



Answers to questions about structures, ventilation, soil, water, waste, energy, machinery and safety.

Buying tips for used equipment

Tight economic times cause farmers to cut back on new tractor and machinery purchases, and either fix up the old iron or hunt for good-quality used equipment. Following are ten buying tips and cautions when shopping for used farm equipment.

1. **Paint**

Watch for overspray and painted-over decals that indicate haste in painting or intent to cover up a problem.

2. **New parts**

Ask to see maintenance records. You want to know what caused a part to fail and require its replacement.

3. **Product Identification Number (PIN)**

Tampering with the PIN is illegal. Ask for evidence of ownership.

4. **Cleaned or washed machine**

This may be the mark of past good maintenance, or an intent to "wash away" potential problems. Look out for fresh oil seeps and "new-looking" paint that was, until recently, protected by years of built-up grease.

5. **Ill-fitted parts**

Hammer marks, kinked hoses and parts misalignment indicate wrong parts were used or care during assembly was ignored.

6. **Oil tricks**

On engines, thicker oils are sometimes used to reduce leakage. Check the owners manual for the proper oil grade. If possible, get an oil analysis, especially if the oil has a "tackiness" to it.

7. **"Just overhauled"**

Look for new gasket edges and shiny metal where parts join to be sure. Ask to see shop receipts for the work.

8. **Dealers and Salespersons**

Are dealer repairs carefully done during slack winter months or in haste during times of fieldwork? Are salespersons genuinely helpful, or do you seem pressured to buy?

9. **Contractors' equipment**

Contractors sometimes buy less-expensive agricultural equipment for their more-demanding industrial uses. Watch out for points of excess wear and oversize or heavy-duty tires not typical of the equipment.

10. **Run and drive it**

Go with the seller to the lot to get the machine. Observe any start-up problems, smoke puffs or unusual sounds. If possible, load tractors in all gears once warmed up to check for desired lugging power.