

## Central Ohio Case IH Dealers Announce Merger

Principals of three leading Central Ohio Case IH dealerships announced today their plans to merge their dealerships into a new company. The corporation will be called Evolution Ag LLC and will bring together the assets and marketing areas of Agri-Trac Equipment of Utica, Hill Implement Company of Circleville and J R Equipment, Inc. of Upper Sandusky and Delaware.

Jim Henkel, Chairman of Evolution Ag said, "Farmers have continued to grow their operations and are demanding more and better services from their suppliers. This merger will allow these dealerships to better serve their customers now and in the future."

Tom Hill, President of Evolution Ag said, "Our plan is to maintain the existing presence in each of the four communities that our dealerships currently serve. This merger will also allow us to make critical investments in facilities and people, better meeting the needs of a growing agriculture."

Evolution Ag is expected to employ approximately 70 people. Henkel went on to say, "There has always been strength in numbers and it is clear that this group of dealerships recognizes the advantages for farm equipment dealers to grow."

Dave Shipley, Treasurer of Evolution Ag said, "The most important asset in any dealership is the people. Evolution Ag will be able to provide our existing employees new opportunities for advancing their career in this exciting industry. We think it will also help us become the employer of choice for others who would like to work in the farm equipment business. "

Evolution Ag will primarily represent the Case IH lines of agricultural equipment including; tractors, combines, planters and tillage equipment as well as sprayers for farm operations. Doug Loudenslager, Secretary of the new company said that final decisions have not been made on allied lines to be carried. Individual members currently represent: Great Plains, Unverferth, Kubota, Grasshopper, Toro, eXmark, Landpride, Cub Cadet, Stihl, Kinze, Yanmar, Kuhn Knight, and J&M.

Hill said that the companies represented in the merger bring a consistent record of sales growth and return on investment. Agri-Trac Equipment in Utica was established in 2002 with the purchase of B&B Tractor. Its marketing area is east-central Ohio and stretches to the Pennsylvania border. Hill Implement of Circleville was established in 1924 and has a marketing area primarily in south-central Ohio. J R Equipment of Upper Sandusky was established in 1986 and serves customers in central Ohio. J R Equipment recently completed an acquisition of Buckeye Tractor in Delaware, Ohio. Buckeye was a Case IH dealership with over 30 years of service to farmers in Delaware, Licking, Marion, Union and Morrow counties.