

Technical support from field to factory

With equipment technology becoming increasingly sophisticated, Case IH has recently appointed two new highly specialised field managers to assist dealers in meeting their customers' equipment needs. Rowan Bennett and Heath Joiner, with their wealth of technical experience, have joined the Case IH team in the newly created role of Technical Support Manager.

Rowan, based in Bendigo, Victoria, will work with dealers across southern New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania, while Heath will be based in Brisbane and work with dealers in northern New South Wales and Queensland.

Dealer technical support

In their new roles, Rowan and Heath will provide dealers with support on technical issues and ensure technical staff in dealerships are fully trained in the repair, maintenance and operation of the latest Case IH technology. Their feedback on product applications from a technical perspective will provide valuable information for Case IH engineers overseas, ensuring Australian farmers' needs are considered in the early stages of future product development.

"Machinery is becoming increasingly complex," Rowan points out, "and the on-farm introduction of GPS technologies



Rowan Bennett is a Technical support Manager based in Bendigo and will work across southern NSW, Victoria and Tasmania.

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Heath Joiner brings years of field experience to his role as a Case IH Technical Support Manager.



such as auto-steering, mapping and variable rate seeding is much more commonplace. This advancement of technology is vital – particularly given the fact the industry needs to increase its efficiency and is faced with fewer people to do the job. Case IH is at the leading edge of these new technologies and in my new position, I will play a key role in supporting dealers with new and existing technologies."

Heath adds that by having other avenues for dealers to call on, both customers and dealers can rest assured that help is at hand should they come across any issues on which they need advice. "Workshop staff can also feel confident that if they need to service or repair any equipment with which they are unfamiliar, support is on hand. The end result for customers is peace of mind and fast, efficient service and maintenance," Heath says.

FARMING BACKGROUNDS

Phil Withell, Case IH Regional Manager, points out that both Rowan and Heath come from a farming background and have a vast amount of technical knowledge.

"Both men grew up in Victoria," Phil says. "Rowan's family ran a 2000 hec-

tare broadacre farm, while Heath's family managed a 140 head dairy. On top of this, Rowan and Heath have a wealth of industry experience, working in technical support roles for a range of equipment manufacturers."

With a degree in Manufacturing Technology, majoring in Metallurgy, Rowan has spent the majority of his career working for machinery manufacturers in technical support and marketing roles.

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Heath, an aircraft engineer by trade, has also worked as a Field Service Technician with Case IH dealer, Kenway and Clark in Moree, NSW. He was responsible for maintaining a fleet of approximately 40 Case IH tractors for a 6000 hectare cotton growing company, before being promoted to the dealership Service Manager.

Field experience

This has given Heath plenty of time in the field helping to sort out technical issues for a range of machinery from the most modern combines and tractors through to decades-old farm workhorses. This experience has underlined a simple principle for Heath.

“No matter how old or sophisticated a farm machine is, its efficient operation is governed by the simple maintenance and servicing rules we all grew up with,” Heath says. “And if you focus on preventative maintenance when things are a bit quieter on the farm, 95 per cent of the time this relatively small investment in effort and money will be paid back many times over with trouble-free operation. A good rule to follow during preventative maintenance is: ‘If in doubt – throw it out’.

“If you do come across some problems, it’s amazing how many of them can be quickly fixed simply by referring to the operator’s manual,” Heath adds. “And it’s particularly important to be familiar with the manual on the modern machines as improvements in technology will mean some changes to operating and maintenance requirements.

“The manuals today are particularly comprehensive and detailed and are designed to help you get the maximum productivity out of your machine. So if your machine is not doing as it should, my suggestion is to spend some time reading the manual before being tempted to curse the advent of ‘newfangled gadgets’.

Heath points out two recent examples of farmers fearing costly and time-consuming breakdowns when, in reality, they were two very easy problems to fix.

“One farmer thought there was a major tractor transmission failure – the other had hydraulic motor problems. But most modern drive systems require the right oil level to engage. Both farmers’ problems were remedied simply by checking, and subsequently topping up, the oil levels.”

Electrical systems

Given the sophisticated and extensive electrical and electronic systems on today’s farm machinery, Heath says faulty earth connections and overlooking basic battery

maintenance can be another frustrating – but very avoidable – cause of machine downtime.

“In the vast majority of cases, regular checks and servicing will lead to trouble-free electrical systems,” Heath says. “But on the subject of battery maintenance, one of my pet hates is the battery terminal protectant gel you can buy.

“This stuff can often do more harm than good by seeping down the sides of

the battery and creating a contact point with the tractor body. Particularly on cold mornings, the tractor may not start – but your voltmeter says the battery is fine. Off into town you go to get a new starter motor when all along the problem is at the battery terminals.

“My advice is to occasionally clean the corrosive powder off the terminals with some elbow grease, rather than resort to a gel-like protectant,” Heath says. ■

BATTERIES DESIGNED FOR THE JOB

A reliable battery is essential for any tractor operator. Case IH’s Magna power batteries have been specially designed for Case IH equipment, to meet performance requirements and match the base-clamping mechanism.

Magna Power batteries have an excellent Cold Cranking Amps (CCA) rating, which means they can reliably start an engine in cold temperatures. The CCA rating indicates the number of amps a new, fully charged battery can deliver for 30 seconds at a temperature of minus 17.8° Celsius.

Another area where the Magna Power battery excels is its Reserve Capacity (RC). This rating is the number of minutes that a 12 volt battery at 26.5°C can be discharged at 25 amps, while maintaining a voltage of 10.5 volts. It indicates a battery’s ability to power a vehicle when the charging system (alternator or fan belt) is inoperative.

Magna Power batteries incorporate computer-designed grids and strong intercell connectors that pass through the partition to create a shorter current path with greater conductivity. This delivers more power to the terminals.

Alloys for longer battery life

Two different alloys are used in the grids to provide the best combination of characteristics for long battery life. The lead-antimony alloy is efficient, with a low build-up of internal heat that minimises water loss, while the lead calcium is stronger than more commonly used alloys, uses less water, and has more resistance to corrosion, overcharging and gassing.

The two materials are alternated in the Case IH batteries, and together produce a battery that is more readily recharged than conventional batteries.

Case IH specifies bonded plates, lead calcium alloy for reduced gassing, and a removable venting system that provides ready access for topping up the battery with water. These measures help reduce the incidence of vibration, high temperature and low fluid levels – all causes of premature battery failure.

For added safety, the batteries have a venting system with a flame arrestor which helps minimise the chance of an external explosion. Nonetheless, precautions such as a well-ventilated area, wearing eye protection, and clothing protecting the face, hands and body, should be observed when working with any batteries.

The Magna Power battery is designed to provide long, reliable service in difficult conditions. Proper maintenance will ensure the most benefits from the design. Some simple, but very effective, maintenance tips includes:

- Checking the battery earth contact regularly;
- Cleaning the terminals regularly;
- Checking electrolyte levels and topping up at least twice a year; and,
- Checking the charge voltage of the battery while the engine is running, using a voltmeter.

