

Agri training centre receives new John Deere tractor for practical training

Senwes and John Deere SA paid the Department of Agriculture at the Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT) a visit to hand over a new John Deere 5075E Cab tractor. The tractor was bought for the newly purchased CUT farm set up as an Agricultural Training Centre in the Bainsvlei area - located 29km from Bloemfontein with 32ha of cultivable lands and 1.5ha of natural pastures.



Handing over the key to CUT students and Professor Fourie is Dries van Schalkwyk, Marketer from Senwes (second from right). On his left is Prof. Pieter Fourie, Professor: Agriculture and two first-year students in agriculture Tshegofatso Kgoasasa (left) and Palesa Maseko.

Different cultivations will be done on the farm which will form part of practicals for the agricultural students. Along with research conducted on the farm, practical classes and work-integrated learning will have a high educational and intrinsic value for the students.

The tractor will allow for training of agricultural students, not only to drive the utility tractor but also to operate the vehicle with different implements. Formal tractor operation training sessions will be conducted in collaboration with Senwes and John Deere SA. Students will be exposed to proper maintenance of the machinery and general upkeep.

The farm is surrounded by active commercial farms, which will be beneficial to the department. It will have livestock such as lamb and broiler chicks including an array of organically grown produce such as watermelons, cabbage, pumpkins, dryland maize and sunflowers, and other melons.



Farm equipment to aid developing practical skills

Prof. Carlu van der Westhuizen, Professor: Environmental Health said the training centre and tractor will contribute to teaching, learning and will add immense value to developing practical skills of students. The tractor was purchased at cost price by the university which shows the commitment of Senwes and John Deere SA, and their willingness to partner with CUT in bettering the education programme. Annually, Senwes pledged to make a large tractor that has automated capabilities such as self-driving available for training, at no cost to the university.

A third-year student in agriculture, Palesa Suping, said she is excited that the department has bought a tractor and a farm. “I am very happy that we finally have our own farm and equipment. We used to do our practical at other farms and I was not free to make mistakes and learn from them while doing my practical, but now I feel relaxed in a safe learning environment.”

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