

Dairy farming with **HEART AND HORSEPOWER** in the Central Drakensberg

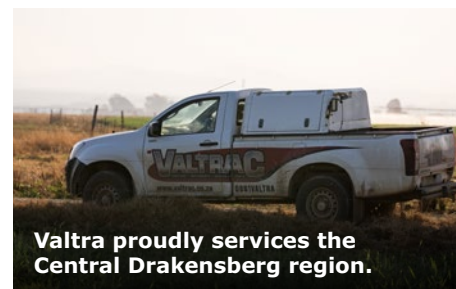


by Natasha Pretorius

Nestled in the foothills of KwaZulu-Natal's Central Drakensberg in the small town of Winterton, you will find Welgekozen farm, where Shane Driemeyer of Gershan Dairy represents the resilient new generation of farmers on this land. After joining his father in 2016 and taking over the reins in 2021, Shane's journey has been defined by deep respect for the land and an unwavering determination to overcome tough challenges.

Like many others, Gershan Dairy has faced its share of hurdles, from managing contagious abortion (CA) in the herd to navigating the recent foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) outbreak.

"It's been trial and error, and [we are] trying to figure out how to manoeuvre all of these different things that we are not used to facing on a daily basis," Shane says.



Valtra proudly services the Central Drakensberg region.



On Welgekozen farm, the two new Valtra tractors are used for various farming jobs.

It is, however, Winterton's natural blessings, such as an annual rainfall of 700 to 800 mm, abundant heat units for silage maize, and rich pasture conditions, that keep the farm moving forward with purpose.

At the core of Shane's philosophy is a commitment to working with nature rather than against it. Welgekozen farm embraces regenerative farming practices to reduce reliance on chemical inputs.

"We are trying to lower our fertiliser costs by using the local cow manure and chicken litter as fertilisers," Shane explains. "We collect our own cow manure right out of the dairy to spread onto the pastures and drylands, incorporating different crops based on soil needs. We figured that we are trying to work with nature instead of trying to work against it."

During the height of the FMD crisis, Shane realised his ageing tractor fleet was due for an upgrade.

"We had been running old tractors and basically just trying to get them through, but the time had come that we needed to actually look for something that was more reliable moving forward," he recalls.

That decision brought him into contact with Gerhard Fourie, Mechanisation Marketer for ValtraC, who brings 36 years of industry knowledge to the table. Rather than simply pushing big equipment, Gerhard paid close attention to Shane's daily operational demands on the farm.



Shane Driemeyer, owner of Gershan Dairy.



While coming up with a solution, Gerhard realised that **Shane did not necessarily need a higher-horsepower tractor, but a more versatile one that could perform a variety of jobs on the farm.** Before making a purchase, Gerhard wanted to show Shane what the Valtras could do.

He took a demo unit to the farm and hooked Shane's existing heavy implements onto the Valtra A115, and it handled the workload seamlessly, proving that a smaller -sized ValtraC can do the job.



In the dairy industry, farmers need reliable tractors that can keep up with demand.



Gerhard Fourie, Mechanisation Marketer for ValtraC.

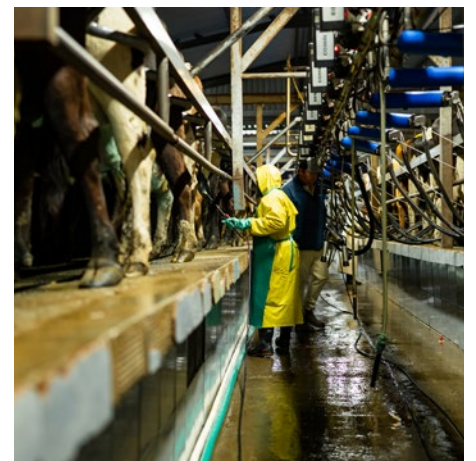
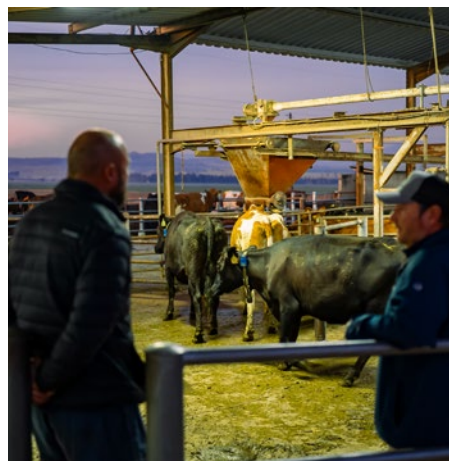
Shane ultimately invested in two new machines, namely a Valtra A105 and the A115 model.

The A105 and the A115 forms part of the Valtra A5-series, which is a compact giant. Though it is small it is big in power and performance. It is available with the easy-to-use HiTech4 transmission to make your operation smoother and reduce fatigue during long hours. This series also features upgraded cab features, improved functionality and advanced electronics like ISOBUS and Valtra Guide compatibility.

Both tractors have better visibility with larger mirrors, LED work lights and a rear window dust strip. They have a 98-litre hydraulic pump and come with dealer fitted front end loaders or a front lift.

The A105 is a 105hp (78kW) tractor featuring AutoTraction and Power Shuttle and is designed for intensive daily yard and loader work. While the A115 is a 115hp (86kW) tractor with an ergonomic low-noise cabin and compatible with the Valtra Guide autoguidance, ISOBUS functionality, SmartTouch Extend and Valtra Connect telemetry.

Although these tractors have not been on the farm for very long, they have already clocked fewer than 180 hours each.



Gershan Dairy proudly owns two new Valtra tractors.

Both the new A5-series tractors on Shane's farm comes with a front loader subframe which allows Shane to not only use these tractors for his farming implements but make them a versatile allrounder on the farm. With this combination the tractor can be used for feeding livestock, bale handling, general yard maintenance and more. This provides a cost-effective alternative to buying a separate machine to do these jobs.

"Doing the jobs they have been bought to do, they have really exceeded my expectations," says Shane. "We have definitely got the productivity up, and we have far fewer breakdowns." For both Shane and Gerhard, this partnership extends far beyond iron and engine oil, as it is built on old-fashioned trust, honest advice and local community support.



"Reliability on a tractor is the service you receive from your dealer," Gerhard emphasises. "That is the most important thing. It is not about selling a tractor. The first thing is the service you can give the farmer, how fast you can deliver that service and having a solution if there is a problem."

Shane agrees wholeheartedly, praising the ValtraC team for keeping their word every step of the way: "Working with ValtraC has been an absolute pleasure. They have always been just a phone call away ... I've got the numbers of everyone from the mechanic right up to the MD. They don't keep you hanging. I would definitely recommend buying a Valtra."



If you are interested in seeing these amazing machines first-hand or purchasing one for your own farm, visit www.valtra.africa

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