

## Official opening of new Case IH Training Academy to help improve Zimbabwean agricultural productivity

*New initiative to help Zimbabwe's farmers / run by Case IH in partnership with Agricon and BlueSky / attracts agriculturalists from across Africa*

St. Valentin, 21 September 2017



PRESS RELEASE

The Case IH Training Academy, a new initiative to encourage best practice in Zimbabwean agriculture, was officially opened in Chinhoyi last week by Matthew Foster, Vice President in charge of Agricultural Commercial Development for Europe, the Middle East and Africa. With support from Case IH, the global leader in agricultural equipment, the Academy will provide hands-on technical and operational training to help farmers improve productivity through the wider adoption of mechanization. At a time when Zimbabwe is striving to improve agricultural productivity to regain food self-sufficiency, the Academy is expected to play an important role.

The official opening ceremony, on 14th September, was attended by more than 100 visitors from Zimbabwe, Botswana, Zambia, South Africa, Kenya, Sudan and Egypt. Guests included farm operators, agricultural equipment dealers and distributors, directors and senior managers of Case IH, and senior representatives of Case IH's Zimbabwean distributor Agricon Equipment.

With 2,000 hectares of land, mostly dedicated to maize and wheat, the training academy is owned by local farmers in Mashonaland West Province and leased and operated by BlueSky Farms. Training activities at the farm will be run in partnership between BlueSky, Case IH and Agricon.

To enable farmers to gain or strengthen a wide variety of skills, the academy gives access to an impressive array of Case IH agricultural equipment. This includes a JXT 75 utility tractor; high-horsepower Puma 210 multi-purpose tractor; state-of-the-art Magnum Rowtrac 380 CVXDrive tractor with continuously variable transmission and tracks in the rear; industry-leading Axial-Flow® 7140 rotary combine harvester; Patriot 3230 sprayer; and a 24-row Early Riser seed planter.

Many of these machines were put into operation on the official opening day for guests to try-out in real-world working conditions. "This was a great opportunity to gain in-field training with practical operation of machines that I cannot drive back home," said Lana Saeed, a sales engineer with CTC Engineering in Sudan. "Handling the machines in a real working environment and exchanging ideas with participants from all over Africa was very useful."

Jacobus Bezuidenhout, an agricultural equipment service manager from Botswana, agreed:

“Involving specialists from different markets across Africa in commercial training at a working farm is a great concept and was well appreciated.” This concept was also praised by Hassan Elkadawy, Sales Manager for Case IH in Egypt: “Interaction with commercial specialists from various regions broadens horizons and shows how to approach solutions from different angles.”

Matthew Foster, Vice President in charge of Agricultural Commercial Development for Europe, the Middle East and Africa, commented: “If people’s reactions on the opening day were anything to go by, this new training academy is a very welcome addition to Zimbabwe’s agricultural industry. It’s important to help operators get the best from their machines, and this new initiative recognises that. Working with Agricon and BlueSky Farms, we will be able to train Agricon’s technicians and commercial team, show customers how to maximise productivity from agricultural equipment, introduce new products to customers, and share the latest thinking on efficient agricultural practices.”

Jason Smith, Chief Operating Officer of Agricon Equipment, said: “Agricon strives to deliver to the market the latest technology in agricultural equipment. With this comes the responsibility to support this equipment, which is why we have invested in this new facility to train our technicians and commercial team. And we hope that in our future provision of training and education to local farmers, we can contribute to a more productive Zimbabwe.”

Daniel Bosman, managing director of BlueSky Farms, said: “Farming principles in Africa are often outdated and there’s a need for a better understanding of the principles of mechanization, technology, and management practices. This is due to a lack of exposure to modern concepts, lack of training, and limited access to the latest technology - all things that the new training academy can address.”

The full line of Case IH agricultural equipment includes small, medium and high-horsepower tractors up to 670 hp, Axial-Flow® rotary combine harvesters, round and square balers of all sizes, hay and forage equipment, tillage, seeding and spraying tools, and a complete line of specialised equipment such as the most advanced sugar cane harvesters and cotton pickers available in the market. Case IH AFS Advanced Farming Systems offer sophisticated solutions including automated vehicle steering, yield and consumption monitoring, and Telematic and Farm Management software support.

Case IH commemorates its 175th anniversary this year - testament to sustained dedication to quality, perseverance, and progress. The brand is part of CNH Industrial, which manufactures agricultural, construction and commercial equipment at 62 plants around the world.

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Press releases and photos <http://mediacentre.caseiheurope.com/>.

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