

Owners Report On Best, Worst Tractors

Are you satisfied with the performance of your tractor? How could it be improved? Have you ever modified your tractor in any way to improve it in terms of power, performance, etc.?

These are a few of the questions we asked randomly selected farmers 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 company or dealer to provide service.

Here's how our survey shaped up.

Eugene L. Underwood, Strafford, Mo.: "When I trade tractors, it'll be for any brand but AGCO," says Eugene who's had a lot of trouble with the AGCO Allis 5670 he bought new in 1993.

"Shortly after I bought it, the tractor developed spells where it wouldn't start. At about 300 hours, the clutch and pressure plate went out. At 570 hours, a part that lubricates the transmission broke and the whole transmission froze up. All the gears and pinions had to be replaced. I feel that the problem was due to inferior quality parts. Since it had so few hours on it, I also felt that the company should have stood behind the repair. They didn't agree, however, since the warranty expired nine months earlier.

"Besides that, the manufacturer could also do a lot to improve the tractor. The lights should be located so you can see better with a loader installed. The hydraulic lift controls should be more accessible and the parking brake should be relocated so you don't trip over it every time you dismount."

Gordon C. Newton, Sinclairville, N.Y.: Gordon says his 1995 Zetor 16245 has a lot of power. "But it is apparently not made for heavy pto or hydraulic work. We've replaced both the pto and hydraulic pump three times. The location of controls is somewhat unhandy and you need half an acre to turn around, especially to the left. Also, the cooling system is weak.

"On the positive side, dealer service has been excellent. Fuel economy is great. And the cab is comfortable."

Marlin Petersen, Kirkman, Iowa: Marlin's generally satisfied with his 1994 Deere 7400 equipped with MFWD, Power Quad transmission and 740 loader. "The 7400 seems to have a lot of guts for its rated horsepower, good hydraulic response and easy handling. I've also had good dealer and company support on the tractor.

"However, I have a few complaints. The air conditioning doesn't cool as well as my Deere 4430 and 4450 tractors. That may have something to do with relocating the vents from the roof to the steering column. I've also had problems every winter with water building up and freezing in the line from the fuel tank to the in-line filter. And the rubber front

fenders have 'shrunk down' so much they almost rub on the front tires. Battery access is difficult with loader mounts attached to the tractor."

Marlin added fender extensions to the rear fenders. "The kit from Deere cost about \$200 and helps keep the cab windows cleaner," he says. "The windows were always dirty before when doing sloppy loader work."

Steve Berning, Warrenville, Ill.: "It has plenty of power and I like the 'Super Steer' feature," says Steve, pleased with his 1995 Ford-New Holland 8670. "It has a roomy, comfortable cab with two doors. The hood raises up like a car for easy access to the engine. The rear fender-mounted switches make for easier and safer 3-pt. hookups.

"I'd like to see them put a grease gun rack on it and bigger tool boxes made out of steel.

Harvey Post, Prinsburg, Minn.: "It's a giant step up from the Deere 8440 I had before," says Harvey, happy with his 1991 Case-IH 9150 4-WD. "It has more power, better fuel economy and I can operate at faster speeds. It's a lighter tractor so it causes less soil compaction."

Harvey added two Halogen lights to the front end of the tractor just below the radiator. He also bumped up the fuel pump 20 hp to get the extra power to pull his 5-shank DMI ripper.

Andrew E. Miller, Muscodia, Wis.: Andrew reports no problems with his 1998 Massey Ferguson 4255. "It's an 85 hp tractor, which is ideal for us. It has front-wheel assist, three remote hydraulic valves, differential lock, an Air Ride seat, and two outside rear view mirrors. The cab has good visibility, good ventilation, and tinted glass."

R.L. Holcomb, Sr., Columbia, Va.: "The tractor now has 102 trouble-free hours on it," says R.L., pleased with his 1998 New Holland 6635 4-WD equipped with a Quicke loader. "I use it every day to feed cattle and I couldn't be more satisfied. The Quicke loader lets you change from bucket to bale spear in 45 seconds."

Michael Wildner, Unionville, Mich.: "The PowerShift transmission gives it an excellent selection of speed ranges," says Michael about his 1996 Deere 7700 2-WD. "It has all the power we need and a comfort-

able, quiet cab with good visibility."

Chris Isbell, England, Ark.: The tracks on his 1998 Caterpillar Challenger 55 provide ideal flotation for rice farming, says Chris. "We have to work in water, pulling a 30-ft. roller behind that pushes last year's straw into the ground," he says.

William Voedisch, Marine, Minn.: "I did a lot of research on compact diesel tractors before I bought this one. No other tractor can match it," says William, pleased owner of a 1997 Kubota L2900 GST that he uses with a 6-ft. Bush Hog mower and Lorenz 66-in. front-mount snowblower. "The 3-cyl. diesel starts every time, even at 25 below zero. The 'glideshift' transmission with shuttle is outstanding.

"The only change I'd suggest is adding an independent pto clutch."

Elmer Petersheim, Oley, Pa.: "It has more than 3,200 hours on it and has never once been in the shop for repairs," says Elmer about his 1992 Deere 2155.

Gary K. Harmon, Leon, W. Va.: Gary's well pleased with his 1997 AGCO Allis 4650 4-WD. "However, the manufacturer could install a larger hydraulic pump to improve steering. It's hard to turn when carrying a round bale on soft ground."

He installed one rear work light and two front flood lights on top of the canopy for front end loader work. He uses an AGCO 680 loader. "It works great," he notes.

Pete Lamp, Waterloo, Ind.: "I only use the tractor 20 to 25 hours a year to plow snow and pull a trailer to cut firewood. So, for me, it's ideal," says Pete about the 1994 Zetor 3320 that he bought new. "What impressed me most was the price - under \$11,000 for a new 45 hp tractor. It obviously doesn't have all the gadgets and gewgaws of a higher priced machine, but there aren't as many things to go wrong either.

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"The only modification I made was adding a bumper and grille guard, which I made out of scrap, to protect the headlights.

"At this point, I'm extremely satisfied with the tractor."

William Stephenson, Huntington, W.Va.: William's main utility tractor is a 1990 Case-IH 1394 with MFD. "It has plenty of power to handle a 7-ft., 1,500-lb. rotary mower on steep hillsides.

"But it would have been easier to service if it had been built along the lines of the older International utility tractors. They've never been matched by another manufacturer, in my opinion, because they have one hydraulic reservoir and one filter. My 1394 has three filters and two reservoirs, which sometimes makes servicing time-consuming."

William also made a number of modifications to his tractor, including an extra heavy four-post framework that fits the existing ROPS frame. He also mounted an 8,000-lb. Rhino winch on front and a dual wheel assembly from M&W Gear on back. Dual

prong quick hitchers were added to the 3-pt. lift arms (Stevens Ag Parts, Rt. 1, Box 32B, Coushatta, La. 71019; ph 318 932-5118) and a four-bank hydraulic valve assembly to power his Stumpster stump cutter. He also added 2,000 lbs. of front end weights made out of 6-in. dia. steel bars and 6-ft. long railroad track.

Lewis Jessup, Virden, Ill.: "It's the ideal size for our 8-row equipment," says Lewis about his 1993 Deere 7600 2-WD. "I'm completely satisfied."

Jerry Woody, Reasoner, Iowa: "We haven't had a single problem in 2,250 hours," says Jerry who's pleased with his 1994 Ford 8870 equipped with front wheel assist. "The transmission shifts much better than any competing machines. It's exceptionally comfortable to operate."

Marvin Hughes, Clermont, Ga.: Marvin's generally well satisfied with the 1995 Massey Ferguson 240 he uses with a 6-ft. Bush Hog mower. But he has suggestions for improvements. "The hydraulics should be more responsive. For instance, when it idles real low, the front end hydraulics don't work well. Lower gears could also be geared a little higher."

Ronald L. Inscho, Brown City, Mi.: "It runs well and starts easily in even the coldest weather," says Ronald, happy with his 1995 Deere 6400. "It has plenty of power and is easy on fuel."

James Willis, Oakdale, La.: "I can't think of a single way this tractor could be improved," says James about his 1995 Kubota 4030 SU. "I'm more than satisfied."

Dewey Pitts, Anniston, Ala.: Dewey's well pleased with his 1995 Belarus 250. "It's easy to service, has many good features and, best of all, was priced right," he says. "If I had it to do over again, the only thing I'd do differently is to add power steering."

Richard Jaescke, Northampton, Mass.: "Repairs have been minimal," says Richard, pleased with his 1993 Ford 5640. "My only complaint is with the 12 by 12 shuttle shift transmission. You have to come to a complete stop between forward and reverse or you'll tear the face off the clutch."

Nick Gouveig, Hilma, Calif.: Nick's happy with his 1996 Deere 8100. "The cab is quiet, spacious and comfortable. All major functions are at your fingertips. The view out of the cab is extraordinary. The 16-speed Powershift transmission maximizes power. It has exceptional maneuverability for its size. The hydraulic flow rate can be adjusted quickly and simply.

"Performance of the 8.1-liter engine is consistent. Maintenance is easy with everything in reach and view. The 8100 will outpull a Case with 25 more hp."

Scott Kiesel, New Riegel, Ohio: "It's the ideal size for loader work and I also use it for mowing, baling, plowing and other tillage work," says Scott about his 1994 Case-IH 895 equipped with front wheel assist, cab and 2255 loader. "When I bought my 895, I priced Ford and Deere. I knew it would be cheaper than a Deere, but I was surprised to find out it was also cheaper than a Ford. I haven't driven a newer model tractor of the same size as mine, but I assume there have probably been improvements in all areas. Overall, though, I think it's a pretty good tractor."

John C. Pansegran, Albans, Ore.: "A real

Porcelain Coating For Deere Manifolds

"We've been recoating exhaust manifolds on antique cars with porcelain for 30 years and have recently discovered Deere antique tractor restorers are interested in one of our processes," says Donna Braun of Prairie Auto Porcelain, Northfield, Minn.

"Many antique automobiles such as Packards, Cadillacs, Lincolns and Jaguars had porcelain-coated cast iron manifolds. But one, the Duesenburg, had a green-colored porcelain coating that seems to be appealing to Deere tractor restorers.

"We use an authentic porcelain coating process, spray applying it to the manifold and then heating it in an oven 12 hours to bake and dry. Prices for the green coating start at \$250.

"We also recoat old wood stove grates for \$30 a pair."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Prairie Auto Porcelain, 1424 90th St. W., Northfield, Minn. 55057; ph 507 645-5325).