

# "Best & Worst" Tractors

(Continued from previous page)

doesn't use much oil. However, we've had trouble with the hydraulic system. It has plenty of pressure and lift, but the filter system doesn't allow enough oil to reach the pump which can cause it to fail."

"It does everything we've asked it to do," says Wilbur Kloeping, Gothenburg, Neb., owner of a 1978 Deere 2840 tractor. "We installed M & W's power package and turbocharger and increased horsepower 20%. We'd buy a Deere 3155 if we were in the market."

Wilbur Larason, Mercer, Mo., has had good luck with his 1991 Massey Ferguson 3120 tractor. "It has a quiet cab that's easy to get in and out of and is fuel efficient. Gears are easy to shift. If I were buying a new tractor, I'd buy a Massey Ferguson 3560. It has a quieter cab than any other tractor I've ever used."

"Our 1991 Case-IH 5140 Maxxum 2-WD has a comfortable ride and a quiet cab. It's rated at 95 hp but puts out 105 hp on the dynamometer. Has excellent hydraulic power and is easy to use. Controls are located right beside the operator. It seems to have good lugging power. Excellent steering and short turning radius. We used it for 278 hours last year," says Calvin Lampman, Florence, Ontario.

Harris Virden, Jackson, Miss., likes his 1987 IH 585 XL with front-end loader. "We're well-satisfied with it but I'd like to see tractor prices reduced and the overall quality of materials used improved. One modification I made was to fix the quick couplers. I put them in a better location."

"Our 1991 Ford Versatile 276 bi-directional tractor runs great but the hand controls for the loader need improvement. Also, I think it needs a clutch for emergency stops and it had several factory defects. The dealer bent over backwards to correct the problems but it still cost me a lot of down time and hassle. I like the tractor but I'm afraid it may turn into a high-maintenance machine," says Lawrence Smith, Shelby, Mont. "Greasing, especially the pto, is a real big job and messy. The hydraulic filler is poor - needs a funnel for adding fluid. All hand controls need to be made more convenient. However, I like the fact that the tractor came with a pto and 3 pt. on both ends. All accessories work good. No other tractor comes close for ease of use for some jobs, like rock picking with a rock fork."

"I'm satisfied with our 1991 Case/IH 7140 but I was disappointed to learn that the oil filter costs \$40 and the two hydraulic filters cost \$95," says Karl D. Steiner, Grandview, Idaho. "It pulled our 6-bottom plow at 5 mph. I like the comfort and maneuverability. One complaint is that it needs a better light in the cab. Hard to see the controls."

Gordon Nagy, Saltcoats, Saskatchewan, has been happy with his 1986 Versatile 276 bi-directional tractor. "We use it 12 months a year. Has lots of power, is easy to start, and handles like a dream. It was a big improvement over earlier 150 and 160 Versatiles. My only suggestion for improvement would be a bigger fuel tank and more ballast on the engine end of the tractor. Also, we put short pieces of pipe around the axles which keeps baling twine from getting into the wheel seals when we're working in feedlots."

"I made front fenders for our 1987 Deutz

7110 and put lights on the fenders so when you turn you can see the corner better. Otherwise, I don't think you could improve it in terms of power, comfort, handling, fuel economy and construction," says Royce N. High, Ohio City, Ohio.

Wayne Bryant, Taylorsville, N.C., owns a "best buy" 1990 Ford 4610 tractor. "It has plenty of power, workmanship is great and it's dependable. Fords are built to last. One thing they could improve is the pto handle. It would be nice if it was easier to reach alongside the seat and the handle should also be made stronger. But if I were buying a new tractor, I'd buy another Ford. When you've got the best, why try the rest?"

"They installed oversized pto bearings in this series so we had to split the tractor apart to replace them," says Alvin Goetz, Bluffton, Alberta, about his 1987 Deutz-Allis 4.70. "The company admitted the problem. The undersized bearings were used to save about \$20 in manufacturing cost but it ended up costing each owner and Deutz-Allis a major overhaul job at about \$1,500."

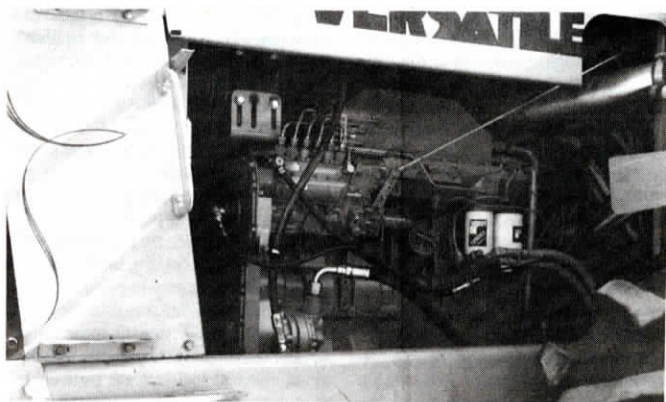
"This is the best tractor Case/IH ever produced," says Wilson Gatewood, Noblesville, Ind., about his 2-WD 1991 Case/IH 7120 Magnum. "It's trouble-free and we get good company and dealer support. We installed a Thomure Mfg. chrome pipe muffler elimination system on the tractor (East Prairie, Mo. ph 800 527-9954). I also installed a window shade on the cab windows so the air conditioning doesn't have to work so hard and to cut glare (Designer Shade, Willard, Wis. ph 800 344-9090)."

"I've got less than 100 hrs. on my Ford 8630 power shift so I don't know if I've found all the bugs yet. It does appear to be much more fuel efficient than the Deere 4620 it replaced. The powershift transmission works well except between gears 9 and 10. Then it's jerky and noisy. The dealer implied Ford is trying to come up with a modification kit. I hope so," says Tom Bocox, Caldwell, Kan.

"I'm the only farmer around with running boards on my tractor," says Vernon D. Dunham, Edinburgh, Ind., owner of a 1975 Deere 4230. "They're made out of 12-in. wide non-slip galvanized steel. They replace the bottom step and run up to the front axle. I have them on all my tractors for ease of servicing and mounting."

"It's old but my 1950 Caterpillar D-2 is my best buy ever," says Charles R. Greer, Denair, Calif. "This tracked tractor has over 6,500 hrs. on it and is 100 percent dependable. It has had three track overhauls and one engine overhaul. Even though they haven't made D-2's since 1956, new parts are still readily available. They should start making these Cats again."

Dale Hansen, Burlington, Colo., has had good luck with his 1991 Deere 4955 2-WD. "Excellent power, fuel economy, torque, and the 15-speed power shift transmission is greatly improved over the 8-speed in the older 40-series tractors. My only complaint is that the power steering is stiffer than on the older 40 series tractors. My 1978 4840 steered easier than the new 4955. Steering wheel bearings and steering valve were replaced by dealer but it hasn't helped."



Versatile 4-WD's are repowered with Cummins engines for \$13,200.

## Repowering Big 4-WD Tractors

"We've done more repowering than anyone else in the country," says Steve Mallicoat, Power Systems Specialist for Cummins Great Plains, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. He helped develop a turnkey kit for putting 360 hp Cummins 855 engines into big IH 4-WD tractors.

Mallicoat actually works out of three Cummins outlets - Cedar Rapids, Des Moines, and Rock Island, Ill. - developing repower kits and supplying engines to repower shops. In fact, Cummins Great Plains supplies engines to John Kinzenbaw of Kinze Mfg., who repowers Deere 4-WD tractors.

Recently, he's been working closely with Jim Costello of Costello Diesel in Fairbank, Iowa, to repower big IH 4586 and 4568 tractors as well as 1855 Oliver's and 555 or 700 Versatiles.

"We've already converted 6 big IH 4-WD's. It costs \$17,000 or more to rebuild a 4586 or 4568 with an IH engine but you can put a Cummins 8554 in for about \$16,750. The IH engines are outdated. Cummins engines are more powerful, more

compact and they'll last longer with less maintenance," says Mallicoat.

The turnkey kit includes all engine mounts, hydraulic pump adaptation, air conditioning, air intake system, and a new exhaust system. "It's a complete and professional installation that looks and performs better than the tractor did originally. Farmers who've made the conversion say they feel like they're driving a new \$135,000 tractor after we're through," says Mallicoat.

Costello, working together with Mallicoat at Cummins, is willing to attempt almost any conversion but so far has packages available for the IH 4-WD's, 1855 Oliver, which receives a new 4BT Cummins for about \$9,350, and 550 or 700 Versatiles, which are repowered with new 6CTA8.3 Cummins engines for about \$13,200.

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Okonski spent \$6,500 to make his "good as new" conversion to front-wheel drive.

## 2-WD Tractor Converted To MFWD

Steven Okonski, Hythe, Alberta converted his 1982 International 5488 2-WD tractor to mechanical front wheel drive by replacing the entire front axle assembly with one salvaged from a 1984 International MFWD tractor that had been damaged in a fire.

"I saved a lot of money and now have an excellent high horsepower mechanical front wheel drive tractor," says Okonski, who made the conversion in a neighbor's shop last fall. "I wanted to buy a mechanical front wheel drive tractor, but I couldn't justify the price so I bought the 5488 tractor used two years ago for \$38,000. It had only 1,800 hours and was in nice shape. However, IH didn't offer an add-on MFWD kit so I ordered an add-on system from an after-market company. Unfortunately, before I got the kit the company went bankrupt."

"The add-on system I ordered would have cost about \$14,000. By salvaging a unit from a damaged tractor, I spent only about

\$6,500 to make my conversion and it looks like it was factory-built. The 5488 has 190 horsepower, but with 2-WD only about 160 horsepower was useable. Front wheel drive is especially useful on soft soils because it provides extra traction and reduces fuel usage and tire wear."

Okonski split the tractor into three parts and mounted the new backing plate behind the engine which had a hole for the front drive shaft to come through. He installed the clutch pack mechanism from the fire-damaged tractor and installed the front output shaft into the transmission. He also installed fittings so he could get hydraulic power to the clutch pack. The electric wiring and solenoids had been damaged by fire so he bought new ones to replace them. He also bought new tires and rims.

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