

The Dairy Business

By
Newton Bair

Look For The Real Bargains

Everybody loves a bargain, especially when it can be put to immediate use. The trouble with so many so-called bargains is that once you have it you have to wonder what to do with it. When that happens, it's no longer a bargain.

Like a fellow I know who has eighteen tractors. He just couldn't resist the temptation to bid on any tractor that an auctioneer said was going too "cheap". Of course, this fellow is farming 200 acres, so maybe he can use them. It figures out to about eleven acres per tractor. He shouldn't ever be

behind with the field work.

Most of us are collectors and accumulators, and the longer we live the more we clutter up the attic and the shed loft with extra do-dads that have only ornamental value. There's no harm in that, and we might even get a lot of pleasure out of collecting "bargains". But beware that some of those items we call necessities can become no more than expensive collections of ornaments.

It May Be Smart To Not Own It

I don't need to tell you that it is costly to own farm machines. It is one of the curiosities of farming

that many pieces of machinery are put to work only a few days a year. Very few other types of business would dare to operate that way. But in the interest of getting a job done on time, we own nearly every piece of machinery that we intend to use at some time, even if it's only once a year. What a bonanza for the dealer who keeps us supplied with the stuff! He just keeps hoping that we are a good credit risk.

It's easier to justify the ownership of a lot of tools when there are more acres under cultivation. That fact has led to expanded operations, requiring more land, more cows, and a lot more labor. All of which requires a higher level of management than most of us ever dreamed of. Right here is the place to stop and take a good look at whether ownership becomes an asset or a liability. Is owning a machine an economic necessity or is it a status symbol? Where do we draw the line between timeliness and profitability?

There are ways of determining the practical economics of ownership versus renting or hiring. Formulas have been developed to work it out mathematically. The only problem with that is that some of the variables in the formula are hard to pin down. What are the actual costs of maintenance and repair? On an annual basis these two alone cost far more than we usually

allow. Interest on the investment, whether on your money or the banks, is substantial. A machine costing \$10,000 with a life of 5 years will cost \$3500 a year if it sets in the shed and does nothing. If it is used on fifty acres, the fixed cost of ownership will be \$70.00 per acre each year. Add all the variable costs of operating and maintaining it and the cost may double. You may be able to rent or hire it for less than half of that.

Figures Guide The Way To Sound Thinking

Now the example I just used is purely hypothetical without naming any specific machine. Anything that I would name, like a corn planter for example, will

immediately be justified in anyone's mind as worthy of ownership. But there are some machines that could just as easily be shared among two or more owners, at a real saving to everyone. The important thing to do is look at each capital item used in the business which a critical eye. Then weigh the advantages it might offer in convenience, timeliness and status of ownership against the true economic effect on the business. It is a healthy exercise in good farm management and could make YOU more money than owning a new monster.

Besides saving you money, you might even have more time to go fishing!

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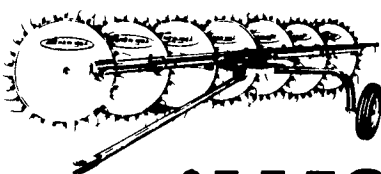
Dimensions and Weights
Total weight 840 lbs
Overall length 22' 11 1/2"
Overall width 39"
Overall height 3'
Working depth 102" (from gin and level, may vary from tractor to tractor)
Propeller dia. — 22"
Drive
Wearler: L55 telescoping U joint assembly with 2 shear bolts
Tractor Requirements
3 point hitch Category II or III
Narrow (Category III) Narrow requires reducing spacers in ball joints of lower lift arms
Hydraulics — single remote outlet
ASAE 8 inch stroke cylinder required (not furnished)
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HP 65 PTO minimum

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