

## ADVERTISEMENT

— John Deere . . . Delivering On The Commitment To Leadership —

## Commitment To Leadership Drives Deere In An Age Of Change

MOLINE, Ill. — The concept of leadership in business and industry goes well beyond simple measures such as unit sales and market share. It extends to less tangible, but even more important ideals such as commitment and partnership.

An ongoing commitment to agriculture and enduring partnerships with customers and dealers go a long way in defining John Deere's leadership in the marketplace. The responsibilities that come with this status are something the company takes quite seriously, said Doug DeVries, senior vice president, agricultural marketing for John Deere's North American, Australian, and Asian Division. In the following interview, DeVries shares thoughts on what it means to be a leader in the farm equipment industry and in agriculture as a whole.

Following the interview is a series of articles providing additional perspective on how John Deere asserts its leadership in key areas ranging from product engineering, design and development to customer service and support.

**Q.** What are some of the key qualities and attributes of an industry leader?

**A.** Being an industry leader means being committed to that business for an extended period of time. At John Deere, we're well into our second century of commitment to the agricultural marketplace. Agriculture always has been the foundation of our business, and it will continue to be the foundation for well into the future.

**Q.** As the leader of the farm equipment industry, what do you believe are the expectations customers have for John Deere?

**A.** Customers expect us to be there for them over the long haul. They expect us to know and understand their business and anticipate their changing needs and requirements. They also expect us to transfer our knowledge into new innovations and products that help them run their operations more efficiently, more productively and more profitably.

These expectations have been created by the generations' worth of commitment we've shown our cus-



**Long-term commitment to the market is a critical aspect of industry leadership, said Doug DeVries, senior vice president of agricultural marketing for John Deere's North American, Australian, and Asian Division.**

tomers. This commitment started 165 years ago when John Deere introduced the self-scouring plow and carries through today with the productive technology of our new 8020 and 9020 Series tractors. It's our ability to live up to this commitment and consistently meet and exceed customers' expectations that has kept us at the forefront of the farm equipment industry.

**Q.** From your perspective, how do you feel John Deere is asserting its leadership in some of these critical areas?

**A.**

- Product development, design and engineering — Making sure we know and understand our customers' business and their needs is absolutely critical. That's why we place such a heavy emphasis on engaging customers — both John Deere and competitive owners — in every step of the process involved in developing new products and services. Another critical factor is continuously striving to integrate new technology into our products. As a company, we invest nearly \$1.5 million a day in research and development to identify, adapt and apply new technology that will deliver real, tangible benefits to our customers. The return on this investment is evident in productivity-enhancing features

such as the new GreenStar<sup>®</sup> AutoTrac Assisted Steering System, which is available on our track tractors.

- Manufacturing and quality assurance — Quality goes to the very core of who we are as a company. It's engrained in our culture and it's one of our critical competitive strengths. Quality is a major area of emphasis and will remain an ongoing requirement in everything we do. Our focus on continuous improvement in our manufacturing processes is also critical. The goal here is to make sure we provide our customers with the right machine at the right time for their operation.

- Customer service and support — Service and support is just as critical as products in the overall value proposition we provide our customers. Making sure their ownership experience is second to none is vital to our business. That's why we work in close partnership with our dealers to make this experience the very best it can be. Our parts distribution system, which ensures dealers receive out-of-stock parts within 24 hours, is the industry standard. Still, we realize we can't rest on our laurels, and that's why we're constantly looking for ways to make it even better.

- Dealership support — Our John Deere dealers play an absolutely essential role in meeting the expectations and requirements of our customers. The strength of our dealers' relationships and their exceptional support provide a critical link between our customers and the company. There's no way we could go it alone, nor would we even consider it. That's why continuing to build the strength of our dealers is one of three key priorities of the North American Marketing Group in the years ahead.

- Advocacy on behalf of agriculture — We believe it is critical to support the industry that has helped make us what we are as a company. That's why we feel it is so important to back legislation, research or initiatives that return something to agriculture — whether it's new industrial uses for ag commodities, soy and ethanol-based diesel, free trade, or a strong farm bill, just to name a few examples.

**Q.** In the current era of mergers, consolidation and contraction, John Deere is seemingly the one and only farm equipment manufactur-

er that hasn't been affected. Why?

**A.** First, it's really not true to say we're unaffected. We're impacted every single day by the changing landscape of the marketplace. But having said that, one reason we haven't been involved in much of this contraction over time is because we continue to provide the broadest line of equipment of any single manufacturer in the business. This is a critical advantage that allows us to do product matches and technology integrations that deliver greater performance and more value to our customers.

**Q.** Agriculture is going through another challenging period, yet John Deere recently conducted the single largest new product introduction in the company's 165-year history. What signal does this send the rest of the industry and, more importantly, to customers?

**A.** When your company has been an integral part of agriculture as long as ours has been, you know there are going to be challenging economic times. As a leader you can't let that fact diminish your commitment to bringing customers new products and new innovations that help

them do their jobs more efficiently, productively and profitably.

While last August's new product introduction was our largest ever, it was only one in a series over the past three years. And by the end of 2003, we will have literally delivered a completely new, comprehensive product line to our dealers and customers. The underlying message is "We're committed to our customers and their business, and we're committed for the long haul."

**Q.** There's little doubt that agriculture and the farm equipment industry are being reshaped right before our eyes. How do you see John Deere's role evolving as the company strives to remain in its position of leadership in the years to come?

**A.** I think you'll see us continue to operate by the principles that have served us so well through the years. We're going to do the very best job we can understanding the needs and requirement of our customers and investing in new innovations to help meet these needs. It's really just a continuation of a process that John Deere himself started 165 years ago.



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training provides a real-world perspective on the challenges and risk that growers have to manage on a day-to-day basis," Foster said. "We're pretty proud of this program and the contribution it makes to the company. We believe this training helps create a greater appreciation of the

level of investment producers have in their farm operations. And that helps foster even more empathy among the folks who work in customer and product support.

"The end result," Foster said, "is the company continues to deliver the superior product, service, and support our customers have come to expect from John Deere."