

THE MAGAZINE FOR LEADING BUSINESS EXECUTIVES

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SPRING 2013

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# Rack Petroleum Ltd.

## Eliminating the Guesswork in Farming

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Rack Petroleum Ltd. (Rack) offers a one-stop shop for all of a farmer's needs; Rack has the bases covered, including control, plant nutrition, fertilizer and fuel. The Saskatchewan-based independent retailer not only provides a wide range of products and services, but also assists farmers through consultation, ensuring each farm is as profitable as possible.

Dennis Bulani, CEO of Rack, founded Bulani Agro Inc. in

1984, though the company was later rebranded as its current designation in 2001. Since the company was founded, Rack has excelled at an impressive rate.

"We've grown tenfold in the past eight years," details Bulani. The company, which has boomed from a \$10 million to \$100 million enterprise, operates out of eight retail locations and two wholesale stores in order to successfully serve western Canada.



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Bulani attributes Rack's success to his 60 dedicated employees, who are treated respectfully and as independents, not as round pegs in square holes. "We have a dedicated, passionate staff here," shares Bulani. "My labor force isn't an expense, but rather an investment. I believe in matching the job to an individual's personality. People like what they do here."

As a small independently owned retailer, Bulani oversees the entire operation with hands-on ownership and a firm belief that value is what any customer seeks. "We can make quick decisions, unlike larger national corporations," explains Bulani. "As far as our competitors go, we don't concentrate on price. We focus on offering customers a quality service with the things that matter. People are willing to pay a little more when they know the overall value is better."

**One-stop Shop and Support**

"Anything a farmer needs, we sell it," emphasizes Bulani. "Whether it is herbicides, weed control, fuel, equipment or anything in between." Rack doesn't stop at the retail end of the business; the company also provides guidance to farmers who need assistance with products. "We take the guesswork out of the operation," adds Bulani.

The company has one 30,000-ton dry fertilizer storage and blending plant at its home in Biggar with 12 agronomists on staff. The team at Rack stocks herbicides, pesticides and fungicides, offering custom applications of these products; however, Rack also stocks seed treatment equipment and various seed brands. To give farmers peace of mind, Rack offers crop nutrition, management and protection programs, including fertility and economic analysis, soil mapping and precision agriculture.

**New Products**

Higher yields mean everything in the farming industry; Bulani helps farmers navigate the challenging decisions involving supplies and equipment needed to make the most profitable crop. One of the company's newest enterprises, the Ultimate Yield Management Institute, a customer, research and agronomist learning centre, helps make this process easier.

Ultimate Yield Management Institute uses an agronomic program developed and patented by Bulani, which takes an in-depth look at six factors that affect crop production. By addressing each factor individually, crop production and yield can be increased. Additionally,

by addressing all six factors together, a farm's ultimate yield can be achieved. According to Bulani, the process behind the Ultimate Yield Management Institute makes it unique and has set the agronomy program apart from the competition.

The company is excited about a new patent on the Racketeer, a bulk herbicide system. Racketeer is a new, safer way to efficiently handle glyphosate on farms. The product is delivered direct to the farmer's door and stored in an 8,000-litre, environmentally safe storage tank and metered flow system, adding convenience by alleviating freight and handling.

"I'm a big believer in using technology to make us better and faster, and to make our customer's lives easier," shares Bulani. "In 2010 the Racketeer won invention of the year in western Canada." Rack also invests in diesel fuel hedging, locking in prices and costs for its valued farmers. "We do just about anything to make being in the farming business better," adds Bulani.

The year 2013 marks 29 years of prosperous business for

## Growing through relationships

Dennis Bulani from Rack Petroleum stated he would be amiss not to mention that their successes have come largely not only from great customers and customer service, but also as a result of their relationships with their suppliers.

One such relationship is the one they have with Univar. Univar has been integral in assisting Rack by supplying crop protection products, inoculants and seed for over 29 years. Their commitment as a wholesale supplier has offered Rack many advantages.

Univar has offered such things from extended term financing to help match farm cash flows, to inventory protection and 24 hour delivery services.

Dennis states "Our specialty is serving the customer and while we focus on that, Univar focuses on making sure we don't get caught on the wrong side of inventories. The right product at the right place at the right time means we have developed an efficient low-cost, low-risk system that allows us to offer superior customer service!"



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Rack. The independent retailer has experienced great success through providing solutions for those in a challenging industry, and Bulani sees no signs of activity slowing down. With this in mind, Bulani is making strategic investments to reinforce and further diversify Rack's multifaceted capabilities.

"In the last year we've added new trucks and equipment to our fuel fleet, expanded our fertilizer blending plants in two locations, and added a research division," details Bulani. "We intend to grow in all areas of our business." Recently, the company was rated one of the Top 100 companies in Saskatchewan.

Agri-retailers need every business advantage they can get including technological tools that save time and money. Tronia Systems Ltd. has been providing those tools to successful companies such as Rack Petroleum Ltd. and other agri-retailers for over 25 years. Tronia's reputation is built on being good listeners. Our customers' input into the development of our solutions is key. Tronia Systems currently has over 300 ag-retail locations using our **agrē**, iBlend & Agronomy Solutions. We are the top provider of software for independent agri-retailers in Canada. Our **agrē** package is a full financial management solution specifically designed for the needs of agri-retailers including features that handle prepayments, blending, multi-location inventory, transportation documents, and much more. Partnerships with customers such as Rack enable us to create a unique, progressive management system that is flexible and customized. This is what sets us apart and facilitates increased productivity and profits for each of our customers.



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Bulani strives to have Rack be the most knowledgeable, reliable source of information and supplies, which only adds value to each of the company's services. Rack Petroleum

Ltd. continues to partner with farmers, enabling growth and future success. •



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