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“The Big Red Round-up” -

a hands-on training experience

By **JEFF MORELAND**

PHOENIX, AZ. — Nobody should know more about a product than the dealer. That’s what Case IH believes, and it practices what it preaches with training courses for dealers, salespeople and the media on its products with intensive, hands-on training.

The “Big Red Round-up,” as it has come to be known, started under the name “new product service training.” As part of the round-up, Case IH holds sessions each year as farmers are preparing to make purchasing decisions for the coming year to introduce new products, as well as discuss changes and updates in existing products. This helps the dealers be more aware of what customers want and need from the beginning of the purchase and throughout the life of the equipment. The training sessions are held at the company’s Litchfield Proving Grounds in a desert just outside Phoenix, AZ., and the facility has been in use for over 48 years for equipment from different lines of the Case IH family.

“We wanted to train our dealers like they had never been trained before,” said Tim Hansen, marketing operations manager for Case IH, who is responsible for organizing the event each year. *“We sat down with our customers and found out what they wanted from their salesmen. We sat down with our dealer principals and found out what they wanted their salesmen to know, then we asked our training people, how can we do this? That’s how it all got started. From there, we put a program together designed in five sessions, based on the market dealers are selling in. Each group is a little different, concentrating on the product of their market.”*

Part of that training includes Frank Lee and his International Ag University. Lee said he got into agriculture strictly by accident, but decided quickly that he liked the industry. From there, he decided to not only stay in agriculture, but to try to improve the industry.

“I was asked to help Case with a problem. I met a lot of really good people. People in agriculture are the salt of the earth, and I wanted to help them,” Lee told a group of dealers during a session about improving service and sales. *“Now I’m here to help you learn about products and give you some things to take back with you when you go to your dealerships.”*

Lee said today's consumers are more savvy than ever, and dealers must know their products.

"It's your job to keep up with your products," he said. "An expert is not somebody who knows everything, but somebody who knows where to find it out."

As part of the International Ag University, Lee currently educates dealers and sales people with Case IH about servicing the industry, advising farmers about what they may need and becoming an agriculture consultant. Case IH was so impressed with the program it decided to join Lee and send its salespeople to the university.

"We looked at the program, and we liked its structure, so we decided to co-op it for our sales people," Hansen said. "It's an investment for salespeople who may want to become Ag Equipment Consultants."

Students go to classes, and even have homework that must be completed. Lee said this is no easy diploma, and all students who enroll do not graduate just because they enroll. Hansen said, in addition to classroom work throughout the program, the Big Red Round-up is also part of the curriculum for the university.

The first group of graduates is scheduled to complete the program in 2006, and Hansen said the program will also accept those outside the Case IH family in future classes.

"It will be good for all brands, not just Case IH," Hansen said. "It will be good for all of agriculture."

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