



New ACO 490 hp tractor will pull a 39-ft. wide disk plow, using just under 2 1/2 gal. of fuel per acre, according to the manufacturer.

HEAVY-BUILT, SIMPLE DESIGN

South African 4-WD Now On U.S. Market

By Jim Houtsma, Associate Editor

In recent issues, FARM SHOW has featured two big new high horsepower U.S.-built tractors - the Cameco 805 (Vol. 19, No. 2) and the Titan (Vol. 18, No. 6).

Now, there's another new entry into North America's big tractor market, the ACO 4-WD built in South Africa by a company started 10 years ago by a farmer named Alph Coetzer. The company started with a 320 hp model but now builds both smaller and larger tractors. Last spring, it received worldwide publicity when it built what's reported to be the world's biggest farm tractor (see sidebar).

Since then, the company has established its first distributorship outside of South Africa in Australia, a dealership in Zimbabwe, and is now coming to North America. The first ACO tractor in this hemisphere will make its debut at Husker Harvest Days, Sept. 12 through 14, at Grand Island, Neb.

"When you buy an ACO you're not buying a tractor for just yourself, you're buying a tractor for your son and your grandson," Daan de Bruin, ACO's marketing manager, told FARM SHOW on a stop in Minnesota. "These tractors were overdesigned so that they're extremely low maintenance and get 25 to 30% better fuel efficiency than tractors with 70 hp smaller engines. It's a straightforward, user-friendly tractor that delivers maximum reliability and performance, as proven in governmental ag engineering tests as well as in everyday use by farmers."

Coetzer built the first 320 hp tractor powered by a Mercedes-Benz V6 engine in 1985 because the Steigers he'd been using couldn't pull big rippers up to 40 in. deep, as required in the arid wheat-corn producing region where he lives. Coetzer's original tractor now has 30,000 virtually trouble-free hours on it, de Bruin notes.

ACO plans to begin exporting the 490 and 610 hp 4-WD's in the next couple of months and will build the giant 821 hp tractor for anyone interested. Two Midwestern equipment dealers have already signed on.

"Neither Deere, nor AGCO, nor Case-IH offer tractors in this power range. And

no one offers them in our price range, which starts at \$175,000," de Bruin says. "We might be able to sell only 10 tractors a year or we might be able to sell 500. We just don't know."

"In South Africa, the 490 hp and 610 hp tractors are leaders among farmers who work more than 800 acres. One of their main tillage tools is a three-row ripper with two shanks per row. The 490 hp tractor will pull a ripper 30 to 40 in. deep at up to 6 mph., using just under 2 1/2 gal. of fuel per acre. It'll also easily pull a 39-ft. wide disk plow, another of South African farmers' main tillage tools. The 610 hp tractor is equally fuel efficient and will easily pull a 52 1/2-ft. wide disk plow."

In South Africa, the 490 hp ACO is powered by a Mercedes-Benz V8 engine; the 610 with a Mercedes V10 engine. For the North American market, however, the tractors will be equipped with Cummins diesel engines of the same power rating.

As in South Africa, the engines will be coupled with Twin Disc power-shift transmissions offering 12 forward and four reverse gears.

The tractors feature heavy-duty Hungarian-built RABA front oscillating and rear fixed axles.

The 610 hp tractor is fitted with 20.8 by 38 in. triples, the 490 hp with 20.8 by 38 in. triples or a combination of 20.8 by 38 in. and 18.4 by 38 in. triples.

Both tractors have 370-gal. fuel tanks and weigh 48,500 lbs. Cabs are fully instrumented, sound-proofed and air conditioned.

Prices are expected to be \$175,000 and \$210,000, respectively, plus shipping.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Daan de Bruin, ACO Marketing Manager, P.O. Box 1109, Bothaville, South Africa 9660 (ph, fax 27 565-2386).



Roller's unique "HC" tractor uses the Oliver's 10-ft. steel tracks, steering brake levers, and rear end. However, it still has the Farmall throttle and clutch pedal.

TRACKS, UNDERCARRIAGE OFF OLIVER HG

Farmall H Fitted With Steel Tracks

You've never seen a Farmall like this 1945 H that's fitted with 10-ft. steel tracks off an early 1940's Oliver HG Cletrac. It was put together by Jerry Roller and his son Jeff of Logansport, Ind.

"It draws a lot of second looks," says Roller. "It steers like a bulldozer and uses the Oliver's steering brake levers and rear end. However, it still has the Farmall throttle and clutch pedal. I've used it to pull a 3-bottom plow and an 8-ft. tandem disk, as well as to pull out small tree stumps. It goes up to 4 mph."

Roller bought the junked-out Oliver for \$250. The engine was no good but the tracks were still in good shape. He already had the Farmall which had a bad rear end. He split the Farmall between the rear end and clutch housing and made an adapter plate for the Farmall bell housing so it would line up with the Oliver transmission. He didn't feel the Cletrac frame rails were

built strong enough so he replaced them with frame rails off an old Avery tractor. He shortened the Farmall's gas tank by about 7 in. to help balance the tractor. He also had an "HC" decal made to replace the Farmall "H".

"I get a lot of different reactions to it when I take it to antique tractor shows," says Roller. "I overheard one man say he could remember when the company came out with it. Another said his dad had one just like it."

Joining the two tractors together was a lot of work, but it wasn't as big a job as I thought it would be. I tried to keep all the Farmall parts that I could. For example, it still has the Farmall driveshaft and drawbar. I spent less than \$1,000 to build it."

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World's Largest Farm Tractor?

"We believe it's the largest tractor in the world. At least we haven't heard of another that's bigger," says the South African tractor company's Daan de Bruin about the new ACO monster 4-WD.

Custom-built for a big South African farmer, the ACO 600 packs a whopping 821 horses under its hood. It's powered by a V12 twin turbocharged Mercedes-Benz marine engine that develops 68 1/2 hp. per piston. That's teamed with a Twin Disc power-shift gearbox offering 12 forward and four reverse gears. It operates at a maximum of 2100 rpm's. Features heavy-duty Hungarian-built RABA axles and 20.8 by 38 in. triples. Cab is fully

instrumented, sound-proofed and air conditioned. Weighs 55,115 lbs.

Despite its size, the 600 is amazingly fuel-efficient, de Bruin says.

For example, the tractor pulls a three-row ripper with two shanks per row at a depth of 30 in. using only 1.1 gal. of fuel per acre, he says.

Available on a custom-order basis in the U.S. and Canada, it'll sell for around \$230,000 plus shipping.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Daan de Bruin, ACO Marketing Manager, P.O. Box 1109, Bothaville, South Africa 9660 (ph, fax 27 565-2386).