

Tractor In A Box “Priced Cheap, Dealer Not Included”

If you've been shopping for an 18 to 30 hp tractor and price is more important than quick dealer service, you might want to call the Tractor Outlet, Albany, Oregon.

Terry Barlow, Tractor Outlet owner, started “tractors in a box” a couple of years ago to augment the income from his RV repair business. He sells 10 different models of 2-WD and 4-WD compact diesel utility tractors in the 30 hp and under range.

The tractors are branded Farm Boss, but they're made by Jinma, the largest tractor manufacturer in China. Jinma made 10,000 tractors last year and exported 3,000 of them to various marketers in North America.

Other equipment dealers sell the tractors fully assembled, under their own name. But Barlow delivers the tractor in the same crates he receives them in. And they don't come with the support of a local dealer.

“I'm an importer, not a full service dealer, so buyers have to be prepared to do some of the work a dealer normally would do,” he says. “But if you can do the final assembly yourself, you can save some real money.”

In addition to final assembly, you'll also need to wait 60 to 90 days for delivery. Barlow arranges shipping as soon as tractors are ordered. To keep prices low, the tractors are delivered to the most convenient point closest to the buyer. It's up to the buyer to pick it up there up or arrange for shipping from that point.

Barlow ships tractors just about anywhere in the U.S., although he says delivery to Hawaii may be cost prohibitive. Canadian orders are delivered to the closest U.S. city, meaning any duties or other fees due at the border come out of the buyers' pockets.

Farm Boss tractors are available in red, blue or yellow to match other machinery, or in Tractor-Outlet orange and black.

Tractors are powered by 3-cylinder vertical, water-cooled, 4-stroke direct fuel injection diesel engines. There are 18, 20, 25, 28 and 30 hp models, with both 2- and 4-wheel drive available in all five. The 18 to 28 hp tractors are all built on the same frame, while the 30 hp tractors have a heavier one.

Barlow's tractors all come with Cat. 1 3-pt. hitch; agricultural tires; ROPS and seat belts; gauges for oil pressure, temperature, fuel, tachometer and amps; rear wheel and front ballast weights; head and rear work lights; rear differential lock; power steering; plus the following:

- On 18 to 28 hp tractors, manual transmission with three forward gears plus reverse and creeper gear with a high and low range, giving them 12 forward and two reverses.

- On 30 hp tractors, manual transmission with four forward gears plus reverse and high and low ranges, for a total of eight forward speeds and two reverses.

- Dual pto speeds: 540/1000 on 18 to 28 hp; 540/720 for 30 hp.

- Two stage clutch, with first stage disengaging the transmission and second stage disengaging the pto. (On all except 2-WD 30 hp model).

Front-end loaders and backhoes are available for all models. You can also buy rototillers, posthole diggers and wood chippers. Cabs can be installed, although the factory says they can't be fitted on tractors with front-end loaders. Other options include: folding ROPS; sun/rain canopy; additional set of either ag or turf tires and rims; under-tractor horizontal muffler; and spring or swivel seats (on select models).

Barlow provides step by step assembly instructions and a list of tools needed, or you can download those from his Website. You



To keep prices low, the Tractor Outlet sells Farm Boss tractors in the same crates they're received in from China. There's no dealer support.

can also buy an assembly video.

Tractor Outlet tractors have a one-year parts warranty. Barlow stocks normal maintenance items and can ship those immediately, although his warranty doesn't require you to buy maintenance supplies from him. Small factory parts that are covered can be air freighted from China in 14 days. Large factory parts come ocean freight in 60 days. “You can buy parts from any of the 175 or so North American Jinma dealers that do stock parts if your tractor is out of warranty,” he says. And many of the parts, especially belts and filters, are standard off-the-shelf parts you can buy locally.

Barlow says his best seller is a 4-WD, 28 hp model which sells for \$8,230, front-end loader included. “That's if people prepay by check and pick it up at a central warehouse,” he says. His least expensive is a 2-WD, 18 hp model which sells for \$5,320. A front-end loader adds \$2,475 to the price so Barlow



Tractors are delivered to the most convenient point closest to buyer, who does the final assembly.

says most people buy the 28 hp model.

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On-Board System Puts Out Fires

When Jim Lohman sold his old Vermeer 605C round baler recently, a big selling point was the fire extinguishing system he had built for it.

And when Lohman, a farmer and plumber from near Hillsboro, Ill., went out and bought a new Hesston baler, the first thing he did was to equip it with an identical system.

He got the idea originally because the Vermeer baler had been through a fire before he bought it.

He used a couple of water pressure tanks as the basis for his on-board fire fighting system. The tanks mount in an open area above the hitch where they wouldn't interfere with the baler's operation. He plumbed the tanks together using 3/4-in. steel pipe from their water inlets. These short pipes screw into a T, which allows water from both tanks to feed down to a lever-operated boiler drain valve. Another short length of pipe to from the boiler drain has a ball valve at the end. There he attaches his fire-fighting hose, a 10-ft. length of 3/4-in. pressure washer hose. He also pumps water into the tanks through this valve.

In the line between the tanks, he installed a pressure gauge with a dial large enough that he could see it from the tractor. This lets him know how much pressure is left in the event he's using the water, and also alerts him should there be a leak or partially open valve.

“I put in the boiler drain valve in as a backup, in case the ball valve should happen to leak,” he says.

At the business end of his 10-ft. fire-

fighting hose, he attached a plastic ball valve that turns on and off easily and quickly, and on that is a small brass hose nozzle that, he says, “...will spray straight and pretty far.”

He fills the tanks with water to 60 psi, which gives him ample water pressure and quantity to fight the fires he's had to date. And he's had a couple.

The first one happened when a tree root got caught in a roller. By the time he saw the smoke, the root and roller were both scorched. “I put it out and had plenty of water left over,” he says. “The root had burned to fit the curve on the roller and wouldn't come back out. I had to unbolt the roller to move it aside before the root could be pulled out.”

The second time he used his fire extinguishing system, a bearing burned out and caught chaff on fire. The chaff fell to the ground and caught the field on fire behind the baler. “I put out the field first, then the chaff on the baler and then cooled the bearing. After that, I dumped the bale and checked for more fire,” he says.

Lohman says you could use any size pressure tanks, but the bigger, the better. “You could go with just one big tank, but two smaller ones were less expensive and it makes more sense to me. There's little chance of both air bladders failing at the same time,” he says. “It doesn't matter where you locate the tanks, either, as long as you T them together and the valve and hose are located where you can get to them in a hurry.”

He says there are other uses for the system, like washing chaff and dirt off the tractor cab



On-board fire fighting system consists of a pair of water pressure tanks, which mount in an open area above the hitch. A 10-ft. length of 3/4-in. hose is used to put out fires.

windows, or cleaning your hands after completing maintenance or repairs on the baler. “You could put on a longer hose, but so far, 10 ft. has been long enough for me,” he says.

Lohman says winterizing the system is

easy. “You just open the valves and straighten the hose and all the water drains out,” he says.

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