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110 year dedicated to quality

Roesner's of Harvey, the manufacturers of the Marshall Multispread is celebrating 110 years in business.

Despite rapid change during the last century, four generations of the Roesner family have had continued success by staying in front of technological change.

This foresight has taken the company from mending agricultural equipment in a blacksmiths shop in 1900 to the successful farm machinery manufacturer and mining design & engineering company of today.

Roesners managing director, Jeff Roesner, is the grandson of the blacksmith and founder of the business, Arthur Roesner.

He said his grandfather would be impressed with the technology used by his company today and delighted that the company had reached such a milestone.

"A hundred and ten years in business is quite a feat," Mr Roesner said.

"With modern manufacturing methods such as computer controlled steel processing, 3D prototyping and laser cutting, we've come a long way from shaping metal in a forge."

Arthur Roesner began his business 110 years ago building coaches and manufacturing and repairing farm machinery.

In 1927 a new innovation, oxy welding, was being introduced to the State and Arthur Roesner became the first country client of Western Oxygen (now BOC).

Using the new technology, the company began repairs to motor car springs and chassis, a guaranteed source of work due to the rough roads of the time.

After the Depression, Arthur's son, Roy, left school and began working in the family business.

The blacksmith shop had expanded to converting cars to utilities so farmers could get more use out of their vehicles.

The next major change to the business came at the end of World War II.

Roy returned after years of service in the air force with an ambition for the family firm fuelled by knowledge of a new technology he had discovered during the war.

New welding methods made blacksmithing virtually redundant so Roesner's became the International Harvester agency selling tractors, ploughs and disc harrows while manufacturing Roesner's own land graders and truck bodies.

In 1956, the company took the first step in becoming the manufacturers of Marshall spreaders, local fertilizer company CSML (now CSBP) wanted to promote the sale of bulk product as an alternative to bagged superphosphate.

Bulk fertilizer sales took off and demand for the Marshall spreader was strong throughout Australia, quickly making spreader manufacturing Roesner's main business.

By the mid-70's the company had specialized in spreader production and in the 20 years between the early 60s and 80s, more than 3000 "super" spreaders were made by the company.

Roesner's developed the trademark Marshall Multispread in 1981 in response to farmers' demands for a machine that could spread lime, gypsum and manure as well as superphosphate.

The Marshall Multispread remains an all-purpose machine with the versatility to work in a wide range of applications, from small mixed farms to broad acre grain properties, vineyards and market gardens, with 16 different models and custom built units for unique requirements.

Roy's son, Jeff, took over the family business in 1985 and it is now located in a purpose built two hectare industrial facility which has greatly increased the production capability. Technical director Matthew, a fourth generation Roesner, manages the design and engineering department.

Since it was first built, there has been constant demand for the Multispread in Western Australia and the Eastern States and more than 8000 units have been made since it was first developed in 1981.

The company which began 110 years ago with a staff of two now employs 25 skilled staff using manufacturing methods undreamt of in 1900.

But Mr Roesner said some things had not changed since his grandfather's day – the business remained family-run and continued to be committed to quality.