

● Mechanical engineer shows off skills working on agricultural equipment

Gqeberha technician stars in world's first reality tractor show

Simtembile Mgidi
mgidi@theherald.co.za

While many people consider themselves to be a jack of several trades, Francois Beer is master of a special one.

The Gqeberha mechanic recently had the opportunity to show off his skillset as one of the finalists in season two of the *Massey Ferguson Master Mechanic* reality show which aired on November 18.

Released on Facebook and YouTube, the show provides a glimpse into the technicians' world of fixing tractors as they travel to various destinations to ply their trade.

Beer, who grew up helping his father on their farm near Patensie, learning the basics while he was still in primary school, said he felt confident entering the competition having amassed at least 15 years of experience and knowledge in the trade.

The 36-year-old is a qualified mechanical engineer having graduated from the then University of Port Elizabeth.

Beer is also a second-genera-

tion agri equipment specialist who works for the family business, Beer Trekkers, and was the only representative from the Eastern Cape in the show.

Beer applied to participate in season two of the show in July and said he was over the moon when he was selected.

"When we applied, you were required to send a video of yourself fixing a truck," he said.

"I used an electronic diagnostic tool showing how to plug it in and opted to attach it to the exhaust pipe of an old tractor. Anyone who knows tractors knows that it was not built to work with any electronic devices.

"I chose it to make a joke, but to also show that I could make it work on any tractor.

"I was told a few weeks after that I was chosen.

"I was so excited, I even had a happy dance, especially since I had missed the first season due to Covid-19."

Season two was filmed in September and he said he enjoyed the experience, particularly working with some of the

latest equipment available in the agriculture industry.

"We were divided into pairs, which meant there were three teams.

"And they [audiences] will be surprised at what farmers are using these days to produce food that makes agriculture more efficient.

"There is more technology these days in tractors than a Lamborghini dealership."

Beer said the various aspects and challenges of the show, particularly the time-based competitions, helped him to also appreciate how farmers had window periods within their food production cycle which required them to have working equipment to meet their deadlines.

Allis-Gleaner Corporation marketing manager and one of the judges, Ryan Clark, said Beer was one of the mechanics who performed exceptionally well.

"Beer not only had so much passion, love for the brand, but he is second generation.

"His father has been running Trekkers for some time



DOWN ON THE FARM: Francois Beer, from Beer Trekkers, made the Eastern Cape proud in season two of the *Massey Ferguson Master Mechanic* reality show

and on a technical view he is a very bright spark.

"We had selected him in season one, but because of Covid-19 he could not come.

"This is the world's first real-

ity tractor show which brings a spotlight to the functions that play a role in the agriculture sector.

"Season one was a huge success, our biggest viewership

is in Dublin. Season two is bigger, there are more episodes, bigger tractors and the challenges are more technical with technology as well." Clark said.