell Equipment first became the distributor of JCB yellow equipment in 2022, we had bought a JCB 3DX Backhoe Loader from the company's Jet Park branch and, as mentioned before, once you

have such a versatile machine, you wonder how your business ever survived without it.

"We also used it extensively on our nearby farm where we maintained the roads, dams, stormwater drainage and a myriad of other applications."

Bethlehem is also home to a dynamic branch of OVK Mechanisation, the division of this agricultural co-operative that sells Bell and JCB agriculture-focused equipment, amongst other great brands. Gabriele mentions that his company and OVK have come a long way and when the Dealer



*“The innovative 6-in-1 front bucket is truly amazing, and we can now level road surfaces and platforms while also lifting pipes and bags with the simple responsive touch of a lever.”*

Principal, Wimpie Nel, recently approached Gabriele with a great deal on a new JCB 3CX Pro Backhoe Loader, it was hard to refuse.

“Our previous JCB 3DX Backhoe Loader gave us 1 500 hours of excellent service over the three years that we owned it. We believe that equipment of this nature should be sold before clocking excessive high hours, so that the next buyer can feel confident that, although he is buying a used machine, it is in great condition and represents good value for money,” Gabriele explains. “Wimpie offered us a great trade-in price and the JCB Finance’s mouth-watering assistance and favourable rates, it made perfect sense to buy the newer machine.”

Gabriele has been very pleased with the new JCB 3CX Pro’s handling and features and tells of OVK’s meticulous attention when delivering the Backhoe Loader in late September 2025. “The new JCB 3CX Pro’s joystick controls are direct like that of an excavator, as opposed to the cross-over controls of the previous model, and Wimpie and his team have been at pains to explain this, and the many other new features, to our Backhoe Loader operator,” he says. “Our operator has the freedom to call anyone of Wimpie’s team at any stage should he be unsure of anything on the machine and it’s this type of care and service that breeds customer loyalty to both



**Dealer Principal of OVK Bethlehem Mechanisation, Wimpie Nel (left), with Gabriele Labuschagne, owner of Aldabri Vervoer.**



dealer and equipment brand.” The new JCB 3CX Pro Backhoe Loader boasts a 6-in-1 bucket that Gabriele enthuses has been a revelation to them. “This innovative front bucket is truly amazing, and we can now level road surfaces and platforms while also lifting pipes and bags with the simple responsive touch of a lever,” he says.

Aldabri Vervoer’s new JCB 3CX Pro Backhoe Loader has been bought with a standard warranty and, as Gabriele explains, with OVK on their doorstep and the machine not in continuous production like an excavator in a mining application, they didn’t feel the need for an extended warranty.

“Wimpie and his team at OVK in Bethlehem are merely a phone call away and with us having a relaxed relationship with their staff, as we believe that people buy from people, we know that they’ll keep caring about us and our equipment as we believe in the continued support of their great brands.”



# Eensgezind Farm adds a second JCB 530-70 to its fleet

**A dairy herd of Holstein cows in the Western Cape delivers eighty-two thousand litres of milk every day. To do that on a sustained basis they need a lot of feed – one hundred and sixty tons of it daily – and that simply cannot be mixed and distributed with manual labour alone.**

Eensgezind, situated near Fisantekraal and Durbanville, is one of the Western Cape's leading dairy farms. Danie Louw is the third generation to farm here after his grandfather, Wilhelm Johan Louw, first bought the land in 1962.

Danie's father, Kobus Louw, is still on the farm with Danie and his family. "We used to farm with sheep, cultivate wheat, and run the dairy herd but these days, with 1 900 Holsteins being milked three times a day, we concentrate on dairy only," Danie says. "We do grow a fair amount of our own silage with 60 hectares of maize and another 60 hectares of sorghum, and all of this under centre-pivot irrigation."

Danie is at pains to explain exactly what needs to be done to see that 1 900 cows eat the correct food to produce the 82 000 litres of milk daily from three milking sessions. "Each cow eats an average of 62 to 63 kilograms of feed daily and

drinks 160 litres of water to produce around 45 litres of milk. To do this for 365 days a year, we use two static feed mixers that are loaded mechanically using yellow metal machines, which we bought into many years ago," he says.



*"Our operators took to the JCB 530-70 Loadalls seamlessly and enjoy the fact that with excellent visibility from the cab, coupled with the boom's long reach and stable chassis, they can unload a truck carrying feed or other commodities from one side only, which saves time."*

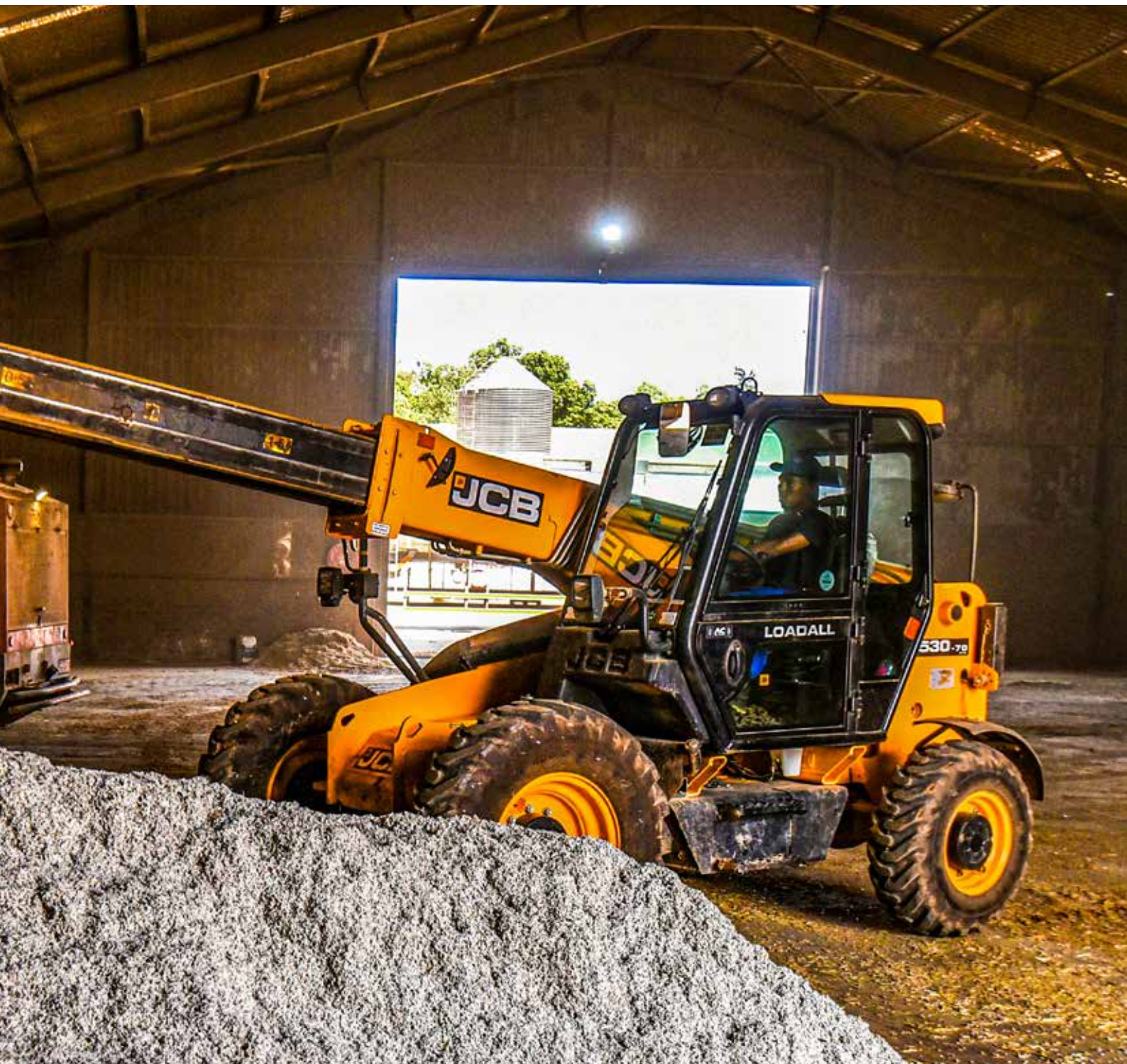
"We've owned equipment made by JCB for a while with a JCB 436ZX Wheeled Loader and a JCB 3CX Plus Backhoe Loader. "We also own a JCB WM115 Single Drum Roller, which we use when fixing our farm roads, but the main use for the equipment is around handling the feed and loading the feed mixers."

According to Danie, they owned a telescopic telehandler that steered on all four wheels but found that there was too much wear on its

axles while carrying a load and steering. "We, however, found the better option in a telescopic telehandler in February 2024 when we bought a JCB 530-70 Loadall that works well in the combination of carrying a load on the front axle and steering on the rear axle," he says. "It really is a very versatile machine and is used for many purposes, like stacking bales of lucerne and straw, lifting bags of fertiliser off trailers and holding bags of seed while loading seed planters.

"This machine has worked so well clocking up some 2 800 hours in about 20 months and we saw early on that there was definitely scope for a second similar machine to assist with loading the feed mixers."

The Eensgezind farm has been a loyal client of Nicky Russouw and Weskus Meganisasie in Malmesbury for some time and it was to Nicky that Danie turned in June 2025 to find out about the availability of a second JCB 530-70 Loadall.





*From left: Nicky Russouw, General Manager of Weskus Meganisasie, with Danie Louw, owner of Eensgezind farm, and his father, Kobus Louw.*



Weskus Meganisasie, with its head office in Malmesbury and branches in Ceres, Clanwilliam, Piketberg and Vredendal, is an official distributor of machines and parts for Bell Equipment's Forestry and Agriculture division, which in turn distributes both Bell and JCB agricultural-focused equipment.

"We traded in our JCB 3CX Plus Backhoe Loader on a new JCB 530-70 Loadall as we know that JCB Backhoe Loaders have good resale value," Danie explains. "Although we already have the one JCB 530-70 Loadall, we were struck again by the ease with which one can interchange the bucket, pallet-forks and a special baling fork that we had made by an engineering company in Malmesbury."

To put the important role that a JCB 530-70 Loadall has on the Eensgezind farm into further perspective, Danie enlightens us with them handling 10 000 block bales of straw and 5 000 tons of lucerne each year to feed their herd, which is part of the mix of other essential nutrients that forms a relentless production line for a constant flow of cattle feed.

The two JCB 530-70 Loadalls on the Eensgezind farm run for at least seven hours each day, seven days a week and will exit their standard warranties after the first year of operation. Danie reports that their average fuel consumption of five litres an hour fits their business plan and their current policy on machine replacement will see them running the Loadalls to 6 000 hours or three years of active operation.

"Our operators took to the JCB 530-70 Loadalls seamlessly and enjoy the fact that with excellent visibility from the cab, coupled with the boom's long reach and stable chassis, they can unload a truck carrying feed or other commodities from one side only, which saves time. Daily checkpoints are easily accessible from ground level, and we've enjoyed the solid care and attention to detail we've received from the mechanics at Weskus Meganisasie when booking services under warranty.





# Bell 225F Forklift is a nimble solution for Bredasdorp Steenwerke

**The owners of a well-established brickworks in the Overberg region of the Western Cape believe that their eight Bell Forklifts of various vintages form the backbone of their production. Without these machines they wouldn't be able to operate, and a new addition to the fleet is helping save them money.**

Bredasdorp Steenwerke was a small but going concern when Buks Jamneck took over in 1984. Since then, Buks' sons, Leon and André, have taken the reins with Kobus du Plessis, now the General Manager.

"We mine our own clay about 2,5km away from the plant and stockpile it outside in order to weather it," Kobus says when we meet at the plant on the outskirts of Bredasdorp. "The clay is then mixed with coal dust and put through a hammer mill and a roller to reduce the clay particles and again left outside to cure, which improves its elasticity."

From there, the clay is mixed with water and put through an extruder to produce two distinct brick sizes – a standard-sized ROK and a Maxi brick – upon which Bredasdorp Steenwerke's solid reputation for quality clay bricks has been built. These 'green' unbaked bricks are then stacked outside to dry before being fired in a special new type of kiln, called a Zigzag or Habla kiln.

"We used to stack bricks into what was called a clamp to fire them but found there were too many breakages. Now new technology has been introduced called a Zigzag kiln, of which we have two," Kobus explains. "It's a much more environmentally friendly process with the bricks baking evenly in a tunnel concept and through a smoldering process. One such cycle lasts a month and is controlled with the speed of a fan."

Bricks though, whether wet or dry, remain a heavy product, and even more so when multiples are stacked on pallets. "I haven't been here all that long but I believe Leon and André saw the value of buying Bell Equipment's three-wheeled Forklifts many years ago for their robust design and build, and the fact that they could carry the heavy loads over uneven underfoot surfaces," Kobus adds. "The acquisition of the most recent model though was for a specific purpose as we caught up with more modern technology."

The technology Kobus refers to is that of robotics. Two years ago, the Jamnecks installed a robot to do the stacking of the green (wet) bricks exiting the extruder. The green bricks are stacked methodically onto pallets, and the robot performs this service relentlessly, waiting for no one.

*"The new Bell 225F Forklift, with its four-cylinder water-cooled engine, is that nimble machine and it shows in our production figures as the Bell 225F Forklift removes pallet after pallet during production hours."*

"While the older Bell Forklifts worked steadily, what was needed to remove the loaded pallets was a newer and nimbler machine to keep the production going," Kobus says. "The new Bell 225F Forklift, with its four-cylinder water-cooled engine, is that nimble machine and it shows in our production figures as the Bell 225F Forklift removes pallet after pallet during production hours."

Bredasdorp Steenwerke's older Bell Forklift fleet consists of three 120A and four 220A machines, all with three-cylinder air-cooled engines. Two of these older machines have raised cabs.

The newer Bell 225F Forklift was bought in 2023 and sold to Bredasdorp Steenwerke by André Jordaan based at Bell Equipment

Cape Town. Apart from the new machine dedicated to the extrusion area, others are used to stack green bricks into the kilns, and yet more are used in the export area where they load trucks. Bredasdorp Steenwerke has three rigid truck-and-trailer combinations that are used to transport bricks as far as Hermanus, Struisbaai, Robertson and Swellendam.



**Bell Sales Representative, André Jordaan (left) with Bredasdorp Steenwerke's General Manager, Kobus du Plessis.**



"The space inside the kilns is quite confined but, because the Bell Forklifts can turn in such a tight radius, they are well-suited for this type of application where they can stack the green bricks and fetch the ones that are ready to be sold," Kobus says. "Our whole system is geared around the Bell Forklifts, and we wouldn't even

look at another make of machine and for good reasons too."

Part of this reasoning is that Bredasdorp Steenwerke has so many replacement parts for their Bell Forklifts, which include several three- and four-cylinder engines, pumps, wheel motors and a host of ancillary items. Another positive

point is that their own workshop staff are so at home with their fleet of Bell machines and can diagnose and repair issues quickly. Diligent daily checks before machines are used and strict preventative maintenance regimes have given Bredasdorp Steenwerke the longevity of their Bell Forklifts and, according to Kobus, this is set to continue.





## JCB 3CX Pro proves a worthy addition to Droëvlei Farm's fleet

**A well-known dairy farmer in the Darling area of the Western Cape bought his newest JCB 3CX Pro Backhoe Loader with a standard warranty as his faith in the JCB brand is unambiguously reflected in his own words when he says: "Because this machine is not going to break."**

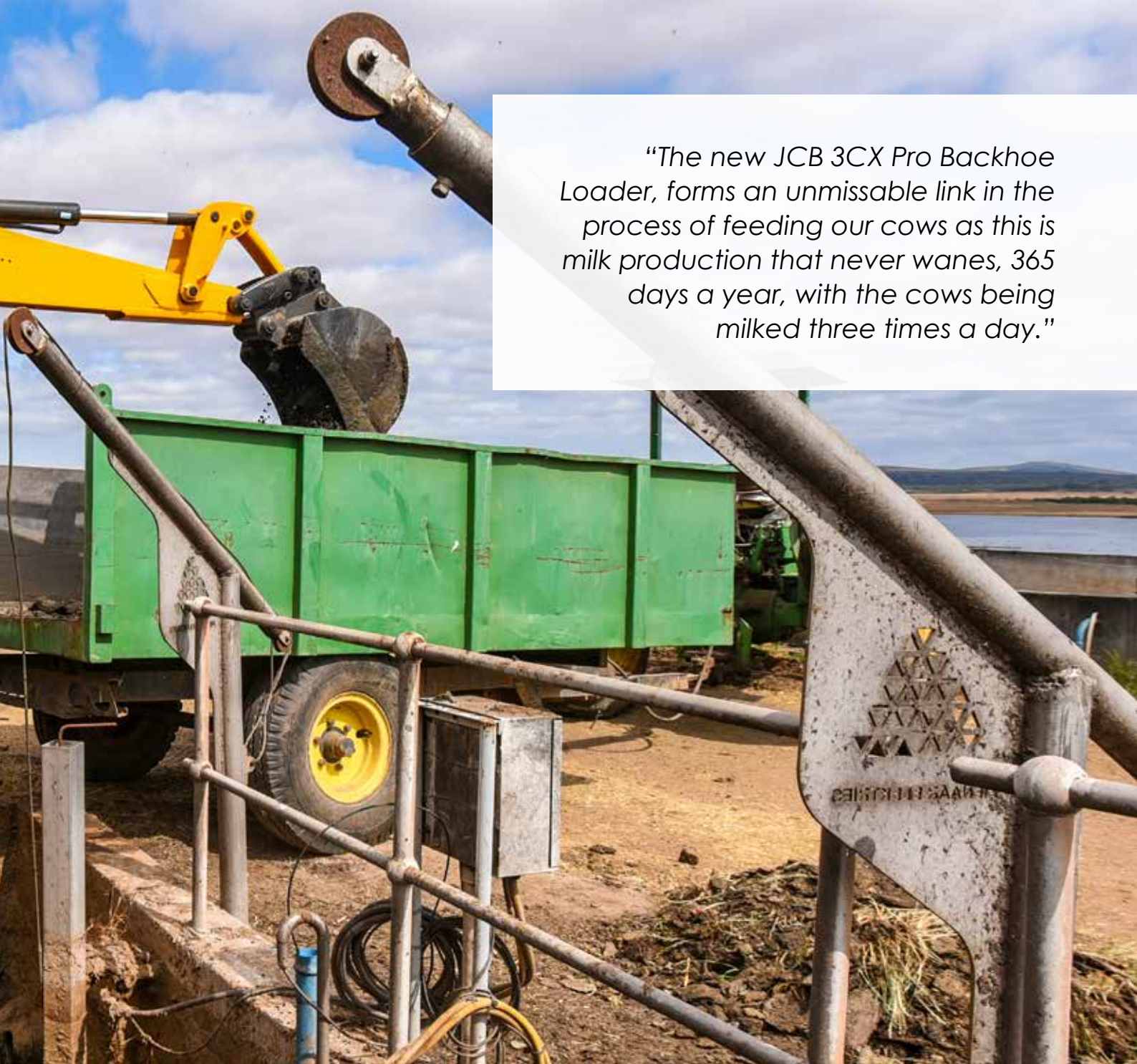
Coenie Basson is the second generation on the farm Droëvlei

after his father, Basie, bought the land in 1991. Coenie joined his father on the farm in 2002 after completing a tertiary qualification in agriculture at Elsenburg.

"We're essentially dairy farmers and milk 1 300 Friesland cows," Coenie says. "We also grow a large portion of our own silage as feed for this hungry herd, which includes barley, oats and Korog (a

cross between wheat and rye also known as Triticale)."

Feeding such a large milking herd calls for a concerted bit of mechanisation and, in 2016, the Basson's bought a used JCB 541-70 Loadall, which they used extensively to load bales of animal feed and for pouring concrete, as they were doing improvements to the farm infrastructure over time.



*“The new JCB 3CX Pro Backhoe Loader, forms an unmissable link in the process of feeding our cows as this is milk production that never wanes, 365 days a year, with the cows being milked three times a day.”*

“Once we had this JCB 541-70 Loadall we soon realised that we were never going to cope without such a machine on the farm, such was its versatility,” Coenie recalls. “We were so impressed with the JCB brand that, in 2017, we bought a JCB 3CX Eco Backhoe Loader. Even with this machine not having a turbocharger, hence being the ‘Eco model’, it soon became an essential part of our fleet and was used to install irrigation infrastructure, dig holes for fencing and many other tasks where using such a machine helped us achieve the end-goal so much quicker.

“Much the same can be said of the JCB 541-70 Loadall as we worked the machine hard during the four years that we had it. Then, in 2020, we bought a new JCB 530-70 Loadall that had larger wheels than the previous machine.” The JCB 530-70 Loadall, now boasting 8 200 hours on its clock, is still in daily use on the farm.

During 2024, the Bassons decided that their JCB 3CX Eco Backhoe Loader had given them a great return on investment with some 8 300 hours over the seven years of diligent service, and they sold it privately with a full-service history.

“We were more than pleased that Nicky Russouw and the company Weskus Meganisasie, with whom we’ve had pleasant and reliable dealings for almost 10 years, was now the local dealer for Bell and JCB agricultural equipment in nearby Malmesbury, and it was there that we headed when needing to replace our backhoe loader,” Coenie says. “To our astonishment, we learnt that Weskus Meganisasie has a permanent order for JCB Backhoe Loaders because as soon as they hit our shores, they seem to be already sold by this dynamic dealership.”

The Bassons took delivery of their new JCB 3CX Pro Backhoe Loader in August 2025 and Coenie is full of praise for the new machine's many features. "We have two older wheel loaders for really heavy work but this new JCB 3CX Pro definitely has more 'grunt' than the previous machine," he smiles. "We are planning to install an automatic lubrication on it soon but already it's made its mark when used for digging irrigation ditches, cleaning farm dams, erecting fences and repairing our farm roads. A standout feature is the new de-bogging system where both the front and rear hydraulics on the bucket and backhoe respectfully can be used once a set sequence of controls is followed to get the machine out of a sticky situation, like being stuck in mud or clay in a dam.

"You will have seen how handily the backhoe boom can be lowered vertically down to clean out a manure pit which makes for reducing the time on an unpleasant but necessary task."

Coenie says that they've retained the quick-hitch system from their previous JCB Backhoe Loader to fit onto the new JCB 3CX Pro to allow them to fit different types of forks when swapping out the bucket. "We have two sets of forks with the forks used for pallets being

different to those used for bales of lucerne," he explains. "We go through 240 tonnes of lucerne each month and the forks for handling the lucerne have sharp points to penetrate the tightly compacted bales.

"The new JCB 3CX Pro Backhoe Loader, therefore, forms an unmissable link in the process of feeding our cows as this is milk production that never wanes, 365 days a year, with the cows being milked three times a day."

Early fuel consumption figures stand at around eight litres an hour, but Coenie expects this to drop once the machine is properly run in and the operators are more at home with the different operational modes.



"We chose to retain the standard warranty because we've learnt that due to their superior design and build, these JCB machines just don't break down," Coenie concludes. "But even if they do, Weskus Meganisasie is but a phone call away and their mechanic, Aldo Opperman, who looks after our machines, is very good at what he does and is also happy to dispense advice over the phone. The high level of service we receive from Weskus Meganisasie is but one reason for our brand loyalty."



***Coenie Basson (left) chats with Nicky Russouw of Weskus Meganisasie.***



# No rest for JCB 530-70 Loadall at Hunter's Rest Farm

**A thriving commercial farm near Bergville in KwaZulu-Natal has the quaint name of Hunter's Rest but judging by the constant activity that a Brangus stud and a cattle feedlot demand, there's not much rest for anyone.**

Here brothers Glyn and Andrew Trodd, along with Glyn's son, Camryn, ply their trade as cattle and crop farmers as their forefathers of four generations before them had done. "Said forefathers had arrived from England in 1856 and our family has owned this land since 1875," Andrew tells us. "They had started off with dairy and cattle farming and cultivated crops, and we now have a Brangus stud, along with a feedlot, and we cultivate maize, soya and occasionally wheat."

Feeding cattle, to in time be ready for the market, is a full-time job, and the Trodd brothers employ technology to aid them in the constant preparation of cattle fodder.

"We needed a loading tool to load bulk feed into a feed mixer and, in 2017, we bought a used JCB 526-70 Loadall through a local equipment broker who sources used equipment in good condition in the UK and imports it," Glyn says. "This particular machine had been used on a grain farm and, with approximately 6 000 hours on its clock, it was still in pretty good shape."

The cattle on Hunter's Rest receive new batches of fodder four times a day with the fodder made up from set mixes. Ingredients include wheat straw, soya oil cake, hominy chop, milled maize, liquid molasses and water. All these ingredients are loaded in bulk into a tractor-drawn feed mixer, which is then pulled alongside the feeding troughs of the cattle pens with the fodder dispensed by means of a mini-conveyor protruding from the mixer's side.

"Making up to four mixes of fodder a day really clocks up the hours quickly on a machine such as a JCB Loadall and our first machine's hour meter had stopped working at one point," Andrew says. "When we realised that we'd perhaps do better with a newer model it was already 2025 and, fortunately for us, we now have a dealer for JCB equipment right on our doorstep with Farm Maintenance Services (FMS) in Winterton selling and supporting this well-known brand."

Consultations with the FMS Sales Representative at the branch in Winterton, Chris Janse van Rensburg, followed and Glyn and Andrew were made aware of the features of the popular JCB 530-70 Loadall, which is more suited to applications in agriculture. With financing at favourable rates from JCB Financing in place, the JCB 530-70 was ordered and delivered to Hunter's Rest at the end of September 2025.

The JCB 530-70 Loadall features a lifting capacity of 3 000kg and a lift height of seven metres. Its cab is ROPS-FOPS certified with excellent visibility, which adds to operator safety. An adaptive load control system automatically manages hydraulic operation for stability and an operator presence switch disables the machine when the operator leaves the seat.

"I was at first sceptical of the machine's turning circle as the bulk of the ingredients for the fodder are kept in a shed where we load the feed mixer away from the elements, but I need not have worried because when operating the JCB Loadall it was immediately clear that it turns in a tight enough arc," Andrew says. "We've also used it to handle bulk bags of fertiliser, and we've been impressed by the ease of switching between the bucket and the forks."

Glyn adds that they have not done exact measurements of fuel usage but this will be done in time once the machine has had its first service. "Speaking of maintenance, we find it convenient that all daily checks, greasing and serviceable components are accessible from ground level and the reversible fan is a real bonus, as mixing the cattle fodder creates a lot of plant-based dust," he says.





Owners of Hunter's Rest Farm, Glyn Trodd (left) and Andrew Trodd (right) with FMS General Manager, Cornie Tosen.



# GJ Filter & Sons upgrades its fleet with Series 5 Haulage Tractors



**In any mechanised business, good forward planning regarding when to replace the very equipment that forms the backbone of the operation is vital.**

This is exactly how an established family-run timber and logistics business in Mpumalanga has managed its mechanised fleet for many years.

GJ Filter and Sons is a company involved in timber growing and logistics. The name is derived from the present owner, Hans Filter's own father, Gunther Johannes Filter. Hans is ably assisted in the business by his two sons, Johan and Hein, and the business is run from the family's farm, Kiel, situated adjacent to Panbult, between eMkhondo (formerly Piet Retief) and Ermelo.

"Our family has been on this land since the 1950s and our farm's main crop is timber. We grow gum and pine, which are evenly split and make up around 90% of our production, with the balance being wattle," Johan says when we meet at their spacious farm offices. "The gum is mostly sent to Richards Bay for export, with the pine sent to sawmills and shavings mills in South Africa and neighbouring Eswatini. The wattle is used for wood chipping, with the bark used in leather tanning."

With forestry and timber production being the Filter family's main business, we suggest to Johan that this implies a certain amount of mechanisation. "All credit to our dad, Hans, who already back in 1994 bought the farm's first Bell Logger – a transaction that was the forerunner

of the many varied machines we now own and operate that originate from Bell Equipment," he says. "His foresight also led us to obtaining and retaining sustained material handling contracts at a large board mill outside eMkhondo since 2002, where many of our machines are used in a variety of roles."

GJ Filter & Sons' Bell Logger fleet now stands at 17, of which all are 225A models except for one new Bell 225F machine. Some older loggers that are in use for material handling at the board mill have clocked over 20 000 hours. These tasks include unloading raw timber entering the mill, loading timber stock into the mill and handling waste. Wood chips are handled using no less than 10 Bell L1204D and E-series Wheeled Loaders.

“We believe that the equipment supplied by Bell Equipment, along with the company’s legendary technical backup from its branch in eMkhondo, forms the backbone of our operations.”



“Our largest fleet of Bell machines, however, is found among the haulage tractors where we have 15 ranging from older Bell 1216 models through the Bell 1464 Series 4 machines to the latest Bell 1406A and 1406AF models,” Johan explains. “Our five Bell 1216 Tractors, all with between 12 000 and 16 000 hours, were coming to the end of their productive lives and we knew we’d have to steadily begin replacing them.

“The plan was to sell three of these Bell 1216 Tractors and keep two as standby machines. With solid forward planning and the assistance and good advice from Bell Equipment’s experienced Sales Representative, Daniel van Huyssteen, we started this phased replacement drive in June 2023.”

GJ Filter & Sons took delivery of two new Bell 1406A Tractors in June and December 2023 respectively and one more in January 2024. They were followed by two more powerful Bell 1406AF models in March and April 2024.

“We bought these five machines early before we had sold the older machines - and mothballed the new ones, as we had managed to acquire them at a competitive price and the older machines were still in active service,” Johan adds. “The new machines have therefore only recently been put into service and are proving their mettle with sustained availabilities and better fuel consumption.”

The Bell 1406AF Tractors, with their all-wheel drive traction, are used for infield extraction of felled timber and hauling this to roadside depots. From there, the Bell 1406A Tractors take over and haul the timber to the mills, some as far as 40km away. Double-axle trailers that carry 20 to 23 tons are used, as well as tri-axle trailers that carry up to 27 tons. This haulage is done during daylight hours only as the sawmills close at 5pm.

The Filters are satisfied with fuel consumption of 50 litres over a 100km distance which translates to 7,5 to 8,5 litres an hour, depending on the terrain.



**Bell Sales Representative, Daniel van Huyssteen, (left) with Johan Filter of GJ Filter & Sons.**

“Our mid-tier fleet in terms of age – namely the Bell 1464 Tractors at the mill – see much higher utilisation, as they run for 23 out of a possible 24 hours, and are used for a variety of tasks such as solid waste and sewerage removal, and hauling coal for the mill’s boilers,” Johan continues.

“Two of our four qualified mechanics are stationed at the mill on a full-time basis, and they service these tractors every 12 days without fail to ensure sustained uptime.”

Johan says that all the tractor drivers have a daily checklist for their machines and the infield machines are seen by a mechanic on a weekly basis. Infield machines are serviced every 250 hours, and this proven preventative maintenance regime ensures longevity of machine and component life.

GJ Filter & Sons recently added a Kobelco SK220XDL-10 Excavator to their fleet that is used primarily for extracting old tree stumps from

compartments and for general maintenance on roads and drainage infrastructure.

“We believe that the equipment supplied by Bell Equipment, along with the company’s legendary technical backup from its branch in eMkhondo, forms the backbone of our operations both on the farm and at the mill, with loyal support for their and our brands working both ways. Bell Equipment understands our business,” says Johan.



# THREE MODELS. ENDLESS HAULAGE SOLUTIONS.



With three power options – the 1406 (139hp), 1736 (173hp), and the new 2006 (200hp) – Bell Haulage Tractors offer a solution for every haulage need and fuel efficiency target. Whether you choose 4x2 or 4x4, every model is purpose-built for haulage and delivers the lowest cost per tonne, backed by Bell Equipment's trusted support.

Let our experts help you choose the right tractor for your business.



Contact your nearest Bell Dealer  
today to see what we can offer.

**Strong Reliable Machines  
Strong Reliable Support**

**BELL**

# JCB Loadall makes light work of spreading fertiliser

**Crop farmers on the Highveld prefer spreading fertiliser on their lands as close as possible to the time that they will plant but this application is often hampered by not having the correct equipment for infield loading.**

Two brothers, who are owners of a large commercial farm near Heilbron in the Free State, have found that with the correct loading tool they can now spread around 120 tonnes of fertiliser a day on their land prior to planting new crops.

Brothers Leonard and Thabo Strydom started farming together under the name L&T Boerdery in 1999 on land near Gottenburg, which lies between Heilbron and Sasolburg in the Free State. Income from sorghum and sunflowers got their cash flow going, which led to



them investing in Bonsmara cattle and building a substantial stud of this hardy South African breed.

“By 2012 we were planting soya as well and had reduced our dependence on cattle,” Leonard says. “To supplement our cash flow, we started a transport company and hauled our own produce to various markets around the country, bringing agricultural lime, fertiliser and other essentials back to the farm on return trips.”

Leonard recalls that they first bought yellow metal machines for use on the farm in 2013 when they acquired a backhoe loader and a skid steer loader. The latter proved very handy when removing manure from the cattle pens. “We then thought to use the backhoe loader to load fertiliser from bulk bags into a fertiliser cart with a built-in auger, which could spread the fertiliser onto land destined for planting sunflowers where we had previously grown maize,” he says.

“The auger in the fertiliser cart, however, had a milling effect on the granular fertiliser, which rendered it too fine to spread effectively, and in time we realised that another way would need to be found.”

Seeking advice from a known source seemed to be the way to go. That source turned out to be De Wet Dannhauser, Sales Manager at ALM Tractor World in Sasolburg, the official dealer for Bell Equipment Forestry & Agriculture and JCB Agriculture machines. De Wet and Leonard's wife, Surene, are cousins.

“De Wet suggested we look at the JCB 530-70 Loadall because its all-wheel drive traction is ideally suited for agricultural use and we could use it to load a specialised dry spinner spreader, which has a bin that sits high above the ground,” Leonard says.

“This sounded like it was the perfect loading tool for our application and our research also showed that buying a new JCB 530-70 Loadall was cheaper than buying a used competitor machine.”

ALM Tractor World and De Wet went the extra proverbial mile and brought a JCB 530-70 Loadall to Thabo and Leonard's farm at Gottenburg to show them how it could add value to their operations, especially when loading fertiliser into the spreader. This gave other farmers in the same area a chance to see this versatile machine with its interchangeable bucket and forks.

“When we saw how quickly and efficiently the JCB 530-70 could load the spreader, we were sold and ordered one in early April 2025, which was delivered a month later,” Leonard recalls. “We requested ALM Tractor World to fit a third-party attachment, which didn't affect the machine's warranty but has enhanced our operation.”

The attachment is made by Orbach and sold by ALM Tractor World. It effectively allows two one-tonne bulk bags of fertiliser to be handled at a time so speeding





De Wet Dannhauser, Sales Manager ALM Tractor World (left) with Leonard Strydom.



up the loading process even more. L&T Boerdery assigned a former backhoe loader operator to the JCB 530-70 Loadall and, according to Leonard, he took to handling the machine with confidence very quickly, reporting that the controls were responsive and easy to use.

"The time that we spread fertiliser prior to planting each year only lasts for a month, from the middle of September to the middle of October, so we don't envisage high usage of the JCB Loadall, which may only run to between 250 and 300 hours a year," Leonard explains. "We may consider using it on a plant hire basis, but the important thing is that it's ready and available for us when the time comes to spread fertiliser prior to planting."

According to Leonard, their planting season ranges from around 20 October to approximately 1 December each year, depending on the climatic conditions.

"Our ground here has a high clay content that makes for sticky underfoot conditions in the wet. This is where the JCB 530-70's all-wheel drive traction is going to make a big difference."

The Strydom brothers know that with any machine maintenance is key to sustained uptime and longevity, and they've been pleased that the JCB 530-70 Loadall's maintenance and greasing points are easily

accessible from ground level. This enhances daily checks that the operator has been trained to do. While fuel consumption is considered a vital input cost, they have not monitored it accurately but believe it will fit their business plan.

"I need to put into some perspective what 120 tonnes of fertiliser will look like to the uninitiated," Leonard concludes with a smile. "Take four interlinked flatbed trucks each carrying 30 one-tonne bulk bags and that's how much fertiliser this JCB 530-70 Loadall can load in a day, which takes some doing."



# Cane Loader safety and fuel economy impress Illovo Sugar

**Imagine filling the diesel tank of an essential machine on a farm knowing that you can complete a whole day shift with that amount of fuel. Now imagine a newer model of the same machine giving you a day and a night shift with the same amount of fuel – is that not the stuff that production and financial managers dream about?**

This is not merely a pipe dream but an actual daily occurrence at an Illovo Sugar farm on the lower South Coast of KwaZulu-Natal.

Illovo Sugar (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd's roots go back more than a hundred years. Sir Charles George Smith in 1891 created events that would ultimately see the creation of Illovo Sugar within his CG Smith

Group. Illovo Sugar has grown into a dynamic and diversified agri-processing business and is one of the largest sugar producers in South Africa.

Sugarcane is grown on many of the company's farms and on one such production unit, situated at Paddock just inland from Port Shepstone, we find Farm Manager



**From left: Illovo Sugar Estate Agriculture Manager for the South & North farms, Jurgen Witthoff, with Illovo Sugar Crop Production Manager for the South Farms, Gavin Massey, Manager: Paddock Farm, Sinegugu Mveli, and owner of M & F Tractor Parts, Bryan Taylor.**

“We’ve been impressed by the safety features and all-round improvements on the new F-series Cane Loader.”



Sinegugu Mveli. “Here at Paddock Farm, we have just over 1 200 hectares of land of which we use 818 hectares to grow sugarcane and 100 hectares for macadamia nuts,’ she says. “Our cut cane goes to the Sezela mill which is 75km away.”

Paddock Farm has use of two Bell 125 Cane Loaders and these machines are used to load the sugarcane infield for transport to a loading zone, and then again from the loading zone to the mill. “Our one older Bell 125A Cane Loader is a 1990 model and has undergone several rebuilds of its chassis and has had engines, pumps and wheel motors replaced,” says Gavin Massey, Illovo Sugar’s Crop Production Manager for the South farms. “As you can see, we believe in getting the maximum life out of

our machines and the robust Bell Cane Loaders certainly prove that you can run such a machine for more than 30 years.”

During the company’s budget planning in 2024, allowance was made for two new Bell 125F Cane Loaders and one was allocated to Paddock Farm. The difference though came in the form of the supplier of the machines. “We had traditionally bought most of our Bell machines from Bell Equipment’s branch in Pietermaritzburg but we’ve been pleased to learn that the company’s Forestry and Agriculture division now has a dealer on our doorstep in M & F Tractor Parts of Marburg in Port Shepstone,” Gavin adds. “This makes obtaining replacement parts and services under warranty so convenient.”

Illovo Sugar doesn’t get rid of its older Bell Cane Loaders but keeps them in reserve for when other machines need repair and to load seed cane. The two new Bell 125F Cane Loaders were delivered to the company in August 2025. As specified by Illovo Sugar, the Paddock Farm machine has dual front wheels fitted for higher flotation when loading infield and a finer mesh retrofitted over the front steel guards shielding the operator from potential cane stalks during the loading process. A fire extinguisher was also fitted on the rear right exterior of the machine.

“We’ve been impressed by the safety features and all-round improvements on the new F-series Cane Loader,” says Jurgen Witthoff, Illovo Sugar’s Estate Agriculture Manager for the South





and North farms. "Even though our operators wear earmuffs, the new Yanmar engine runs so much quieter than the older Deutz engine and the four-point seatbelt is a really good safety concept.

"We like the idea of the proximity switch on the door that automatically renders the machine stationary when the door is opened – and the reverse camera, LED lights, internal fuel tank and isolator switch on the exterior are great improvements. With all these safety improvements as standard features, it may encourage us to quicken the pace of replacing older machines as ensuring

operator safety is a big driver for us as a company."

Farm Manager, Sinegugu, smiles broadly when she says: "The improved fuel consumption of the Bell 125F machine has been a game changer for us as we now get a day and a night shift worked on a full tank where before we could only get one shift out of a tank. This is making a massive positive difference to our production costs."

At Paddock Farm, infield loading takes place in daytime and loading on the zone for haulage to the mill happens during the night shift.

Each Bell Cane Loader has three operators assigned to it. While under warranty, the new Bell 125 Cane Loaders will be serviced by M & F Tractor Parts' mechanic, Johan Basson, a former Bell Equipment employee with many years' experience of cane loaders under his belt.

All three Illovo Sugar managers agree that the service levels and parts holding of M & F Tractor Parts have been outstanding and they're adamant that their Bell machines are in good and caring hands for maintenance and technical backup.

# New JCB 3CX Pro features impress on Owen Peters' farm

**The directors of Dorning Motors, Bell Equipment's dealer for their forestry and agriculture equipment in the towns of Kokstad and Underberg, believe that the recommendation of one of their most loyal clients was instrumental in them vying for and obtaining the Bell Equipment Forestry and Agriculture and JCB Agriculture dealerships.**

Owen Peters is something of a legend in the Kokstad area. A farmer for the past 35 years on

land that he, by his own admission, bought with every cent that he had, and a noted building contractor, Owen has certainly made his mark within the Kokstad community and beyond.

"We do mixed farming on our farm called Fairview, which lies to the west of Kokstad, and cultivate maize, wheat, soya and potatoes," Owen tells us. "We also have Bonsmara cattle and Dohne Merino sheep."

Owen had started his working life in the construction industry, which enabled him to buy the land where Fairview stands today. Many commercial buildings in Kokstad bear his stamp of quality building methods and for the last 12 years he has focused on low-income housing contracts. He also owns a business making and selling concrete blocks and bricks.

"We first bought JCB Backhoe Loaders in the 1980s as their

***"The 6-in-1 bucket is a great innovation and a real bonus as it's almost like a multi-functional tool on the machine with its many uses, which include levelling roads and platforms."***



versatility and robust build worked well for us in the construction business. We've owned eight of these machines to date," Owen adds. "We never hired the machines out as plant hire and only used them for our own purposes on building contracts and on the farm.

"I've been a long-standing client of Dorning Motors for our agricultural tractors and implements. When I heard that they were looking to obtain a dealership for yellow machines, I encouraged the owner, Marc Tolmay, and Dealer Principal, Keith Chapman, to pursue a JCB Agriculture franchise for the quality of the products.

"I knew that with Marc in the driving seat, and Keith heading up sales, they wouldn't drop the ball with such a dealership, and they've certainly proved me right."

Owen's policy on machine replacement has always been that sustained uptime of yellow equipment is paramount in completing building projects on time. He justifies that buying new machines makes sense in reducing downtime to the minimum.

He recently sold a six-year-old JCB 3CX Backhoe Loader with some 6 000 hours of solid service to make way for a newer model, and it was sold privately with a full-service history. "The service we got from this last JCB 3CX machine was

quite superb when used on building projects and our farm, and I had no hesitation in ordering a new JCB 3CX Pro from Dorning Motors in September 2025."

Owen bought the new JCB 3CX Pro with assistance from JCB Finance with a 30% deposit and financing at favourable rates over 36 months.

"Our switch to the new JCB 3CX Pro Backhoe Loader has been easy with its power output being the same and, more importantly, due to its controls now being much more user-friendly with joysticks on the armrests," Owen explains. "The 6-in-1 bucket is a great innovation and a real bonus as it's almost like a multi-functional tool on the





**The JCB 3CX Pro Backhoe Loader removing tree stumps on the Fairview farm.**

machine with its many uses, which include levelling roads and platforms."

The JCB 3CX Pro's use on Owen's farm has increased due to the machine's many new functions and it has been used to make contours that aid irrigation and drainage, maintain and repair dams, destump felled trees, fill up tracks left by centre-pivot irrigation systems and maintain farm roads. During the planting season it also loads fertiliser and lime onto tractor-drawn trailers and seed into planters.

"Dorning Motors designed and fitted a quick-hitch system for us that allows us to switch easily between a bucket and forks," Owen says. "We're also looking forward to learning more about the machine's 'de-bogging' feature and have been assured that JCB's Sales Engineer, Janko Wilken, will come and demonstrate its use to us.

"On the service side, we've become so accustomed to Dorning Motors' high level of service as they really live up to their

own high standard of doing something right the first time," Owen says smiling. "We've never had them do any bit of service or repair over and they always arrive on-time and with the correct parts and service kits.

"It's also reassuring to know that a family-owned business like Bell Equipment backs up Dorning Motors, which is similarly family-owned, as this has the downstream effect of ongoing care for clients."



**Dorning Motors Dealer Principal, Keith Chapman (left), with Owen Peters in front of a JCB 3CX Pro Backhoe Loader.**

# Bell TF302E ticks all the boxes for Werverdiend Forestry

**For a short-haul timber contractor to be competitive, it is advantageous to have a dual-purpose vehicle that can load and unload itself both in the field and at roadside depots, with the ability to drive on public roads an added advantage.**

This is the opinion of a surprisingly young man, who, although a recent entrant into the competitive world of forestry contracting, has learnt so much of the sound basics of forestry contracting from his experienced father.

Jaco Potgieter founded his company, Werverdiend Forestry (Pty) Ltd, in 1998 in eMkhondo, formerly Piet Retief, after having gained experience in forestry contracting before. His son, JC, joined the business in 2020 straight from school and told us more.

"My dad started off on a small-scale doing harvesting in pine and gum before focusing more on gum nearer to eMkhondo," he says. "He employed manual harvesting methods but loaded the timber using Bell Loggers and in 2003/2004 he assisted Bell Equipment with the research and development of a debarker based on a Bell three-wheeled machine."

Jaco subsequently bought four of these machines for his own use. In later years, on the insistence of his

*"Bell Equipment's safety systems are world-class with ROPS-FOPS certified cabs and automatic transmissions and park brakes. The latter is a massive advantage when working in steep areas."*



clients, who are large-scale growers producing paper and pulp, harvesting methods became more mechanised due to safety concerns and tracked carriers were fitted with harvesting and processing heads.

Welverdiend Forestry now works out of two bases, one near

eMkhondo and the other at Rooihooigte near Carolina.

“With these new contracts in place, we soon realised we’d need a multi-purpose vehicle that could work infield, where driving over stumps can be challenging, and run on gravel roads over longer distances. Such a vehicle

was not easy to find until we came across the features of the Bell TF302E Forwarder as given to us by Bell Equipment’s knowledgeable Sales Representative, Daniel van Huyssteen.”

JC mentions that they had built up a good reputation with their large-grower clients as operators





*JC Potgieter of Welverdiend Forestry (left) with Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Daniel van Huyssteen.*





with an exceptional safety record and were keen to continue that trend, which is important from a reputational view and the very real safety of people.

"Bell Equipment's safety systems are world-class with ROPS-FOPS certified cabs and automatic transmissions and park brakes. The latter is a massive advantage when working in steep areas," JC enthuses. "Added to this is the Waratah CF8 crane, which is much more powerful than those on competitor vehicles, and this makes for sure and safe operations when loading and unloading timber."

With firm orders from clients in place, Welverdiend Forestry ordered their first Bell TF302E Forwarder in May 2024 and it was delivered at the end of July the same year.

"We have three operators for our Bell TF302E Forwarder, and it took them a little while to get used to the fast crane, which is due to the excellent hydraulic flows the machine delivers," JC says. "After 11 months it had clocked an impressive 4 500 hours, which shows how well it has slotted into this operation.

"Mixed with flat and hilly areas, we bank on an average payload of between 16 and 18 tonnes totalling 8 500 tonnes per month and average fuel consumption of 15 to 16 litres an hour, which fits our business plan perfectly."

JC adds that with long-term contracts in the offing, their plan is to deploy more similar Bell TF302E Forwarders. "A longer-term contract makes it feasible to plan for capital expenditure on equipment, and we would always like to have a new machine, a mid-life machine and an older machine available, as this makes for sustainable replacement planning.

"We're getting excellent service from Bell Equipment's branch in eMkhondo with quick response times and parts availability, and this is reassuring given our plans to increase the size of our Bell Forwarder fleet."

# Muirlands invests in JCB 535-95 Loadall for efficient maize handling

**A family-run farming operation in the Swartberg area near Kokstad in KwaZulu-Natal has found it more cost-effective to store grown produce like maize in their own sheds rather than at commercial facilities and this has brought**

**about an increasing amount of mechanisation in the handling of this produce.**

Shaun Muir and his family farm this land. His son, Braden, tells us more: "Our dad had learnt a lot of what

he knows from his own dad, and passes this on to my brother, Anthony, and I. We have a Simmentaler cattle stud along with Brahman cattle and Dohne Merino sheep and we grow crops like maize, wheat and potatoes."



It really is a family affair with the boys' mother, Heather, Braden's wife, Pippa, and Anthony's wife, Michelle, all involved in the farming operations. Braden looks after the crop cultivation and Anthony oversees the livestock with Shaun casting eyes over the whole operation.

"Apart from our traditional agricultural tractors, we had first bought a backhoe loader back in 2011 and this machine was used

extensively on the farm until we decided on a newer and more powerful replacement for it in August 2024," Braden says. "We were very pleased to learn that Dorning Motors in Kokstad and Underberg was now an official dealer for Bell Equipment Forestry & Agriculture and the renowned JCB Agriculture yellow equipment."

The Muir's had done some strategic thinking and found that if

they stored their own produce they would save money and have it more readily accessible for distribution when agricultural commodity prices shot up. They then started storing their maize in this manner.

"When we took delivery of a new JCB 3DX Pro Backhoe Loader in August 2024, we used it to stockpile the maize in our sheds and also used it for other more traditional purposes such as



*"The JCB 535-95 Loadall is playing a defining role in the middle of this mechanisation by making the storage and handling of our primary produce so much more efficient."*

removing rocks in fields, repairing roads and loading lime when doing land preparation for new crops. In time though, we realised that with a growing maize crop, we'd need a more specialised machine with a longer reach to stockpile the maize in the sheds into higher heaps."

With assistance from Dorning Motors' Keith Chapman, the Muir's decided that the JCB 535-95 Loadall, with its three-stage boom pushing out to 9,5 metres, would be the correct machine for their varied applications.

The JCB 535-95 Loadall was delivered to Muirlands in September 2025 and, with the maize crop fully harvested, the machine was put to work on a variety of tasks. "We employed a current tractor driver to operate the JCB Loadall and he took to the controls of the machine quite quickly," Braden recalls. "The controls in the cab are very user-friendly as are the general ergonomics and visibility from the driver's seat."

The machine has been used to pull a trailer loaded with bulk bags of fertiliser to where the fertiliser spreader can be loaded, using the

boom for lifting. However, its main task has been to stockpile the maize in the many square metres of concrete floor space under roof that Muirlands boasts.

Manoeuvring the machine to fill spaces in tight corners has proved to be easy with the JCB's 'crab-steer' feature where all four wheels can move in a diagonal direction. It is also used to load maize into trucks for transport to millers and other clients, and the quick change between the bucket and forks has made the process easier.

"We've taken a firm decision that no matter the load that is being stockpiled, the JCB Loadall will only be used in 4x2 traction on the concrete floors as it has enough power to stockpile the maize and we're intent on having it with us for a long time," Braden adds. "There are plans in place to ensure its longevity with daily preventative maintenance regimes that include using the handy reverse mode of the radiator fan to blow out the persistent maize dust and regular attention to greasing points, which are all easily accessible."

Having Dorning Motors as service agents within easy reach has been reassuring for the Muir's and they

speak highly of the company's response times and stockholding of both parts and service kits. They try and learn as much from Dorning Motors' mechanics who are happy to share their knowledge when they come to service the JCB machines.

"We've encouraged all our drivers and operators to buy into the care and maintenance of our equipment by firstly training them properly and then rewarding them when they look after the equipment," Braden says. "We've all driven the tractors and operated the JCB machines, so we have a much better understanding of what their experiences are while working."

"We firmly believe that increasing mechanisation is the way to go. In addition to our fleet of agricultural tractors and the JCB 3DX Pro Backhoe Loader we have a 20-tonne excavator on the farm, which has proved valuable in especially road and dam maintenance. The JCB 535-95 Loadall is playing a defining role in the middle of this mechanisation by making the storage and handling of our primary produce so much more efficient."

**From left: Dorning Motors Sales Representative, Nick Leahy, and Dorning Motors Dealer Principal, Keith Chapman, with Braden and Pippa Muir and Siboniso Mzozo, the JCB Loadall operator.**



# JCB LOADALL

# LIFT HIGHER

# REACH FURTHER

# WORK FASTER



**STACKING**



**REHANDLING**



**CLEANING**



**FEEDING**



**TRAILING**



**PUSHING**



**TRANSPORTING**

FOLLOW US ON    

E-mail: [forest.agri@bellequipment.com](mailto:forest.agri@bellequipment.com)  
[www.bellequipment.com](http://www.bellequipment.com)



Bell-1963

# NCT Richards Bay rebuilds with Bell after massive fire

*“It’s all to do with service. If I phone, I want service and that happens with Bell Equipment. I have three or four people that I can call if we have an issue and one of them is bound to answer and jump, no matter what time of day or night.”*



Throughout history, fires have caused widespread devastation and loss. In late September 2023, the NCT Forestry Agricultural Co-operative Limited (NCT) mill in Richards Bay experienced this first hand when strong winds, low

humidity, and high temperatures combined to create ideal conditions for a fire that raged for more than ten days.

Described at the time as “a multi-billion-rand catastrophe”,

losses included tonnes of wood chips and round logs, massive infrastructure damage on both the wattle and eucalyptus chip lines, and several pieces of equipment including a Bell L1506 Wheeled Loader, an old Bell Haulage Tractor, a Bell Logger and a tracked Kobelco Excavator with a Timber Grab that had been purchased four years earlier.

The community and industry rallied immediately with assistance provided by, among others, uMhlathuze Municipality, Transnet, Mondi, South32, Sappi, Zululand Fire Protection Association (FPA), KwaZulu-Natal FPA, helicopters from Working on Fire, Leomat Construction, and Bell Equipment, which sent two 38 000-litre Bell Water Tankers.

“We give thanks to our Bell Sales Representative, Haig Thompson, and the Bell team for those Bell Water Tankers. They made a huge difference. In fact, we've planned our new fire reticulation system based on the volume of water that those two machines threw,” said Ryno Martyn, NCT Richards Bay Operation Manager.

Dr Antonio Ciolli, who holds a PhD in fire engineering, has taken NCT's fire preparedness to the next level with a new fire plan. In the event of a fire, based on NCT's fuel loads, the plant needs to be able to put 7 400 litres of water down a minute for six hours without relying on municipal water supply. “That's just under 2,5 million litres of water that I need to keep on the front at any one stage,” says Ryno.

To achieve this, NCT Richards Bay now has its own fire station and has installed a 200mm ring main pipeline around the property with pumps and a pump station capable of pumping at around nine bar pressure. “We can release the same amount of water as the Bell Water Tankers using water cannons fixed to a Toyota Landcruiser that can go anywhere. This vehicle releases over 7 500 litres of water a minute, and it can reach about 70 metres. These ideas came from lessons learned during the fire to make the new system more practical and very effective.



From a business perspective, Ryno recalls: "The worst part about the fire was that the market had just started to come right and we had increased our chipping rate. Then, suddenly, the Chinese market dipped, and they decided to slow everything down. They didn't cancel vessels, but by slowing everything down we started to build up stock. That morning at 4am we had just finished loading the first of four vessels that were due to come in over a two-week period. We had the fire that afternoon and had to turn the other three vessels away. That was terrible."

### Rebuilding

Due to the investigations and the December holiday season, NCT only started to really get going in January 2024. Ryno said: "In January I met with a company in the Cape that produces biofuel products. They go to orchards when a farmer wants to replant and grind the material down for them so they can use it as a mulch for the new seedlings. We realised

that we couldn't produce a paper quality chip, but we could certainly produce a biofuel quality chip, so we hired the company to come and chip for us from February 2024.

"We've got two long-standing contracts with Japan for biofuel products, so this was at least something that we could help our customers with, because it's important to remember that we're a co-operative and a priority for us is to help keep our timber farmers turning over some timber. When we first started, we were only going to process about 75 000 tonnes but by the time the machine left in June 2025, we'd done about 230 000 tonnes, and had loaded five vessels."

The two chipping plants – BayFibre and Richards Bay Wood Chips (RBWC) – had to be completely rebuilt. BayFibre, which chips predominantly wattle, was chipping as a going concern by November 2024 and by June 2025

the two plants were chipping a combined volume of 3 000 tonnes of timber per day, just shy of the 4 000 tonnes per day they were chipping prior to the fire.

NCT started replacing the burnt-out equipment once the insurance claim had paid out. The new fleet includes a JCB 436 Wheel Loader, a JCB 155HD Skid Steer and a wheeled Kobelco SK260LC-10 Excavator fitted with a MT1000 Timber Grab, all supplied by Bell Equipment Empangeni.

NCT Plant Manager, Charles Atkins had spoken to others about wheeled loaders and was advised that JCB was the way to go. The JCB 436ZX, with its operating weight of 14 564kg, 132kW of power and net torque of 786Nm at 1 300rpm, is proving to be a sound choice. Fitted with a larger bucket, it's used for cleaning around the plant, moving chips, and loading biomass onto side-tippers so it can be sent back to NCT growers to use as mulch.



*From left: Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Haig Thompson, NCT Plant Manager, Charles Atkins, and NCT Richards Bay Operations Manager, Ryno Martyn discuss the new firefighting equipment inside the new fire station.*



The JCB 155HD Skid Steer, with its 2 990kg operating weight, 42kW of power and 192Nm of gross torque, is ideal for general housekeeping duties in the yard where it can manoeuvre into tight spots that are inaccessible to other types of equipment.

NCT currently has a fleet of three Kobelco SK260LC-10s fitted with MT1000 Timbers Grabs – two wheeled and one tracked – which are used to offload timber trucks.

Ryno explains that NCT opted for a wheeled undercarriage with the latest machine so that it could move between the two wood chipping plants for greater efficiency and use of resources. The cab was also raised by 500mm to improve visibility so operators can see over stockpiles, which can be up to 6m high.

Charles comments: "Other than a small radiator leak we haven't had any issues in the six years that we've owned Kobelco Excavators. They are really good machines – basic and easy to work on." NCT is likewise pleased with the average fuel economy of between 11 and 12 litres per hour.

He also enjoys Kobelco's Komex and JCB's LiveLink telematics systems, particularly the feature that warns him when machine services are due.

While build quality and machine performance are important, Charles said customer support also influenced their machine choices. "It's all to do with service. If I phone, I want service and that happens with Bell Equipment. I have three or four people that I can call if we have an issue and

one of them is bound to answer and jump, no matter what time of day or night."

Apart from the latest wheeled Kobelco, which has a three-year service plan, all the other equipment will be serviced by Bell during the standard warranty period. Thereafter, they will be maintained by NCT's own mechanic.

Other Bell-supplied machines in the fleet include five old Bell Haulage Tractors and three Bell Loggers – two A-series machines and one F-series, all of which have longer booms for improved reach.

NCT's Richards Bay operation has been using Bell equipment for over 25 years. And with a new chipping mill and equipment NCT will most certainly be around for many more years to come.

# Loyal Bell timber customer Kanyi Ilanga Trading celebrates 21st anniversary

**When seeing Elvis Shabangu gaze out over his big timber treatment yard nestled in between vast timber plantations it's difficult to imagine that this was once a young boy who left school prematurely to help his single-parent mother take care of his siblings by doing odd jobs.**

Since then, Elvis has grown into a proud and tall man who is well respected in the timber and other industries where he is steadily growing a diversified enterprise.

Now celebrating its 21st year in business, Elvis Shabangu's Kanyi Ilanga Trading started off small, working initially in silviculture and contract timber harvesting, and has now grown into short and long-haul businesses. His latest addition to the timber industry is a timber treatment plant.

"Since I started out in the timber business in 2004, my teams – whether working in silviculture or in timber felling, extraction and haulage – have always relied on yellow timber-handling machines made by Bell Equipment, and this is not about to change," Elvis says. "We're still using Bell 225A Loggers that now boast seriously high hours, and even with rebuilds these machines still deliver solid mechanical availabilities each day."

Kanyi Ilanga Trading has explored the full range of Bell Equipment's timber-handling offering over the years, initially using a Bell 1756 Haulage Tractor-Trailer combination for short-haul applications before acquiring Bell T17D and T21D Timber Forwarders. Sometime later, a Bell B25D Articulated Dump Truck (ADT)

carrier was converted into a timber forwarder, and in the following years two modern Bell TF302E Forwarders joined the fleet. In 2020, Kanyi Ilanga Trading put a new Kobelco SK210LC Wheeled Excavator carrier fitted with a Bell MT800 grab into service.

"We've stayed with equipment from Bell due to the longevity that the equipment promises and delivers," Elvis adds. "Our Bell T21D Forwarder now stands at 38 000 hours and has had two new engines fitted. In the six years that we've enjoyed the two Bell TF302E Forwarders, they've given us 18 000 and 15 000 hours respectively with only a sandwich block needing to be replaced on one."

Elvis is adamant though that the backbone of his company's timber-handling fleet is the Bell 225



**From left: Elvis Shabangu (Owner of Kanyi Ilanga Trading), Daniel van Huyssteen (Bell Sales Representative) and Rudi Petzer (Kanyi Ilanga Operations Manager at the timber treatment plant).**

Logger in both the older A-series as well as the newer F-series machines. "We have 24 of these machines evenly split between the older A- and newer F-series machines," he says. "We recently bought new Bell 225F Loggers to replace older A-series machines that had generally clocked more than 17 000 hours in the eight years that we owned them. During that time our four qualified mechanics had performed rebuilds on them in our well-equipped workshops."

He expands on the Bell Loggers many uses within Kanyi Ilanga's operations which start with silviculture, working in tandem with felling teams, extracting, indexing and unloading and loading timber at roadside depots. They are also used in conjunction with cable yarders and skidders, loading timber trucks which transport to mills and export facilities. Without them Elvis believes his timber treatment facility would not function.

"We keep on using Bell Loggers for a few very simple reasons," he says. "Our company and our people have grown while using Bell Loggers and, while there may be cheaper options on the market, they aren't as durable as Bell Loggers when you consider that their application in the timber handling environment is a tough one."

Elvis tells of an unusual use of their Bell Loggers when they had to



figure out a solution to an environmental issue on an important access route to one of their sites.

“We had a problem with a section of road that had a high clay content. When it got wet our trucks skidded and couldn’t gain access to, or exit the area with full loads,” he recalls. “We then bought 16 000 used concrete railway sleepers from Transnet and used our Bell Loggers to unload these sturdy sleepers from trucks before the same Loggers placed them in the

excavated section of the road, which then created a paved area that was solid underfoot.”

To own more of the timber value chain, Kanyi Ilanga Trading recently bought a timber treatment facility where gum poles of varying lengths are treated with either creosote or chromated copper arsenate (CCA). This facility, situated at Hemlock, which lies between Ngodwana and Emgwenya (formerly Waterval Boven), lies adjacent to large forestry tracts that Kanyi

Ilanga owns and which provide sustained gum-pole feedstock to the facility. Here Bell Loggers are used to load and unload the timber that is treated in large pressure vessels and, when treatment is complete, the machines place the timber bundles on drying racks. Once dry, bundles of treated poles are loaded onto trucks for delivery to customers and the Bell Loggers are used again to ensure quick turnaround times.



The treatment is designed to extend the lifespan of timber by making it resistant to decay, rot, and insect infestation.

“While not taking anything away from the reliable service we’ve enjoyed with our original Bell 225A Loggers, we’re enjoying the frugal fuel consumption that the new F-series Loggers are delivering,” Elvis adds. “We’re saving at least 1,5 litres of diesel an hour with the

new Yanmar watercooled engines and considering the price of diesel now, this is a huge saving.

“And I should add that no machine can survive without diligent maintenance and, with this in mind, I want to commend the service we’ve received over the years from Bell Equipment in both Mbombela (formerly Nelspruit) and eMkhondo (formerly Piet Retief),” he concludes. “We have many

points of entry into Bell Equipment as we know the branch managers, product support representatives and mechanics, but our most valuable contact has been through Bell Equipment’s knowledgeable Sales Representative in our area, Daniel van Huyssteen.”





# FMS appointed new dealer in Winterton

**Farm Maintenance Services, or FMS as they've long been known in the trade, have always wanted a leading yellow metal equipment brand to offer to their vast customer base and now they have one, albeit in their branch at Winterton, in the foothills of the Drakensberg.**

FMS was bought by Andrew Nicholson in Pietermaritzburg in 2013 and serves the broader KwaZulu-Natal Midlands area where a variety of crops, cattle and dairy farms fill the rolling landscape.

Cornie Tosen is the General Manager for FMS in Pietermaritzburg and the Winterton branch and expresses how excited they are about this latest offering to their customers. "We're a market-leading dealer for the likes of Massey Ferguson and Fendt agricultural tractors and a broad selection of related farming implements. For us to now be able to offer strong brands like Bell and JCB as



**Cornie Tosen, FMS: General Manager Pietermaritzburg Head Office and Winterton.**

well is truly a long-standing dream come true.

"It came about when, early in 2025, Leon Röhrs, owner of Drakensberg Agricultural Services in Winterton, approached us about taking over his business. His greatest concern was that his current customers would be looked after as they had supported him so loyally. Leon is a true gentleman whom we've known for many years and it's commendable that his first concern was for his customers."

With negotiations settled, FMS started trading in Winterton on 1 April 2025 and continues to service farming customers from below the Drakensberg through

Creighton, Kranskop and Muden, around Pietermaritzburg to Durban. The Winterton branch has a well-stocked parts department and boasts a workshop manager supported by three qualified mechanics and five apprentices, who are being mentored.

"Selling yellow metal machines into our existing customer base is a natural outflow of our business as backhoe loaders, telehandlers and even forestry equipment fills the gaps where traditional agricultural equipment does not," Cornie adds. "You'll often find that a farmer will say that until he owns a JCB Backhoe Loader or telescopic loadall, he doesn't know how his farm had survived without it.

"We're proud to say that the first JCB machine we sold was a JCB 530-70 Loadall that went to a large commercial farm with a cattle feedlot situated near Bergville where the machine is used for several hours a day loading a mixture of raw products into a feed mixer.

"We're also confident that the message will soon spread that we're committed to serving our farming customer base with great products, of which Bell and JCB complement our existing brands with technical service and parts to match."



**BRAAI KIT - BOMA**



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

**BRAAI & CARVING SET**



**R650<sup>00</sup>**

**MUG - BEER**



**R800<sup>00</sup>**

**LEATHERMAN REV**



**R1 800<sup>00</sup>**

**MULTI-TOOL**



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

**CARD HOLDER - LEATHER  
BROWN/BLACK**



**R380<sup>00</sup>**

**LEATHERMAN  
WAVE**



**R3 600<sup>00</sup>**

**LEATHERMAN  
SKELETOOL**



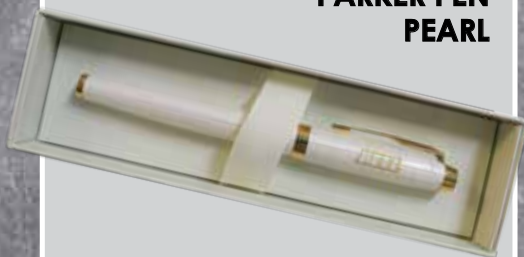
**R2 500<sup>00</sup>**

**POUCH - LEATHER  
TAN/BLACK**



**R700<sup>00</sup>**

**PARKER PEN  
PEARL**



**R980<sup>00</sup>**

**MULTI TOOL PEN**



**R120<sup>00</sup>**

**WALLET - LEATHER  
BLACK**



**R650<sup>00</sup>**

**COOLER BOX - 45 LITRE  
GREEN**



**R2 800<sup>00</sup>**

**VOYAGER CUP  
1200ML  
DIFFERENT COLOURS**



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

**BELT - LEATHER  
WITH GRADER BUCKLE  
BROWN**



**R500<sup>00</sup>**

**CAP - OILED CAMO**  
OLIVE/CHARCOAL



**R150<sup>00</sup>**

**HAT - SAFARI**  
STONE



**R150<sup>00</sup>**

**CAP - GRADER**  
BLACK



**R150<sup>00</sup>**

**JACKET**  
**CAMO PUFFER**  
SIZE: S - 5XL



**1 090<sup>00</sup>**

**SHIRT**  
**FISHING**  
SIZE: S - 5XL



**R350<sup>00</sup>**

**SHORTS**  
**CARGO**  
KHAKI  
SIZE: S - 7XL



**R350<sup>00</sup>**

**SHOE - LEATHER SLIP-ON**  
BROWN  
SIZE: 7 - 11



**R1 000<sup>00</sup>**

**SHOE - MEN'S VELDSKOEN**  
TAN  
SIZE: 5 - 11



**R1 000<sup>00</sup>**

**BOOT - AFRICAN RANGER**  
**(NON-STEEL CAP)**  
GREEN  
SIZE: 3 - 13



**R1 500<sup>00</sup>**

**SANDAL - MENS LEATHER**  
BROWN  
SIZE: 7 - 11



**R470<sup>00</sup>**

**SANDAL - LADIES LEATHER**  
BROWN  
SIZE: 4 - 7



**R470<sup>00</sup>**

**SANDAL - LADIES LEATHER**  
TAN  
SIZE: 4 - 7



**R400<sup>00</sup>**

**BELL**  
**PROMO SHOP**

**CONTACT:** Tel: +27 (0)35 907 9312  
**Email:** promo.rby@za.bellequipment.com  
**Website:** promoshop.bellequipment.com

**PROMO SHOP HOURS:**  
Monday - Thursday: 09h30 - 14h30  
Friday: 09h30 - 13h00

# GET MOVING

Embrace the movement towards leaner efficiency, lower service costs and the lowest production cost with the partner that brought you the old, the new and the revolutionary!



Contact your nearest Bell Dealer today to see what we can offer.

**Strong Reliable Machines  
Strong Reliable Support**

# **BELL**