

They Specialize In Rebuilt, Low-Cost, Compact 4-WD Tractors

Finding a good, small tractor, especially one with four wheel drive and a front loader, can be a real problem. That fact was on Ivor Venema's mind when he went shopping for used machinery parts in Japan back in 1997.

Raised in the equipment business, Venema and partner, John Glazema, founded Handlers Used Equipment, Ltd., Abbotsford, British Columbia, about 10 years ago to sell used equipment and used parts. On one buying trip, he happened on an export dealer with dozens of compact tractors for sale. "Most of the used compact tractors of this size and age in the U.S. and Canada have very high hours and are in such poor condition you can't find a decent one," he says. "Most of these were only slightly used by comparison, with around 1,500 hours or less.

Venema bought 140 older 4-WD tractors in the 14 to 45 hp range, all with low hours and in fairly good shape. He imported them into Canada to refurbish and sell. Since that beginning, the company has become one of the largest North American importers of used Japanese tractors.

Most of the tractors the company buys are 10 to 20-year-old low hour Yanmars and Mitsubishis.

When a tractor arrives at their business, it's totally refurbished, from front to back and

from seals to decals. "We check them out and replace all the fluids, filters, and any seals that could possibly leak. We put in new batteries and cable clamps and install a new seat. Ninety-five percent get new front tires and many get new rear tires, too. If there are dents or dings, those are taken care of by an autobody repair specialist and then the tractors get a fresh coat of paint and new decals," Venema says. "Before it leaves here, it's fitted with a Category I 3-point hitch (if it doesn't have one) and a new Allied front loader. We build our own mounting kits, so we know each loader fits just right. Rear tires are filled with calcium for added traction."

On top of that, each tractor must pass a 30-point mechanical and safety check before it can leave the refurbishing plant. Tractors are delivered with a 30-day warranty that covers most components.

Since the company began refurbishing compact tractors four years ago, they've built a dealer network that spans most of the Western states and now reaches through the Midwest and to the East Coast and Florida as well.

Missouri distributor Jim Pitts has been pleased with the support he's received from the company. "They make sure the tractors are in almost-new condition before they're delivered to dealers and they provide parts



Ivor Venema travels to Japan to buy used compact tractors in good condition.

support for every tractor they sell," he says.

Venema adds: "I buy tractors with a known history and only if I know there's a readily available parts supply."

Handlers also makes its own 3-point mounted backhoe sized for 20 to 35 hp. Its refurbished Yanmar and Mitsubishi tractors, with new loader installed, retail at about 60 percent of the price of a new tractor with similar horsepower.

Venema says nearly all their refurbished

tractors are sold through dealers. To locate a dealer or for information on becoming a dealer, contact the company or check their Website at www.best-used-tractors.com.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Handlers Used Equipment, Ltd., 39451 No. 3 Road, Abbotsford, British Columbia V3G 2G1 Canada (ph 604 850-3601; fax: 604 850-3627) or Von Self, Sedro Woolley, Wash. (ph/fax 360 856-2521).

"Deep" Spading Loosens Soil Pan, Boosts Crop Yields

Jim Bauer tried deep ripping but it wasn't the answer to the soil problems he faced on his Worden, Ill., farm. But when his friend and neighbor Ross Lay, Litchfield, Ill., got good yield increases from a home-built deep ripper that he calls a spader (FARM SHOW Vol. 22, Issue 3, page 32), Bauer figured it was worth a try, too.

After all, Lay's soils were similar to his, so he figured the problems were bound to be similar. "I'm farming windblown soils that are 18 in. to 2 ft. thick over the top of some ancient topsoil," he explains.

Lay built his deep ripping "spader" by fastening 4-ft. long sections of road grader blade lengthwise to the bottom of his ripper shanks. With a 350 hp tractor, he pulls two of these spader shanks spaced 5 ft. apart, running at depths of 26 to 32 in. He claims it gives him a 30 bu. boost in corn yields and bumps soybean yields the year following by a good 6 bu.

While he was considering how to make one, he attended a soil symposium on Lay's farm where he met Bill Dieterich, founder of DMI and inventor of the DMI Turbo Tiger and other deep-tilling tillage tools. Bauer says he discussed the idea with Dieterich, who then offered him advice and also sold him parts and steel he could use in making his own spader.

"He sold me the experimental prototype used to perfect the Turbo Tiger. It had the DMI logo on it, but also said 'experimental' on the side of the frame," Bauer recalls. Most importantly, it had the shanks and sturdy toolbar Bauer was looking for.

Bauer left the five shanks on the bar and lengthened the center and two outside shanks to 4 ft., so they would go up to 30 in. deep into the soil and still have plenty of clearance when working in undisturbed corn stalks.

He left the Turbo Tiger ripper points in place on all five shanks. On the three shanks he lengthened, he welded sections of 10-in. wide hardened steel grader blade, with the

leading edge angled slightly down to the tip, which he left 3 in. longer and lower still than the grader blade. "The first year, I tried making my own shoes, but I wasn't satisfied with them because they wore out so fast. The second year I replaced them with the hardened steel grader blade and I haven't had to replace them since," he says.

"This design pulls the shank into the soil, so I don't need any additional weight to make it go down. In fact, I have to use the gauge/transport wheels to keep it at the right depth," he says.

The shanks, made of 1 1/2-in. solid steel bar, had to be widened at the top as well. "I had to add a half-moon section with a radius of about 6 in. to the front of the shanks at the top, in order to change the shear point when running the shanks that deep. Before I widened them at the top, the shear bolts would break as soon as the shanks went into the ground," he says. "Originally, the distance between the shear and the anchor bolts was 7 in. I lengthened that to 12 in. before I finally got it right," he says. Now the shear bolts only break when he hits something harder than the clay pan he's breaking up.

Bauer uses his spader in the fall on every acre he intends to plant to corn in his three-year corn-soybean-wheat/soybean doublecrop rotation. He sets the depth so the spader shanks run 20 to 24 in. deep most of the time. The two original factory shanks between the three spaders cut in at 10 to 14 in.

He says the cost of converting the old Turbo Tiger into a deep spader was minimal. "Not counting the cost of the machine I bought from Dieterich, it was probably under \$500," he says.

He's used his deep spader for several years. He says there's a yield advantage in every crop year, with corn yields 20 bu. or so higher, depending on the year.

There might be one disadvantage to this type of deep ripping. "Last year, when it was dry all year but then wet in the fall, the soil



Bauer converted a prototype DMI Turbo Tiger into a five-shank "spader".



On the three shanks he lengthened, Bauer welded sections of 10-in. wide hardened steel grader blade.



Lay built his deep ripping "spader" by fastening 4-ft. long sections of road grader blade lengthwise to bottom of shanks.

stayed loose. When we tried to get through the wet fields with the combine in the fall of 2001, it was like there was no bottom under it and we had to use the big tractor for pulling out the combine as well as for spading,"

he says.

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