



Weekly Times
Wednesday 2/4/2008
Page: 57
Section: General News
Region: VIC Circulation: 73,000
Type: Rural
Size: 394.63 sq.cms.
Published: --W----

Brief: AUTOIT

John Deere deal opens \$1.5b door

AN AUSTRALIAN business has secured a \$6.5 million deal to supply agricultural machinery giant John Deere with retail dealer management software systems.

Melbourne software developer Auto-IT Pty Ltd has sold its EQUIP software to John Deere Information Systems which will use the systems throughout its dealer network in the US and Canada.

The deal means John Deere owns the source code for the software in the US in its own right but only for the agricultural and construction industry.

Auto-IT retains the right to sell its software systems into non-agricultural, forestry and construction dealerships in the US as well as to all markets internationally.

John Deere selected Auto-IT from 20 software manufacturers in six countries.

The deal positions Auto-IT as the number two player in Australia and New Zealand for supplying systems into the retail automotive dealer market and the number one supplier of agricultural and construction dealer systems.

Under the deal, Auto-IT will supply systems to 70 per cent of the John Deere market in Australia and NZ.

In welcoming the deal, Auto-IT's chief executive officer Ken Fife says the development is a significant step towards growing its international business.

"Although consisting of only 70 people, we are a strong and profitable business and are making our presence felt on the world stage. John Deere is already supporting our efforts to sell to its dealers in other international locations," Ken said.

"This deal gives us an opportunity to not only further strengthen our position in Australia, but to gain an even greater foothold in international markets potentially worth in excess of \$1.5 billion.

"Currently, the business has a presence in Australia, Brunei, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, Fiji and South Africa but we are planning for even more rapid growth — at least two new countries each year," Ken said.

Auto-IT's product range consists of two key products called

UNITS and EQUIP, which are Windows-based "new generation" software, specifically tailored for the automotive, trucking, agricultural and construction equipment industries.

John Deere customers will receive two upgrades a year via seamless data transfer. Product development and enhancements will be a joint effort between Auto-IT and John Deere Information Systems, effectively ensuring that the Australian John Deere market is given streamlined access to subsequent software versions.

John Deere Australia's dealer development coordinator, Jamie Chua-Taylor also predicts a bright outlook.

"This is definitely a win-win situation for both companies and their respective clients," Jamie said.

"Australian John Deere dealers can now enjoy the benefits that come from a partnership that delivers a technologically superior product, which is not only tailored to suit their needs but also seamlessly integrated into their business."



Well connected: Auto-IT's Ken Fife, with John Deere dealer David Collier, who runs one of four dealerships in Australia to implement the new software system.