

Radium workhorse as good as new

After 10 years service

Pieter van der Westhuizen farms in the Parys region of the Free State, in the heart of South Africa. Lying between the Vaal River in the north and the Orange River in the south, the province consists of flat, rolling grassland and crop fields, rising to lovely sandstone mountains in the northeast.

The province is the granary of South Africa, with agriculture central to its economy. Cultivated land covers 32 000 square kilometres, and natural veld and grazing another 87 000 square kilometres.

Van der Westhuizen bought a Prospread Spreader from Radium in 2001 and estimates he has used it to spread about 15 000 tons of various kinds of fertiliser and other materials over the years. As his crop activities increased, so did the machine's workload. Over the past four years, the spreader has covered about 600 ha per annum, spreading about 2 400 tons of material per annum.

Running maintenance on the spreader included replacing the rear spinners, putting in a new chain and new sprockets on the rear driveshaft. Van der West-

huizen estimates that these repairs did not cost more than R20 000 over the last ten years. The robust mild steel construction of the bin showed very few knocks after ten years of hard work in the harsh African soil.

Radium's modern, state of the art Prospread currently costs R231 000. Instead of pensioning his trusted old workhorse, Van der Westhuizen brought his spreader to Radium for a complete overhaul. As his farming activities became more sophisticated, the spreader also needed to be adapted. Among other things, he requested Radium to convert the spreader's outdated ground-related drive to an hydraulic drive in order to be compatible for variable rate application.

The total cost of overhaul and conversion came to under R60 000, transforming a tried and tested workhorse into a spanking new thoroughbred for much less than the price of a brand-new Prospread. An investment in a Radium machine is always a good move for a forward-thinking farmer.

