

Ten factors to determine used equipment prices

LANCASTER — Here are the ten factors that determine market prices for used tractors and farm equipment, according to the editors of "Marshall's Farm Equipment Guide"

1. **Age.** The age of a given tractor or other farm machine is by far the main consideration in establishing the market price. An older unit is obviously less valuable than a newer machine of the same make and model.

However, the difference is not always as great (or as small) as one might expect. In many cases improvements are made by the manufacturer during the course of a model run without changing the model designation, and machines which incorporate the change or improvement may be considerably higher-priced on the used market than models of the immediately-preceding year which do not have it.

Also, a certain amount of deterioration takes place in the condition of a machine strictly on account of age, whether it is operated or not. Deterioration in rubber tires, belts, hoses and even

pre-sealed bearings are examples.

2. **Mechanical condition.** The basic mechanical condition of a machine is often the major consideration, especially in the case of older models, which may or may not be economical to repair and overhaul.

Determining mechanical condition is sometimes difficult, and the buyer should take all the time needed to satisfy himself as to the unit's overall mechanical shape. In the same way, a recent major overhaul can add considerably to the market value of a used tractor or other machine, especially if the extent and cost of the work can be readily and accurately established, and the work was performed by a reputable shop.

3. **Hours of use.** Most motorized farm machines and virtually all farm tractors built in the last 10 to 15 years are factory-equipped with hour meters which record the elapsed time during which the engine has been operated.

Unless such meters have been tampered with, the hourmeter reading is an excellent indication of the amount of useful service life

left in the machine.

Basically, the buyer of a piece of used farm equipment or a tractor is actually buying the unused service life remaining.

4. **Maintenance.** For any experienced tractor or farm machine owner-operator, it is usually not difficult to determine how well (or how poorly) a used farm machine has been maintained by its previous owner or owners.

Under good maintenance and with careful operation, the useful service life of any farm machine is greatly extended. Equipment that has obviously been well looked after and carefully operated, always commands a premium price.

Another important consideration is the storage of the machine during the off-seasons. Equipment that has been stored under cover when not in use is generally in better condition and has a better appearance, and thus usually sells for a better price.

5. **Size and capacity.** Since the late 1960s there has been a definite and steady increase in the size, power and capacity of most farm machines. This has been the response of tractor and equipment manufacturers to the steady growth in farm size and the shortage of farm labor.

Thus it is often found that used machines in the largest size and model categories have retained more of their original value and are in greater demand by buyers than smaller models of similar age.

Premium prices especially are paid for the largest combine models, even those as old as 15 years, and their larger size and capacity is the main reason.

However, the same effect sometimes works in reverse in most parts of the country the demand for small utility-type tractors exceeds the supply and their prices hold up extremely well over time.

6. **New machine prices.** The

current list price for new equipment is an important factor in the value of used machines, especially late-model units.

It is not at all uncommon for current-model used units to actually rise in market value as the price of comparable new units increases. This is, of course, a less prominent factor in the case of older units (about five years old and older).

7. **Fuel type.** Diesel-powered tractors and equipment such as self-propelled combines appear to be rising in market value as fuel prices increase, because of the obvious operating-cost advantages.

However, it is also possible that with increases in on-farm fuel alcohol production the value of spark-ignition-engined used equipment will stabilize, or might even increase in some cases. There have been cases also where premium prices have been paid for LP-gas powered tractors and combines in parts of the country where LP supplies are plentiful.

8. **Optional equipment and attachments.** Well-equipped used tractors and other equipment have always been more in demand than simpler, "stripped" units of the same make, age, model and

condition. This is especially true in the case of such features (formerly options but now more or less standard equipment) as air-conditioned operator cabs, power-shift transmissions and hydrostatic traction drive for harvester combines.

9. **Popularity.** Not all tractors and machines depreciate at the same rate relative to new price. Some makes are simply more popular than others, both in the new and used markets.

Brand popularity varies in different parts of the nation, but in general machines of the most popular makes are in greater demand and tend to get consistently higher prices than less popular makes.

10. **Changing farm practices.** Occasionally used equipment values are affected by changes in basic farm practices, such as the conversion from corn picker-husking to combining. New techniques sometimes do not "catch on" the way they were expected to, and equipment for these may depreciate rapidly in value. Major changes may be coming in planting and tillage practices because of fuel and energy costs and may affect used equipment values in the future.

Farmers to talk land preservation

YORK — A panel discussion addressing techniques for the preservation of York County farmland will take place as part of the March meeting of the York County Farmers Union.

The meeting is scheduled for March 11, 1981 at 7:30 p.m. at Pleasant Acres, east of York. The meeting is open to the public.

The moderator for the panel discussion will be William Conn, chief of land use and development controls for the York County Planning Commission. Panelists include Amos Funk, a Lancaster County farmer, and David Schreffler, chairman of the Millcreek Township Planning and Zoning Commission in Lebanon County.

Over 20,000 acres of York County farmland have been lost to industrialization and housing in the last decade," said Albert Bentz, York County Farmers Union president. The price of farmland has tripled since 1970, and many farmers are better off financially by selling their properties to developers.

"Farmers cannot afford to purchase and keep land in agricultural use, so the prizes soils of York County are lost to the builders of shopping centers, housing developments, and in-

dustries," Bentz said.

The panel will discuss various ways that local government can prevent farm land from falling into the hands of non-agricultural developers.

Currently, legislation is moving through both the state House and Senate calling for the establishment of agriculture areas, or ag districts, which would provide farmers with a reasonable assurance that they could continue future farm operations without undo harassment or encroachment.

The bill, House Bill 143, also provides for the formation of an Advisory Committee made up of two farmers, two agribusinessmen, and an elected official to monitor the sale of agriculture property.

The bill is sponsored in the House by Lancaster County Representative Noah Wenger, and in the Senate by Indiana County Senator Patrick Stapleton.

"The legislation is an important step toward the protection of agriculture land in York County and all of Pennsylvania," stated Bentz. This meeting will provide farmers and the general public the opportunity to ask questions and understand what this legislation will do for ag preservation."

Schuylkill to hold estate seminars

SCHUYLKILL HAVEN — The Schuylkill County Extension Service will be conducting a series of two meetings on the subject of Estate Planning aimed at the average family situation.

The series will be led by Marilyn Furry, Penn State Family Living Economist, and Ellen Katz, Extension Regional Farm and Home Management Specialist. Topics to be covered include wills, family record keeping, and Pennsylvania Interstate Laws.

Meetings will be held at the Penn State Schuylkill Campus in Building C, Room 202 at 7 p.m. on March 10 and March 17.

The first meeting will deal with what you need in a family estate plan, and the second will cover how you go about preparing these items.

With the increasing complexity of our financial situations, it is important that everyone makes

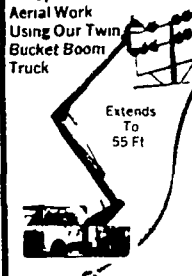
estate planning an integral part of their financial picture. These meetings are meant to give clear and easily understood ways to do just that.

There is no charge for this series of meetings, but registration is requested and can be made by calling the Extension Office at 717/385-3431.

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Blue cheese butts will cheer this butter log that can be sliced to serve on burgers, hot breads or baked potatoes. Combine one-half cup (1 stick) butter and one-fourth cup (1 oz.) crumbled Blue cheese. Add one tablespoon each fresh lemon juice and finely chopped onion with a dash of pepper, mix well. Shape to form a six-inch log on waxed paper. Wrap and chill. Let stand 30 minutes at room temperature before serving. (Yield 3/4)

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