

“Owner’s Report” On Best, Worst Tractors

Are you satisfied with your tractor? How could it be improved? Have you modified it in any way? What accessories have you bought for it?

These are some of the questions we asked randomly selected farmers and ranchers in an effort to highlight those tractors that perform with flying colors, and to pinpoint the “lemons” that fail because of poor performance or failure of the dealer or manufacturer to provide service.

Here’s how the survey shaped up.

Tom Stritzke, Nowata, Okla.: Tom’s had nothing but trouble with a 1983 Deere 2940 since the day he bought it. “The motor threw a main bearing. I’ve replaced the short block, and I’ve rebuilt the hydraulic system twice,” he says. “The hydraulics are so bad you have to rev up the engine to raise up the bucket with no load. I think I finally understand what Deere & Co. means when they talk about the long green line - the long green line of money on its way out of my pocketbook. I’ve had trouble getting rid of the tractor since no dealer will offer me a reasonable price as a trade-in.”

Len Taylor, Glen Ewen, Sask.: “I’m really satisfied” says Glen about his 1993 Ford Versatile 946. “However, the seat is poorly constructed,” he says. “It’s a shame to spoil such a wonderful tractor with a 5 cent seat.”

“We installed another hydraulic pump because we needed one more hydraulic outlet to power the granular herbicide applicator we run with our cultivator, seeder and fertilizer rig.”

Carl Ehre, Coyanosa, Texas: “They took my money and ran,” complains Carl who’s dissatisfied with the transmission and hydraulic system in his 1994 Belarus AS 250. “I get no dealer service and no response from the main office in Milwaukee.”

Gary Larson, Atwater, Minn.: Gary’s well pleased with his 1996 Deere 8100. “The visibility and roominess of the cab is incredible,” he says. “The command arm with all the controls is placed right and is comfortable to operate.”

Donald Tisher, Amherst, S. Dak.: “My 1994 Case-IH 7240 with front-wheel assist has plenty of power, handles well, and is fuel efficient,” says Donald. “However, visibility out of the cab could be better.”

Gene Crane, Columbia, Mo.: Gene says his 1992 Ford 4630 is a good overall tractor but he has a complaint. “I use it a lot for baling and the tractor’s transmission is not well suited for the job,” he says. “It’s too fast in third gear and too slow in second. Likewise, seventh gear is practically worthless because it’s so close to eighth.”

James T. Kinner, New Berlin, Ill.: “Exceptionally dependable” is how James describes the 1983 Versatile 875 he uses to pull a 7-shank ripper, 17-knife anhydrous toolbar and 33-ft. disk. “Our local dealer carries most parts commonly known to wear out,” he says. “I bought the tractor used and it had a no spin front axle, a real plus.”

Maurice Tack, Valier, Mont.: After 5,000 hours, Maurice believes all the bugs are finally out of his 1983 Case 2590. “We bought the tractor new and within the first 100 hours, the radiator leaked and all the exhaust valves burned out. Five injector lines and the water pump went next,” Maurice says. “We overhauled the transmission twice, installed two new blower motors, put in a third radiator, and, finally, completely rebuilt the engine. It works excellent now.”

Greg Elsen, Zillah, Wash.: Greg’s well satisfied with the 1981 Deere 750 4-WD he uses around his 5-acre Christmas tree farm. “It’s a great tractor,” he says. “I’ve got over 2,000 hours on it with absolutely no problems. The original battery even lasted 10 years. I only wish it had a more comfortable seat.”

Tom Scott, Northampton, Pa.: “My 1990 Belarus 525 is exceptionally dependable and economical,” says Tom. “My only complaint is that the hand throttle is poor. Fortunately, the foot throttle works good.”

Tom Bremer, Ocheyedan, Iowa: One of Tom’s “best buys” is his 1990 Ford TW-15. “It offers excellent power, comfort, and fuel economy,” he says. “It pulls a 26-ft. field culti-

vator at 6 mph and uses only 4 to 5 gal. of fuel per hour doing it.”

James B. Barbour, Hallstead, Pa.: His 1985 Deutz 6806 4-WD is “extremely fuel efficient, starts excellent even in below 0° weather, and has lots of power for its size (65 hp). The weak point, however, is the brakes. The foot brakes are only fair and the parking brake won’t hold a baler and wagon on a hill.”

Steve Bughi, Walla Walla, Wash.: “Indestructible” is how Steve describes his “best buy”, a Massey-Ferguson 4880 4-WD tractor equipped with 320 hp engine he bought new in 1981. “We’ve put over 8,000 hours on it and it’s still operating with the original engine and transmission,” he says. “The only money we ever spent on that tractor was replacing bearings in the front axle. I did the work myself last winter and parts were only \$500.”

Brent H. Ralstin, Mullinville, Kan.: “Improved fuel economy would be welcome,” says Brent about his 1993 Deere 8560. Otherwise he’s quite satisfied. “Visibility from the cab is great and air conditioner vents are by the steering wheel, a vast improvement from when they were in the ceiling. The tractor also has plenty of power.”

Jerry Culver, Iroquois, S. Dak.: Jerry’s put over 2,000 hours on a 1983 IHC 5288 he bought used without any problems. “We’ve heard of cooling problems in these tractors, but we clean the radiator and coolers at each oil change and can’t report any such problems ourselves,” he says.

Warren Sherwin, Beeler, Kan.: “The Cummins engine starts like a top and is really stingy on fuel,” says Warren about his 1990 White American 60. “What’s more it was priced

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right. I only wish they’d make a third hydraulic valve standard equipment.”

Carl Noble, Mar, Ontario: Carl’s well impressed with the service he’s gotten out of a couple of Leyland tractors, a 1972 384 and a 1973 253. “Even with their age, they continue to be excellent tractors for us,” he says.

Sylvester Riehle, Sunman, Ind.: When Sylvester compares a couple of Ford tractors he uses with a couple of Whites, the Ford’s seem to win. “My 1978 Ford 8600 and 1991 8530 have the upper hand over my 1978 White 2-50 and 1979 2-60,” he says. “Repairs are readily available at the Ford dealership. Our White dealership is too many miles and parts are too high.”

T.E. Jackson, Bowling Green S. C.: Thomas is the proud owner of three Massey-Ferguson tractors - a 1975 1135, a 1980 230 and a 1982 255. “I like the dependability of their Perkins engines,” he says. “Plus, there’s a wide selection of places to buy parts. My only complaint is that the fuel economy on my 255 equipped with 236 cu. in. engine needs improving.”

“I welded a pintle hook to a piece of square tubing and bolted it to my drawbar. It makes the hitch safer, faster and easier to use.

“I also bolted a piece of 1/4-in. thick plate under the front end of the 255 to protect power steering lines and cylinders.”

Roy Wadsley, Nemahah, Iowa: Roy’s 1973 IH 1066 is reliable but a few improvements could

have been made. “It needs synchronized gears between one and four, better power steering, easier access to the oil filter, and beefier front end bushings,” he says. “Otherwise, we’ve put 4,800 hours on it with few repairs including replacing a bearing on the brake pinion shaft. Pretty impressive service I’d say. It might even get its first set of new tires next year.”

Jeff Wuebker, Bradford, Ohio: “This tractor has over 8,000 hours on it and has never required any engine work,” says Jeff about a 1978

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Deere 4440. “We did replace the B and C range in the transmission a few years back. We’ve been pleased with this tractor since the day we bought it. The only thing it needs is to be Ziebarted because it’s starting to show a little rust on the cab door.”

Bruce Boyer, Wells, Nev.: Bruce is happy with his 1984 Hesston/Fiat DT566. “Even though it’s only 51 hp, it’s 4-WD and has enough power to handle all my equipment,” he says. “Fuel economy is excellent. The only problem is that the exhaust, which is underslung, is a little noisy.”

Brian Toms, Dixon, Ill.: “It’s handy, fuel efficient and well made,” Brian says about a 1950 Ford 8N he owns. “It’s simple to take care of and has always performed reliably. I wonder how many of today’s tractors they’ll be able to say that about when they’re 40 years old. I wonder, too, if people will be buying them not just to restore but to continue working as well.”

Mark Steinberger, American Crystal Sugar Co., Hillsboro, N. Dak.: “We’re generally impressed with the tractor,” Mark says about a 1992 White 6085. “Service has been excellent. They replaced the tractor at no charge after

the first year because of a recall. Our only complaint is that the clutch could be stronger for loader usage.”

George De Gloppe, Grand Island, N.Y.: George is well satisfied with his 1967 IH 1206 Standard. “It handles easily and is extremely maneuverable, thanks to its short wheelbase,” he says. “However, the gear shifting mechanism could have been improved.”

Chris Haugrud, Pelican Rapids, Minn.: “It’s an excellent tractor for heavy work,” says Chris about his 1968 Deere 5020. “It’s got plenty of power and the transmission and rear end are exceptionally heavily built. However, the 24-volt electrical system is a real hassle. It seems there’s always a short in the system somewhere.”

“I also like my 1990 Deere 2355 equipped with 145 loader. But the transmission isn’t synchronized and there’s been a rattle in the rear end since it was new. The dealer has been through it and can’t find what the problem is. The front end could be heavier-built for use with the loader, which has been an excellent piece of equipment.”

Gary Hege, Olar, S.C.: “I’ve had this tractor for more than 1 1/2 years and have had no mechanical problems of any kind with it,” says a pleased Gary about his 1995 Case-IH 7240. “However, the door seems a bit awkward to pull closed from the seat. Perhaps a power closer would be in order.”

C. Erwin Bullette, Fawn Grove, Pa.: The only problem with the Deutz 3006’s C.E. bought at an auction two years ago is that they’re no longer in production, he says. “It’s the best smaller, 30 hp, tractor I’ve ever owned,” he says. “It starts right up in cold weather and runs cool in hot weather. It uses no oil and is fuel efficient. I’ve had no expenses other than routine maintenance. I also like the gear selection it provides.”

Jesse K. Peachey, Bay Tree, Alberta: “It needs a heavier, better constructed loader frame,” says Jesse about his 1994 Ford 9030 bi-directional. Otherwise, he’s well satisfied, he says.

Dan Lammerant, Blyth, Ontario: Overall, Dan’s pleased with his Zetor 5245 tractor. “It has plenty of power, handles well, has excellent fuel economy, and is well built,” he says. “How-



6-Wheel Skid Steer Utility Tractor

“I built it completely from scratch after designing it and making blueprints on computer,” says Luc Belzile, Edmundston, New Brunswick, Canada, about his unique 6-wheel skid steer utility tractor that features a rear dump box and a 360° swivel backhoe.

The entire operator platform swivels with the backhoe. Fully hydraulic, power is supplied by a 13-hp. Honda motor driving a triple hydraulic pump. Each wheel hub is direct-driven by a hydraulic motor so no chains are used. Low speed is 1.9 mph while top speed is 3.4 mph.

The dump box holds 19 cu. ft. The

backhoe, which can be fitted with either a 12 or 20-in. bucket, dumps into the box which makes it perfect for landscaping projects, notes Belzile. Total weight of the machine is 2,900 lbs. All new parts were used to build the prototype.

“It could be fitted with a variety of attachments as well as an enclosed cab,” says Belzile, who would like to sell his prototype and/or rights to the design, which is patent pending.

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