

# Feeding the World

John Deere is leading and supporting the agriculture industry with a focus that is both local and global.

Images by Fullframe Photographics

**W**ith a global network and presence in more than 130 countries around the world, John Deere is playing a pivotal role in ensuring the global food supply of generations to come. Since its founding in 1837, John Deere has always been dedicated to those who are linked to the land, from farmers to station-owners and operators, landowners, and builders.

Ever since blacksmith and inventor John Deere crafted a polished-steel plough in his blacksmith shop in Grand Detour, Illinois, which allowed pioneer farmers to cut clean furrows through sticky American Midwest prairie soil, his company has focused on supporting and serving the agricultural industry. Throughout its 177 years of history, the company has pioneered inventions and innovations that have dramatically transformed the vital farming operations and practices of farmers across the globe.

Over that period, the company has seen an astounding array of

changes to its business, products, and services. Despite these shifts, John Deere has always kept its core values at the centre of everything it does. These values of integrity, quality, commitment, and innovation are what energise the people at John Deere, from its North American headquarters to its vital Australian and New Zealand operations.

Peter Wanckel, CEO of John Deere Australia and New Zealand, says the longevity and success of this global company can be traced back to the firm foundations of its deeply held values. "John Deere has been around for about 177 years. It's a very strong brand with a very good reputation for its products and support. We're driven by our four key values of integrity, quality, commitment, and innovation. John Deere has always operated under those four core values without compromise, and as a result we've developed a very strong brand in the marketplace.

"We've upheld and developed the John Deere brand in Australia and New Zealand through what we do every day. We focus

on understanding the needs of our customers and delivering solutions that will provide value to those customers. We do that through a world-class dealer network.

"We focus on ensuring that our dealers have the capability to meet our customers' needs. Obviously, one of our critical success factors is making sure that we have extraordinary talent in our organisation to enable and support our dealer network. It's about having the right people and talent in our organisation."

To ensure that John Deere attracts and retains the right skills and talents, Peter states, the company has developed a very well-defined talent management process. "It starts with recruitment where we spend a lot of time recruiting the right people for the organisation. We also spend a lot of time providing them with training and development and opportunities to broaden and develop their skills and knowledge.

"With that, we tend to find that we have very good retention rates >

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with our people and we end up with people that are very committed to John Deere and who want to provide the support our customers are looking for," Peter says.

"At John Deere, we provide our customers with a solution that best meets their needs. Part of that solution is the piece of equipment, but it's also everything

that goes with it from quality to support, provision of spare parts, and the capability of our dealer network to support them. We're really looking to provide them with the total solution."

This mission is something that Peter has upheld for 15 years during his time at John Deere. He says that over that period the company has continued to evolve. "The company has really transformed from being a North American company with international operations to a global organisation. It has become more global in its focus. The business outside of North America is growing, and products are now being sourced from locations around the world. Instead of sourcing all of our products for the Australian and New Zealand markets from North America, we now source products from other regions around the world as well.

"That change to a more global organisation has also impacted the

organisational structure. We now operate as part of a global organisation with a focus on local execution. That has great implications for how we operate. We do things once somewhere in the world to meet the needs of all markets around the world. Rather than duplicating work in each region, we try to focus on doing it once and then applying that across the globe," Peter says.

"With the world's population growing and with finite resources, we have to improve the productivity of our farmers to feed the world. As a result, there's a very strong focus on delivering new equipment and products that are completely integrated with advanced technologies to help farmers grow more food and fibre from every hectare. We continue to focus on how to better utilise these technologies to improve farm productivity."

Working with farmers and suppliers to explore and develop

these technologies is a core mission both for John Deere globally and for Peter and his team. "Our Australian and New Zealand farmers are seen around the world as among the leaders in innovation and adoption of technology. Given the climatic and natural conditions that we have to deal with, it's interesting to see how farmers are innovating and improving productivity. This market is important from John Deere's perspective in that it provides some of the leading indicators as to where productivity improvements, in particular the application of technologies in farming, will lead to in the future."

While John Deere sources most of its products from its own factories around the world, the company still relies on a number of suppliers to meet its local needs whether it be parts, accessories, or services such as transport and logistics. Peter says that just as the quality and fit of John Deere products are important, these well-established supplier relationships are essential to the continuing strength and success of John Deere.

"We have strong relationships with our suppliers. Again, a lot like our approach to our people, we spend a lot of time in selecting our suppliers and then building strong relationships to enable both of our businesses to succeed," Peter says.

"For example, Milne Dunkley has been our customs broker for a long time. We've worked together to support each other over the years and built a very strong relationship with open and honest communication. We're quite prepared to raise opportunities for improvement with them, and likewise them with us. It's a very well-established, mature relationship.

"We have a worldwide award within our company called 'Achieving

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Excellence' in which we recognise John Deere suppliers around the world who satisfy certain performance criteria. Milne Dunkley has won that award for five years in succession, which entitles them to Partner status, which is effectively our hall of fame for suppliers. They are also the only customs broker that has achieved this award under the program. It's been a long-term relationship that's been nurtured over the years and has been very successful for both of us," Peter says.

John Deere is also determined to be a supplier of choice to industries around the world. With a wide portfolio of businesses that include agricultural, construction, forestry, power, and turf equipment, plus financial services and parts services, John Deere is supplying worldwide customers with vital equipment and services. As the equipment partner of choice throughout the world, John Deere

is set to continue to develop these core areas of strength while diversifying and developing its other businesses.

According to Peter, this is true of the global giant's Australian and New Zealand operations as well. "Long term, from a global and a local perspective, John Deere is set to grow. As I mentioned before, with the increase in population and the need to feed the world, agriculture is only going to grow and become more important as an industry around the world. That bodes well for John Deere globally and also in Australia and New Zealand."

As Peter and his team look to the horizon for technologies and products that will shape the future of farming, John Deere will continue to focus on satisfying its customers' needs and providing vital solutions for those who are linked to the land. •

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We commenced business in 1987 and over the following 27 years have demonstrated our skill and dedication in achieving significant savings and efficiencies on behalf of our clients in the areas of customs and international trade.

Our business is at the forefront of customs processing, with our main focus being compliance and on-time delivery.

A number of our clients are leaders in the agricultural, automotive, electrical, consumer electronics, food, paper, steel, chemical, and plastics industry sectors.

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*"For the past 16 years Milne Dunkley has provided customs clearance and it is refreshing to have a client completely focused on compliance, enabling us to deliver a level of service commensurate with their standing in the agricultural sector." - Peter Tambakis, Managing Director, Milne Dunkley Customs & Forwarding*