

### Which Tractor Fits Your Operation Best

Farmers trying to decide whether their next tractor should be powered by a diesel or gasoline engine should weigh the pros and cons of each against the work that has to be done, says Tom Williams, extension agricultural engineer at the University of Delaware.

On the basis of performance, gasoline and diesel tractors of the same make and model will perform equally well. If both tractors are in good condition, the horsepower and lugging ability of the two are about the same.

Many farmers prefer a diesel tractor because it uses less fuel than its gasoline counterpart, and diesel fuel usually costs less. Because the diesel tractor requires a greater initial investment, however, the lower fuel costs should be balanced against higher fixed costs and slightly higher repair bills, Williams points out.

Diesel engines normally require fewer overhauls than gasoline engines, but you often need specialized equipment and more skill to overhaul a diesel.

Know your horsepower requirements before deciding the fuel-type. Then, compare tractors within the power range, Williams suggests.

Compare the purchase prices of the tractors — including additional costs for new storage facilities, if necessary. Look at the difference in price per gallon between the two fuels. Consider tax refunds and rebates, too.

The number of hours the tractor will be used during the year is also important, says Williams. Most farmer will overestimate the number of hours they use the tractor.

Studies conducted by Purdue University researchers reveal that farmers can't afford small diesel tractors in the 40 PTO horsepower range unless they

use them at least 600 hours a year and pay no more than \$500 over the cost of a comparable gasoline tractor, says Williams.

Diesel tractors in the 65 PTO horsepower range have an economic advantage over gasoline models when used 500 to 600 hours a year. This is true as long as the initial investment isn't more than \$400 over the price of a similar gasoline tractor. If the tractor is used 800 hours a year, you can justify paying an extra \$600 for the diesel.

If you need a tractor in the 90 PTO horsepower class, a diesel has a definite economic advantage over the gasoline model, notes Williams.

Use a big diesel at least 600 hours a year and you can afford to pay \$800 more for it, \$1,000 more if your diesel fuel costs two cents a gallon less than gasoline. When the tractor is

### My Neighbors



"Please hang up and dial again—"

Barely one-eighth of Iceland remains ice-covered year-round, says the National Geographic.

Used 800 to 1,000 hours, diesel is the better buy regardless of the fuel cost.

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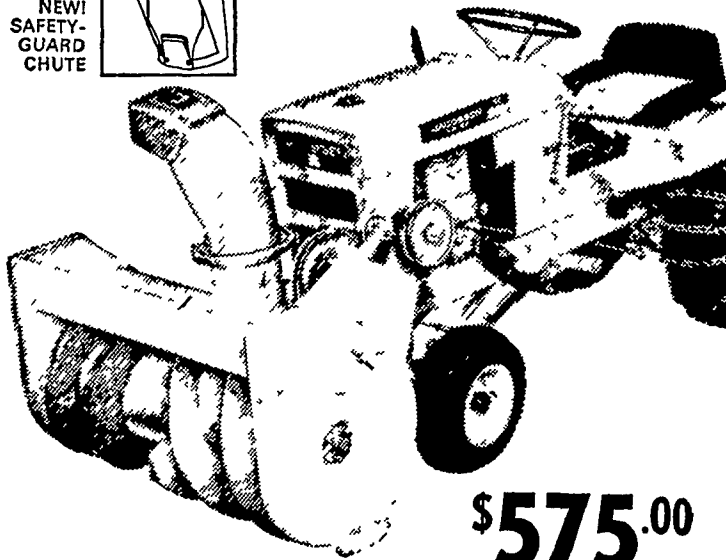
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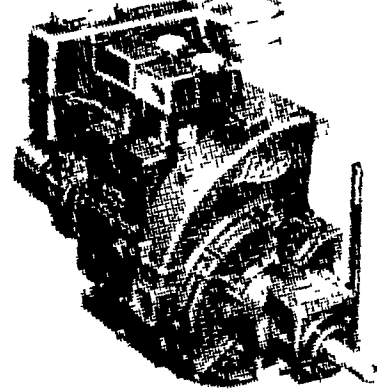
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### Protect Lawn

If we have much snow this winter, we can expect snow mold in lawns or fine turf where disease has been a problem, cautions Allen H. Bauer, extension plant pathologist at The Pennsylvania State University. Damage from snow mold is reduced or prevented by not piling snow on the lawn and by treating lawns or fine turf where the snow mold has been troublesome with chemicals. Where much snow falls, see your county agent for further information on snow mold control.

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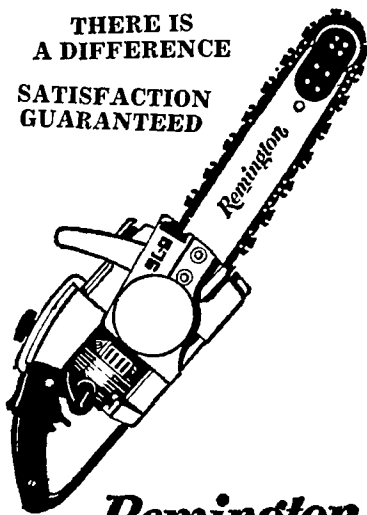
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