

Agrico is the irrigation leader of the 21st century

by Tisha Steyn and Grethe Bestbier

AGRICO



Johan Visser, drip and micro irrigation expert at Agrico.

What is the secret to more than 120 years of service?

According to Johan Visser, drip and micro irrigation expert at Agrico, constant innovation and progress are fundamental to success. When serving a technologically developed irrigation market, one should not only be able to keep up, but you must always be one step ahead. That is how Agrico remains relevant. This is how Agrico grows.

From pivots to drip and micro irrigation, and everything in between

Johan joined Agrico at the beginning of 2022. With 38 years' experience in the irrigation industry, his mandate is to expand drip and micro-irrigation expertise within Agrico, a name largely associated with pivots.

He says: "South Africa was one of the first countries to watch Israel tackle precision irrigation in the late sixties. South Africa is also a water-poor country, so we also had to learn drip and micro-irrigation techniques."

To compare micro and drip irrigation to pivot irrigation is to compare apples with onions. According to Johan, the two methods are not in competition with each other at all. Each method has a specific application.

"The choice of system is based on the farmer's needs," he explains. "With good planning and management of the systems, both are water-efficient methods of irrigation."

Establishing the application of drip and micro irrigation within Agrico requires a plan of action. This includes further training of Agrico's designers and experts, as well as expanding the Agrico footprint across the country. In this way, every farmer can be assured that there is an Agrico expert nearby to provide the necessary support.

One step ahead of the rest: how to stay at the forefront of technological development

The South African irrigation market's development over the decades is striking. The 21st century has shown the face of modern solutions and software such as Agrico Web Control, which

allows a farmer to control his entire irrigation system from his or her mobile phone. We live in a technological age, and that means swim-or-sink for irrigation suppliers.

"Many farmers, especially the younger ones, prefer a high-tech system. Agriculture is very dynamic, and the wheel of preferred products is constantly spinning. That is why Agrico is working hard to remain at the forefront of technology," says Johan.

"South African farmers are among the best in the world. They produce under harsh conditions. Commercial farmers receive minimal or no support from the state, input costs are high, the roads are in appalling condition, and water is limited."

Fortunately, the expression, a farmer makes a plan, is still as appropriate today as before. Farmers learned to face the challenges by farming more effectively, economically, and scientifically.

Irrigation is no longer simply watering your crops; it is a transfer system that transports water, fertilisers and chemical or biological components to the crops.

The management of water is a prerequisite for success. An irrigation supplier should know how to determine the farmer's and farm's needs. Our farmers are well informed, and it is the duty of the irrigation industry to ensure that we provide them with an economically workable system," says Johan.

The Agrico footprint grows non-stop

"Agrico is a world leader in irrigation. We aim to be the best irrigation company in the Southern Hemisphere," says Johan.

Therefore, growth and expansion are of utmost importance. It is critical to move, literally and figuratively, as close as possible to the farmer. By being present in a farmer's area and demonstrating absolute expertise on all irrigation methods, the farmer can be assured that he or she is getting the optimal solution.

"Agrico wants stay in touch with the farmer all the time. Our role is to be the bridge between farmers and the importers and manufacturers of irriga-

tion equipment."

Therefore, a salesperson should first of all determine who the customers are.

Thereafter, a solution should be proposed that the farmer is comfortable with, so that he can get the most out of it.

This is how Agrico offers efficient, economically feasible and sustainable irrigation solutions.

"Agriculture requires the farmer to be in charge of all aspects of his farm in his own way, with our help."

While Agrico sells products of reputable brand names such as Netafim, Agriplas and Azud, they also manufacture at least half of the equipment they offer in-house. The factories in Bellville and Lichtenburg currently support 39 branches across South Africa and Zambia.

More than 70 marketers serve farmers in Zimbabwe, Namibia, Botswana, Mozambique and Angola, as well as Nigeria and Ghana. A team of about 40 young engineers develops products and provides technical support.

"We employ young men and give them opportunities. With our existing experience and their innovative, passionate energy, we tackle agricultural challenges head on."



For more information on how Agrico can assist you with the latest and greatest irrigation technology, contact sales@agrico.co.za or call +27-83-455 5423. You can also visit Agrico's website at www.agrico.co.za.