

Potato boom for local supplier

Sennah Handling Systems - a Paarl-based manufacturer of high quality potato bagging machines and materials handling equipment for the agricultural sector - has substantially improved its productivity with new packaging machines that make use of SEW-EURODRIVE products.

In 2013, Sennah upped its production from 26 machines the previous year to 94 machines. This means that more than 1 000 SEW-EURODRIVE geared motors are currently operational in the local potato and onions farming industry.

Owner Hannes Visser says: "What we envisage is for man and machine to complement each other. Whatever man cannot do is left to the machine. That complementary technology is substantiated in the machines that we offer for weighing and packaging of potatoes and onions."

The current machine is able to pack 480 x 10kg bags per hour. The company focuses on end of line packaging solutions, which involves the process that follows after sizing and sorting. In the cut throat business of farming where there are so many factors playing a role in profit margins, Visser comments that specialisation is a key aspect.

"We have over the years managed to refine and optimise our process in such a way that the machine is built to an exact specification which has been tried and tested. The company has built over 300 machines which are exact replicates of each other. The machines are manufactured according to high quality specifications, using SEW-EURODRIVE products, to ensure smooth running and minimum downtime for the farmer," he continues.

Although there is a trend towards automation, Visser points out that there is still always a human element which is vital to the local economy. "Many people will be without employment if everything is automated.

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People will always be part of the production manufacturing process, but without automation there can be no real growth for the farmer.”

Visser reveals that he has been doing business with SEW-EURODRIVE throughout the duration of his career. "I was introduced to SEW-EURODRIVE in my first employment and have grown the relationship with the company, its products and its people. I selected SEW-EURODRIVE because of its pricing structure, low maintenance and quality."

Sennah machines are sold nationwide, and Visser adds that it was key that the products used should be reliable and robust to ensure not just his reputation as a machine builder, but also to ensure the ongoing production and profitability for the farmers who are his customers.

Furthermore, the national presence and local stock holding offered by SEW-EURODRIVE ensured the competitive edge for Sennah Handling Systems. Visser notes: "Through our detailed project management and planning, SEW-EURODRIVE was able to ensure that we had the required stock at the appropriate time."

The success of the new potato packaging machines means that Sennah Handling Systems has moved into the list of top 20 SEW-EURODRIVE customers. "It is always good to work with SEW-EURODRIVE, as it is a business partnership that is mutually beneficial. The service I received from the Cape Town branch and in particular Eugene Vorster, my sales engineer, is truly excellent, and I look forward to seeing more SEW-EURODRIVE products in the field in the near future," concludes Visser.

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