

WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN BUYING A FERGUSON TRACTOR

By Dean Austin, Retired Ferguson/MF Mechanic

Oil Leaks: On the bell housing there is a weep hole on the bottom. It should have a cotter pin head sticking down twist it around and check there for leaks. It is all right if it is a little damp around it but should not have a steady drip of oil. If the pin head is not there stick something up in the hole and move it around to make sure it is not plugged. Sellers will sometimes plug that hole to hide transmission leaks. It can get very expensive to repair those leaks.

Engine Exhaust: Let the engine warm up and then let it idle for a couple of minutes. Run it up to about 1500 rpm. There should not be any blue smoke coming out of the exhaust.

Hydraulics: Try to have the hydraulic oil hot when you do this test. Put something on the three point (the heavier the better). Raise it up and then shut off the engine. It will probably seep down; that is normal. It should not fall steadily, however.

Power Steering: Behind the grill of the F-40 is the power steering cylinder. If it hasn't been cleaned up it will have oil and dirt there. There should not be any oil that you can see there. Look for any clean spots; they are caused by leaks. Look for similar indications on any TO-35 with power steering.

Rear end: Shake the rear wheels sideways to see if the axles are tight and check there for any signs of a leak right behind the wheels.

Clutch: With the independent PTO it is best to get the transmission oil close to operating temperature first. The clutch should stop the tractor with the pedal depressed half way down with the PTO still turning. Then the PTO should stop when you push the clutch all the way down. With something hooked to the PTO shaft, engage the PTO; it should start to turn immediately. If it hesitates, it is a good sign the clutches or the seals are bad.

Engine: Pull the hydraulic dipstick. If the oil is white or light gray, it means the oil has water in it. It may have a cracked block. Check for coolant leaks or any major oil leaks and be sure to check the oil & coolant levels.

Brakes: If the brakes have good pedal but still not stop the tractor, you may have to turn the drums and replace the shoes and other parts.

Many of these same points apply to earlier models of Ferguson as well as early MF models. This is how I would check one if I were looking to buy.

(Revised 9/19/10)