

Mechanical Mule: The Ultimate 4-Wheeler

Some 4-wheelers are just for fun, and some are for fun or work. Then there's the Mechanical Mule. The Mule is unlike any 4-wheeler on the market. It's a self-propelled wagon, tow truck and walk-behind flatbed all rolled into one. This surplus military utility vehicle can be outfitted with extra seats, a winch, a blade or even a 106 mm recoilless rifle. The 48 by 95-in. vehicle fits inside a standard pickup truck bed and can be stored on its side when not in use.

"I use mine to haul wood to the house all winter long, leave it parked outside, start it at 30 below and haven't done more than change oil on it in more than 10 years," says Terry Markarian, owner, Mechanical Mules of America (MMA). "They were introduced in the early 1950's and were designed to be more maneuverable and carry more than a Jeep. They were manufactured through the 1970's. A Mule could be airdropped, land on its side or top, be righted and driven away."

The 14 hp (military rated), four-stroke, two-cycle aluminum motor needs no cooling system and fits in a compact space under

the bed. The driver's seat sits on the front edge of the Mule with a foot basket that extends forward and down. The hand controls, also at the front edge, combine with a flop-down steering wheel to make walk-behind control easy.

Not only does the Mule have 4-WD, but it also has crab steering for extreme maneuverability. The transmission has three forward and one reverse gear, with a high and low range for each. Stick it in first gear, low range, and Markarian says the rig can go almost anywhere. All four wheels are locked, meaning it keeps going as long as even one wheel has traction.

MMA claims to be the only remaining refitter for the Mule. When Markarian and his crew take a surplus Mule out of mothballs, it is torn apart with all metal sandblasted, primed and repainted. All sealed bearings are unsealed, inspected and resealed. Motors are pulled out, inspected, tested and replaced. A new carburetor and fuel pump to handle modern gas are installed, as well as any other parts that need to be replaced, reconditioned or rebuilt. MMA has a specially



A surplus military utility vehicle, the Mechanical Mule is a self-propelled wagon, tow truck, and walk-behind flatbed all rolled into one.

built "rotisserie" that allows the mechanics to rotate the machine 360 degrees for further work. The original electrical system is replaced with a 12-volt system including starter, alternator, battery and front and rear lights. New upholstery is added, and the reconditioned unit is test driven by Markarian.

Mechanical Mules start at around \$11,130 for 4-WD/2-wheel steering and one seat. A-4-

WD/steering unit with passenger seat and foot basket, as well as a winch and other goodies, sells for \$12,460. Markarian even has a fully equipped Mechanical Mule with a 106 mm recoilless rifle available for around \$28,000.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Mechanical Mules of America, Inc., P.O. Box 1009, Hamilton, Montana 59840 (ph 406 961-4024; www.mechanicalmulesofamerica.com).

Military Vehicle Now Sold For Farm Use

Steel-plated vehicles originally designed for border patrol and troop rescue in Israel perform just as well on American farms, ranches and even highways. The newest Tomcar pickup is said to be built with military precision.

"It's purpose-built to be this size. It's not built off an ATV or dirt bike," says Sam Carew-Jones, dealer relations manager for the Phoenix, Arizona, based company. It's built to be fast and yet safe to drive over rough terrain at more than 20 mph.

"This is more about suspension and maintaining 15 inches of ground clearance," Carew-Jones says. "Low center of gravity and suspension set it apart for safety."

A completely flat skid plate prevents hang-

ups and the front suspension mounts and rear chain casings are all made of armored steel. The Tomcar has gas-charged dual coil-over shocks and an on-board air compressor to charge shocks to compensate for up to a 1,433-lb. payload in the 70-in. wide by 66-in. long bed with a manual dump.

Equipped with lights, seatbelts and other options, and capable of speeds up to 65 mph, the Tomcar is a low-speed street legal vehicle in some states, plus a biodiesel engine is one of the options. It comes with a 6.75-gal. gas tank, with an optional second tank.

With the drive chain sealed in an oil bath and parts designed to handle four times the Tomcar's horsepower, the vehicle has a life expectancy of more than 20 years. "Owners



Tomcar is built with military precision. Low center of gravity and suspension set it apart for safety.

can do their own maintenance and just replace wear items, keeping costs way down over the life of the vehicle," Carew-Jones says.

Cost for the pickup is about \$20,000. Tomcar also has 4-seat models available.

Dealer inquiries are welcome.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Tomcar, 1727 E. Deer Valley Rd., Phoenix, Arizona 85024 (ph 623 587-7799; www.tomcar.com).

Electric Utility Vehicle Delivers Quiet Power



Electric-powered "Chuck Wagon" utility vehicle runs quiet and can handle up to a 400-lb. payload that can be manually dumped.

After observing the growth in the popularity of electric golf carts for home use, American SportWorks decided to add an electric utility vehicle to their line of gas-powered UTV's, ATV's, go-karts and scooters. Production of the 48V "Chuck Wagon" UTV started this year at the company's Roseland, La., plant.

"Customers want quiet vehicles for hunting, working around livestock, or inside warehouses," says Laura McCallum, who manages marketing at American SportWorks Fort Wayne, Ind.

With a stronger suspension and higher torque than golf carts, the Chuck Wagon

is meant to be used as a utility vehicle with a 34 by 42 by 10-in. bed for up to a 400-lb. payload that can be manually dumped. It has a 2-in. receiver hitch and 1,100-lb. towing capacity.

The utility vehicle has an 8.6 hp/500 amp controller motor, a direct drive transmission, and a DANA gearbox transaxle. It comes with lap/shoulder belts, headlights, travels up to 18 mph and can be made street legal with additional equipment in some communities.

Depending on the terrain and size of the load, an overnight charge nets about 38 miles.

"With regenerative braking, hitting the brakes actually recharges the battery to a small extent," McCallum says.

MSRP is \$4,999, and the Chuck Wagon comes with a one-year warranty. The company is seeking more dealers.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, American SportWorks, Laura McCallum, 4404 Engle Ridge Drive, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46804 (ph 800 643-7332; www.amsportworks.com).

Low-Cost Utility Vehicle Handy On Farm

For people who want a utility vehicle, but don't like high prices, Hart Marketing offers an inexpensive model that has power, a hydraulic dump and gets up to 50 mpg. The UTV300 Hart Cart utility vehicle sells for \$3,995, less than half the price of brand name competitors.

"We keep our prices down because we have no overhead with fancy showrooms," says Allan of Hart Marketing, located in Fountaintown, Ind. Vehicles are manufactured in China with American engineers on-site to maintain quality control.

"Up to 660 lbs. can be dumped by the 45 by 31 dump box. It also comes with a ball hitch with 660 lbs. of towing capacity."

For use in rough terrain, the 2-WD vehicle comes standard with a 2,000-lb. winch and 50-ft. cable.

The 23 hp, water-cooled engine allows the cart to travel up to 33 mph. With a 5-gal. gas tank, seatbelts, turn signals, lights, windshield wipers and other features, the vehicle is street legal in some states.



UTV300 Hart cart utility vehicle has a hydraulic dump and gets up to 50 mpg.

Expect to spend about 2 1/2 hours assembling parts to the main chassis and engine. It has a 90-day warranty, with optional extended warranties.

Hart Marketing is interested in expanding with new dealers.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Hart Marketing, Inc., Fountaintown, Indiana 46130 (ph 800 214-2309; www.shawnhartmarketing.com).