

## Case IH LB 434R Supersize Baler Feeds Cogeneration Power Plant in Mauritius

*Mauritian thermal power plant Terragen chose the Case IH LB 434R baler to produce high quality, high density bales of sugarcane trash to feed its cogeneration thermal power plant.*

St. Valentin, 15 September 2015



Sugarcane is the dominant crop in Mauritius, where it is cultivated on 85% of the country's arable land. It plays a key role in the sugar industry, one of the pillars of the national economy. In addition, its trash provides a valuable raw material for energy generation.

Sugarcane is a crop highly efficient in converting solar energy: current technologies in use in Mauritius can produce over 500 kWh of electricity per tonne of bagasse. This is the high-energy raw material that Terragen Ltd uses to produce electricity during the sugarcane harvest season, which runs from July to December, switching to coal during the intercrop season. Terragen Ltd's 70.6 MW thermal power plant produces around 400 GWh of electricity annually, contributing about 15% of Mauritius' yearly national electricity consumption.

To feed its thermal power plant, Terragen Ltd – a joint venture between Albioma and Mauritian group TERRA – is running a sugarcane trash harvesting programme in collaboration with the Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute (MSIRI) and in partnership with TERRA's Agricultural division.

Terragen Ltd chose the new Case IH LB 434R baler to collect and bale the sugarcane trash. These high performance balers consistently deliver maximum productivity, producing perfect high-density bales in under 60 seconds. They feature a new high-speed pickup and an additional feed roll for high speed work in all conditions.

"We received the LB 434R in time for the beginning of the sugarcane harvesting season, in July. Throughout the season it will be working 8 to 10 hours a day, with a daily output of 20 bales/hour on average," explains Miss Lauriane Mietton, Terragen's Agronomist in charge of Biomass Projects. "We chose the LB 434R for three main reasons: the high-density bales, the Rotor Cutter system, and the optimal bale dimensions for transport and stocking. So far we are very pleased with it: the quality of the bales is consistently high, they remain nice and compact."

This is achieved with the smooth running Rotor Cutter system, designed to create tight and compact segments for easy distribution of the crop in the pre-compression chamber. As soon as it is filled to the required density, the stuffer fork pushes the material up into the bale chamber, repeating the process until the desired bale length is reached. The three dimensional density system keeps the bale in shape throughout the bale forming process. The bale is then tied using a double knotting system to minimize wear and tear on the twine.

“The Rotor Cutter system cuts the sugarcane trash shorter, giving us a much better quality of trash for use mixed to the bagasse in energy generation,” adds Mr. Charles Vaultbert, in charge of Terragen’s co-products.

For the duration of the sugarcane harvesting season, Terragen Ltd depends on the LB 434R’s high productivity to feed the power plant with sufficient crop. Their Case IH dealer, Mechanization Co. Ltd., plays an important role in making sure the machine remains in top condition and performs at its best throughout.

“The excellent relationship with our Case IH dealer is critical to our operation, both for the technical support they provide and the spare parts and bale twine we need,” states Miss Mietton. “Also, this is a machine with a high technological content, which requires some training to operate it and get the best performance from it. Our dealer was very good in setting up the machine on delivery and getting our operators up to speed.”

Mr. Didier Duthil of Mechanization Co. Ltd. (MECOM Ltd.) concludes: “The baling of sugar cane trash to produce electricity is a new application in Mauritius; the LB 434R is showing right from the start that it is very well suited to it and is giving excellent results. It is performing very well, producing nicely compact bales and achieving very high levels of productivity. Also, the possibility of setting the density of the bale and consequently its dimensions is extremely important for the transportation logistics of the bales and will surely be very useful to our customers.”

**Notes to the Editor:**

The photograph shows, from left to right: Mr Stepher Heureuse, Mr Patrice Nicolas, Mr Jean-Marc Flore and Mr Didier Duthil of MECOM Ltd, Mr Denis Lagesse of LA MOISSON Ltd, Mrs. Lauriane Mietton and Mr Charles Vaultbert of TERRAGEN Ltd, and Mr Pierre-Guy Charoux of LA MOISSON Ltd.

LA MOISSON Ltd is a Mauritian agricultural contracting company operating in the sugarcane sector and customer of MECOM with a fleet of Case IH equipment.

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