

Smörgåsbord



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**Disgruntled Iowa
Farmer "Sounds Off"**

Last spring, when he'd finished his corn-soybean planting, Iowa farmer Louis Rosman, of Harlan, put yellow flags on his 3-year-old Kinze 6-row planter and parked it alongside busy Highway 44 that runs alongside his "Rolling R" farm west of Harlan. He then strung a big sign between the markers, declaring the planter to be a "Downtime Special". To further vent his anger, he placed the following classified ad in Iowa Farming Today:

Kinze 6 x 30 planter. Completely rebuilt, except tires, with little factory or dealer help. "Downtime Special." Don't plan a vacation; with this machine in the family you will still be planting corn. Comes with yellow flags. Check this one out before buying a new one. It may save your neck as well as your wallet. On display along Hwy. 44, West of Harlan. Rolling R. (ph 712 744-3283).

"I'm sounding off to let Kinze Mfg. and the public know that I'm not happy with the way I was treated in getting mechanical problems with the planter corrected. That's what makes my particular planter so unique," says Rosman. "The company tells me it's the only one that has caused any problems. When Kinze copied the Max-Emerge machine, they forgot to copy the reliability.

"We bought the planter new in 1984 and had problems right from the start. The 3½-in. cylinder wouldn't lift the filled fertilizer boxes. Then, the insecticide box drive chains ran off and wrapped up. The mounting plates had been drilled oversized. The dealer helped solve this problem by supplying new mounting plates.

"Another major problem was with the dry fertilizer. It wouldn't feed out and plugged the auger fighting. This happened two or three times per 10 acre fill. We'd have to empty the fertilizer box with a gallon can, disassemble the entire mechanism and then chisel out the rock-hard fertilizer. All this was caused by castings which had not been dressed or polished, causing fertilizer to build up on them."

This past spring, welds on the lift frame broke

loose, causing the planter to suddenly drop to the ground. Although the planter was now out of warranty, Rosman felt "Kinze Mfg. should have been concerned enough about a serious safety problem to help correct it. Minutes before, two of us had been working under the planter. We could have been killed when it dropped down. We spent the next day getting the disabled planter loaded up and hauled to a welding shop."

Roger Sorensen, owner of Sorensen Ford in Harlan, which sold Rosman his Kinze planter, says neither the roadside display nor the ad has had any adverse effect on his business. "Most people around here who know the full story just kind of laugh and chuckle about the display. I've sold other Kinze planters in the community. The product speaks for itself."

Says Jon Kinzenbaw, owner of Kinze Mfg., headquartered at Williamsburg, Iowa: "We're sorry that Mr. Rosman isn't happy with his Kinze planter, and are disappointed that he felt compelled to take us to task publicly. We stood behind our warranty and feel that both the company and our dealer went beyond the call of duty to try to keep Mr. Rosman happy. I'm sure most farmers familiar with Kinze Mfg. and its planters understand and appreciate where the planter market would be today if Kinze Mfg. hadn't stepped in as a major supplier."

Ever since FARM SHOW began 10 years ago, we've invited readers to "tell it like it is" in nominating their "best" and "worst" buys. The single most popular "best buy," by an overwhelming margin, is the Deere Max-Emerge, which Kinze Mfg. copied and sells under the Kinze and New Idea labels. Among more than 100 farmers who have nominated the Max-Emerge (or Kinze), all but about four or five have given it high marks as a "best buy." One disgruntled owner was unhappy because the dealer had improperly set up his newly-purchased Max-Emerge. Another was disappointed with the fertilizer attachment on the Max-Emerge he'd recently purchased. Wisconsin farmer David Frank, of Mondovi, was unhappy with Deere and Co. for "refusing to do anything about the inability of 7000 series Max-Emerge to plant accurately on sidehills."

Now comes Louis Rosman whose quarrel is more with "company relations" than with performance of his Kinze planter itself: "It's basically a good planter now that I've rebuilt and fixed it up. I'd sell it for \$8,000," he told FARM SHOW.

Banking Horror Stories

Bank Story No. 1: The dealer warns this farmer up on the merits of a new forage harvester. The farmer is convinced that it's time to replace, that the benefits are in the machine, and that his own credit situation is A-1. And so off he goes to the bank.

"Sorry," he's told. "I can lend you money to buy a new car. I can lend you money to buy a new boat. But I can't lend you money on a new forage harvester."

Why? Well, that's an agricultural machine and this local bank is already overloaded on loans that have to do with farming. The bank holding company that bought the local outfit a few years ago has told them to reduce their agricultural commitments.

But wait, this guy's a farmer. If he can't farm better with an improved machine, how could he pay for the car or the boat? Never mind, there'll be no loan on the forage harvester.

Bank Story No. 2: Last year, the manufacturer's vice-president of marketing gave this dealer a plaque honoring his 25 years as a dealer representing the line. This dealer had done everything a company could hope for — moved sufficient volume of product, serviced the product well enough to give the company's name a place of respect in that trade territory, and had made money doing it.

And now, he was going out of business! What happened? His bank told him that his line of credit was to be cut by over half, and since he felt he couldn't do business that way, he opted to hang it up.

"I called that bank president," said the marketing V-P. "I told him, you dumb jerk, you've put my dealer out of business." (Dumb jerk isn't exactly the expression he used.) Yes, because the bank didn't want too much agricultural business that might make it look bad to its owners.

Never mind what the bank had done to its town by letting that dealership fold up.

Bank Story No. 3: Farm Credit Services of Wichita is running an ad in various media in Kansas, Oklahoma, Colorado and New Mexico suggesting that now might be a very good time to buy farm equipment!

Here's how the ad reads:

"Is now the time to buy farm equipment? It could be. There's probably more good farm equipment on the market right now than ever in recent memory. Because of the general farm economy, a lot of it is priced right. If you are looking to purchase a new or used tractor, combine or other implement, now could be the right time.

"If you need help financing it, give your Farm Credit office a call. Maybe we can help..."

After I read this, I called Monte Reese, a vice-president for Farm Credit Services, which is a Production Credit Assn. I told him some bank stories, and how encouraging his own organization's efforts were.

"Agriculture is our bread and butter," he commented. "There are certain farmers out there who are excellent credit risks, and we want to do business with them."

Reese is convinced that part of our problem in agriculture is what Orion Samuelson, the farm broadcaster, calls the "coffee shop syndrome," in which farmers and others involved in farming sit around and talk about real difficulties until they are blown out of proportion. "We want to turn that around," Reese said. "Our ads offer a positive message from someone who has money to lend to those who are in a strong enough position to purchase new or used equipment."

(Bill Fogarty in Implement and Tractor, June, 1986 issue.)



First Caterpillar Farm Tractor — Caterpillar Tractor Co. may introduce its first farm tractor by the end of the year, according to company officials who recently unveiled a working prototype. The rubber-tracked machine, which has been the subject of rumors for years, may be introduced as early as December of 1986 — despite the still-faltering farm economy, according to Karl Oberle, Caterpillar spokesman.

The rubber-tracked Cat will be in the 200 to 250 pto hp. range and equipped with a totally new rubber track design which, the company says, reduces soil compaction to less than 1/2 that of similar-sized 4-WD tractors.

One farmer, who claims to have test-driven one of the new tractors, told FARM SHOW that "the ride is" so much smoother than a conventional wheeled tractor you can't believe it." According to the company, the tracked-tractor has all the features needed to compete successfully with conventional 4-WD ag tractors, including increased fuel economy.