



Kurkowski use a 125 hp. Unimog to pull this 28-ft. field finisher across corn stalks.

German-Built Truck-Tractor

Two and a half years ago Nebraska farmer Kelvin Kurkowski bought a used 4-WD "Unimog" from a Colorado city's street maintenance department. He liked it so well that a year later he bought another one and also decided to become a dealer. So far he has sold five Unimogs to area farmers. The Unimog is a true high-speed tractor made in Germany by Mercedes Benz. It has unique high speed truck-like capabilities.

"It's the most versatile tractor in the world and has a great future in North America, especially for diversified farming," says Kurkowski, who has the first new agricultural Unimog ever shipped to the U.S.

The Unimog is equipped with front and rear 3-pt., front and rear 540 and 1,000 rpm pto, front and rear remote hydraulic outlets, a rear drawbar hitch, and a cargo platform that doubles as a 3-way dump bed. It has oscillating axles and Michelin lugged tires (available from 40 to 48 in. high). Power is supplied by a Mercedes Benz 6-liter direct-injected turbocharged diesel engine and a



By mounting a loader he can use the Unimog to push silage into a bunker silo. 24-speed transmission. Models equipped with a standard gear ratio can travel at speeds up to 60 mph.

Sizes range from 100 to 240 hp. Numerous attachments, including cranes, trenchers, blades, side-mount boom mowers, etc., are available.

"Unimogs are built tough enough to pull heavy tillage implements, yet they're compact and maneuverable and have the ride, comfort, and speed of a fine automobile with extreme longevity," says Kurkowski, who owns a 125 hp model U1200 and a 156 hp model U1600. "They're more efficient than tractors or trucks alone and are so versatile that I was able to sell two Case-IH 160 hp tractors. Unimogs cost about 20 percent more than a new conventional tractor with comparable horsepower, but the extra cost is worth it because they can do much more and replace a lot of equipment. They're equipped with a 3-person cab but are still legally classified as an agriculture tractor with the obvious legal benefits.

"I use mine to pull a 40-ft. grain drill, forage harvester, 22-ft. offset disk, 60-ft. spring tooth harrow, and 28-ft. field finisher. I also use the tractors to pull a round baler, hydra-swing swather, and 600 bu. grain cart with a 600 bu. pup trailer behind it. In addition, I pull a 90-ft. sprayer with dual 1,300-gal. tanks, or I can mount a 400 to 700-gal. sprayer equipped with 90-ft. folding booms in order to top dress wheat or spray herbicides. Unimogs also make great loader tractors. I mounted a loader on my smaller model and use it to push silage into a bunker silo. My tractors are equipped with low ratio rear ends for field work. I can go as slow as .04 mph or as fast as 55 mph so I can drive to town at highway speeds.

"Unimogs have been sold throughout the world for more than 50 years and are widely used as farm tractors. The first question many farmers have when they see a Unimog is, 'Is this a true heavy duty tillage tractor?'. After two years of experience I can answer with a definite 'yes'. It has a heavy duty suspension system and oscillating axles with outboard final drives that keep the ground pressure on all four tires equal at all times for maximum traction. It's unbelievable how much tractive effort it has for its weight.

"Because it's so compact, it also makes a great loader tractor. One Colorado farmer



"Ranch Hand" has a 136-in. wheelbase and rides on 48 by 25.5 by 20 high flotation tires. It comes with leaf spring suspension and front and rear stabilizer bars.

Farmer-Designed "Ranch Hand"

Bryce Wiehl, who farms near Smith Center, Kan., designed and built the "Ranch Hand" tractor and exhibited it to the public for the first time at the recent 3-I Show near Garden City, Kansas.

The 136-in. wheelbase rig has a one-seat, full-vision cab with front and rear windshield wipers and is powered by a 165 hp 5.9-liter Cummins turbocharged diesel engine connected to an 8-speed transmission. The truck-tractor can be equipped with front and rear 3-pt. hitch, front and rear 540 and 1,000 rpm pto, front and rear remote hydraulic outlets, front loader mounting brackets, a rear drawbar hitch, and a rear dump 8-ft. sq. flatbed. It comes with leaf spring suspension, front and rear stabilizer bars, and a 17,000-lb. Rockwell rear axle and a 12,000-lb. front axle. It rides on 48 by 25.5 by 20 high flotation tires.

Tucked under the flatbed is a 30-gal. hydraulic oil reservoir, an air compressor with a 12 1/2-gal. tank and 50 ft. of hose, two 16 cu. ft. toolboxes with internal lights, and a 25,000-watt generator. The generator has one 220-volt outlet and two 110-volt outlets, allowing you to operate a grinder, lights, welder, and other tools. The rig's gross vehicle weight rating is 22,000 lbs. The cab has eight work lights - four front and four rear - and a catwalk that leads from the cab to the bed. The cab also has a tilt hood with gas shock absorber.

"We see it as a utility vehicle or as a

medium duty truck that can do many jobs normally performed by a tractor," says Wiehl. "Once we tell farmers what it can do, they're amazed. The vehicle itself weighs 14,000 lbs. and can carry an 8,000-lb. load. You can mount a sprayer, fertilizer equipment, post hole digger, or other equipment on the flatbed. You can use the rig to spray fields in the morning and fix fences in the afternoon. It'll go from 4 mph to 48 mph and comes with a hand throttle with override foot control.

"It also works great with haying equipment. We use it to pull a hydra-swing swather, round baler, and bale processor. This past spring we used it to pull a 30-ft. drill. The model we're putting on the market can pull anything a 140 hp tractor can pull, such as a 22 to 24-ft. field cultivator or 20-ft. disk.

"There's a pressurized 12-gal. water system under the flatbed with a 50-ft. long hose for rinsing out tanks or washing up. There are four hydraulic remotes on back and four on a joystick control in the cab that allow you to do two different operations with one lever, such as raising and tilting a bucket at the same time. The drawbar comes with a cushion-style 16-in. extension."

Sells for \$115,000.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Crystal Plains Mfg., Inc., 1500 North Park Road, Phillipsburg, Kan. 67661 (ph 913 543-2600).

who does custom hay grinding uses his Unimog to pull an engine-driven stationary hay grinder on a trailer to different farms. He uses the Unimog to load 1-ton big square bales into the grinder. He had been using a 3-ton truck to pull the grinder and a bi-directional tractor to load bales into it. After he bought the Unimog he was able to sell the truck and tractor, as well as a 1-ton Dually pickup. He also eliminated the need for a hired man.

"We use the side-tilt cargo platform to carry fuel tanks for other vehicles. If we're on a sidehill and the tank is low on one side, we can raise the platform a few inches in order to get the last 20 gallons or so of fuel out of the tank. It also works great for filling in center pivot tracks in fields too muddy for a conventional loader tractor. We can drive alongside the tracks and tilt the platform to fill the tracks instead of having to cross them and straddle them as we would with a truck.

"The tractor has a high speed pto port on back of the transmission that can be used to gearbox-drive a generator for welding or hydraulic pump for operating a backhoe or

boom crane, etc. It also has a standard manual inflation system with air hoses used to fill tires. An optional central tire inflation system lets you control air pressure on all four tires from the cab on-the-go, which is handy when you switch from field work to over-the-road travel. Hydrostatic drive, powershift transmission, and 4-wheel steering are optional on different models.

"At the present time only European-made loaders fit the Unimog. We're negotiating with American companies to have a loader built specifically for the Unimog. I'm also working with MacDon Co. to adapt its front-mount swathers to the Unimog, and with Mattracks, Inc., to mount its track system on the tractor.

"A new 80 to 90 hp Unimog sells for about \$90,000, a 160 hp model for about \$140,000, and a 215 to 240 hp model for about \$170,000. We can also provide used Unimogs that sell for \$20,000 on up. We're a full service stocking dealer with ready access to the U.S. parts warehouse in Arizona."

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Vol. 21, No. 3, 1997

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FARM SHOW (ISSN #01634518) is published bimonthly (6 times a year) for \$15.95 per year (\$19.95 in Canada and foreign countries) by Farm Show Publishing, Inc., P.O. Box 1029, 20088 Kenwood Trail, Lakeville, Minn. 55044. Second class postage paid at Lakeville, Minn., and Madelia, Minn. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to FARM SHOW, P.O. Box 1029, Lakeville, Minn. 55044 (ph 612 469-5572; fax 612 469-5575). Single copy price is \$4.00 (\$4.50 in Canada). Publication No. 469490 GST No. 131272023.

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May-June, 1997