

# A CASE For Happiness

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Think of a time of frustration with an old machine. Maybe it was a washing machine in constant need of repair and a few good kicks to get it running. Maybe a lawn mower that had to be worked on all day just to get it started. Agricultural researchers at Texas Tech University felt these same frustrations when dealing with old equipment used for research. However, in times of budget constraints, replacing old equipment is difficult.

Texas Tech is located in the heart of agriculture, providing a unique opportunity to conduct vital research that impacts the agriculture industry world-wide. However, research projects are constantly hindered by outdated equipment that university research farm employees currently operate. Case IH and Texas Tech have formed a partnership to open vast new opportunities in the field of agriculture research.

Norman Hopper, Executive Associate Dean in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, found out about the Case IH University program while speaking with a colleague from West Texas A&M University. He was told about a program in which Case IH supplies universities with equipment and tractors that can be used for research or production, all at a very nominal fee.

Texas Tech should start receiving equipment in April 2011, Hopper said. The new equipment Texas Tech receives will be placed at several research farms that include the Quaker Avenue research farm, Erskine farm, New Deal farm, Pantex research farm, and the Texas Tech Equestrian Center.

"This partnership could not have come at a better time," Hopper said. "We are experiencing some pretty severe budget cuts. So these high dollar items, like tractors, would be almost impossible for us to purchase."

According to David Braune, owner of Heritage Equipment, the Case IH equipment will include two Case IH Magnum tractors, several utility tractors, a few Case IH Scout utility vehicles, and a skid steer. This equipment is valued at over a quarter of a million dollars. Heritage Equipment, which is the local Case IH dealer, will supply Texas Tech with the equipment and tractors.

Russell Solomon, the West Texas territory sales manager for Case IH, said he is eager to see how these tractors will benefit research at Texas Tech.

"A lot of tractors the guys are running out there now are 20 to 30 years old," Solomon said. "It's a nightmare to get them going. They may have to work on it all day just to get it out to the field."

Research farm manager, Steve Oswalt, is thrilled with the new opportunity.

"For Case to come in and offer us brand-new tractors at basically no cost to the department is so good I don't even know how to put a dollar value on it," Oswalt said. "It is like our prayers have been answered."

The Quaker Avenue farm is a 120-acre farm and really cannot justify buying a \$200,000 tractor, Solomon said. A typical farmer who is going to buy a \$200,000 tractor is going to operate that tractor on anywhere from 1,000 to 2,000 acres.

"To renew or fix our equipment would cost more money than we have to spend," Oswalt said. "For Case to give us a tractor to lease, and every 250 hours give us a new one, essentially tells me I will no longer have any repair cost because everything is under warranty."

After the equipment has been used 250 hours or six months, it will be returned to Heritage and sold to local farmers at a discounted price. Since modern-day farmers are moving toward more high-tech equipment, the tractors supplied to Texas Tech will be equipped with the newest technologies, Braune said. A few innovations the row-crop tractors will be equipped with are Auto Guidance Ready, Tier 4 emissions standards, and fuel-efficient transmissions.

Greg Coke, store manager for Heritage Equipment at the Lubbock location, said Heritage will order the equipment for Texas Tech and make sure it is equipped with these innovations, but the partnership is not a one-way street.

Case IH, as a company, and Heritage, as a local dealer, will benefit from the exposure of Texas Tech running its equipment.

"Case is in the process of trying to make their dealers more visible," Oswalt said. "To show in a place that is very

visible, like Texas Tech, will allow Case IH to get some of their products out and increase their market share."

Heritage Equipment will also be able to use Texas Tech research farms to demonstrate its equipment during field days.

"It's a win-win situation for both Texas Tech and Case," Hopper said. "We get the use of a brand-new tractor without having to buy it, and Case IH will get exposure and advertisement."

Researchers and farms managers at Texas Tech are elated about the opportunity to receive new equipment and give their old equipment the boot. Case IH's generosity has spread smiles across many

faces and brought comfort in knowing the farms now have reliable equipment. Because of the opportunity presented by Case IH, Texas Tech can continue to be a research leader for years to come. **T**

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Whitney Mathews | Canadian, Texas

