

FREE TOOLKIT

FARMER PRODUCT GUIDE

Buying more tractor than your operation needs wastes money every month you own it. Buying less than your heaviest implement demands costs you stalled PTO shafts, slow hydraulics, and hay left in the field when the weather turns. The fix is sizing the tractor to the work you actually do, not the horsepower number that sounds impressive at the counter.

WHAT'S INSIDE

The full guide · A spec comparison chart · A pre-purchase checklist

SIZING A TRACTOR TO THE WORK, NOT THE NEIGHBOR'S

The number on the hood is engine horsepower, and it is not the number that turns your implements. PTO horsepower is what actually spins a disc mower, tedder, rake, or baler, and it always runs lower than the engine rating. A Standard L Series L3902, for example, is rated at 37.5 HP but only delivers 30.3 HP at the PTO. If you are matching a tractor to a piece of hay equipment, the PTO HP number on the implement's spec sheet is the one that matters, not the tractor's headline HP.

Hydraulic flow works the same way. GPM output determines how fast your loader lifts a bucket of feed, how quickly a hydraulic-fold tedder opens up in the field, and whether a disc mower's hydraulic lift keeps pace at the end of a row. A tractor with low hydraulic flow will feel sluggish running newer implements built for higher oil demand, even if the engine has plenty of power to spare.

Three-point lift capacity is the third piece, and it is easy to overlook until you hook up something heavy. Rated lift capacity determines what you can safely raise and carry level, not just what you can drag behind you. Undersize it against a loaded box blade or a heavier mounted implement and you will feel the back end of the tractor struggle on grades or bounce on rough ground. All three numbers, PTO HP, hydraulic flow, and lift capacity, need to clear what your heaviest implement requires before you look at anything else on the spec sheet.

MATCHING TRACTOR TO TASK

General chores and feeding on a smaller operation. If your day is mostly feeding cattle, moving round bales, bush-hogging fence rows, and running a box blade on the lane, a Standard L Series tractor covers it well. The L2502 and L3302 handle loader work and light rotary cutting without excess cost, and the L3902 adds enough PTO HP (30.3) and 3-point capacity (2,870 lb) for heavier chore work. If you know you will eventually pull a small disc mower into the mix, step up to the L4802, which puts you at 39 PTO HP, enough to clear the DM1017's 36 HP minimum with room to spare.

Hay production. This is where PTO HP earns its keep as the number you check first, because every piece of hay equipment lists a minimum, and your tractor has to clear the highest one in your lineup, not just the average. A mid-size disc mower like the DM1022 needs 42 minimum PTO HP, the DM1024 needs 46, and a mid-size round baler like the BV4160 needs 40 to 60 depending on setup. Run those numbers against a Grand L70 Series tractor and the upper-end models line up well: the L5070PRM delivers 39.8 PTO HP and the L6070PRM delivers 53, both fine for a DM1022 or DM1024 mower, a tedder, a rake, and a BV4160 baler on the lighter end of its range. The MX Series (41.3 to 51.8 PTO HP) is built for exactly this kind of work too, with a 2,310 lb 3-point hitch that handles the full hay lineup without strain. The mistake we see most often is sizing the tractor to the mower and forgetting the baler usually has the highest PTO HP requirement in the whole operation.

Heavier fieldwork or larger acreage. If you are running the wider end of the lineup, the DM2032 disc mower (55 minimum PTO HP), the TE6576CD tedder at nearly 25 feet, or the BV5160 round baler (75 minimum PTO HP with its 14-knife cutting system), you need to move up to the M4 or M5 Series. The M5-091 delivers 76 PTO HP, which clears the BV5160's requirement with a small margin, plus a loader capacity near 3,990

lb for handling bulk feed and stacked bales. The M4 Series is worth a look too if your work is heavier on daily livestock chores than long field days. It is built cab-forward with a class-leading turning radius for tight barnyards and an independent hydraulic PTO clutch that speeds up switching between mowing and baling equipment mid-season.

THE HAY EQUIPMENT LINEUP

A disc mower cuts the hay and conditions it in the same pass, crimping the stems with a steel or rubber-tine conditioner so they dry faster and more evenly. Width should match both your acreage and your tractor. The DM1017 at 5'6" fits a smaller L Series tractor and tighter gateways, while the DM2032 at 10'6" covers ground fast but needs 55 minimum PTO HP to run it right. Always check a mower's minimum PTO HP against your tractor before you buy either one on its own.

A tedder fluffs and spreads the cut hay after mowing, exposing more of it to sun and air so it dries before the next rain moves in. The TE4052T works well for mid-size operations at 17'1" of working width, while the TE6576CD stretches to nearly 25 feet for operators who need to cover a lot of ground between weather windows. Wider tedders fold hydraulically for transport, which is worth confirming your tractor's hydraulic output can support without a delay.

A rake gathers the dried, tilled hay into a clean, consistent windrow that feeds the baler evenly. Windrow width should be set to match your baler's pickup width, 79 inches on the BV4160 and 86 inches on the BV5160, so the bale chamber is never starved or overwhelmed. The round baler is the last step, compressing that windrow into a dense round bale and wrapping it in net wrap for weather protection in storage. It is usually the heaviest PTO draw of the four, which is why the baler you plan to run should be the first thing you check against a tractor's PTO HP, not the last.

REPAIR OR REPLACE, AND BUYING CONSIDERATIONS

Hours are the best starting point for deciding whether to keep repairing an older tractor or trade it. Under about 4,000 hours, most machines are still in their prime and repairs are usually routine. Between 4,000 and 7,000 hours you are in the transition zone, where seals, hydraulic leaks, and wear parts start showing up more often and it is worth pricing trade options while the tractor still presents well. Past 8,000 hours, the risk of a major component failure, engine, transmission, or hydraulic pump, climbs fast. A simple rule holds up well in the shop: if a single repair estimate approaches or exceeds half the tractor's current market value, replacing it is usually the smarter financial move.

The real cost of downtime rarely shows up on the repair invoice. In Stark, Carroll, and Columbiana counties, a good weather window for cutting or baling hay does not wait for parts to arrive, and a breakdown mid-cutting can cost you more in lost hay quality than the repair itself. When the numbers point toward replacement, financing structured around your revenue cycle and a conversation with your accountant about Section 179 can make a new tractor or implement easier on cash flow than the sticker price suggests.

Wherever you land, local parts and service support matters more than it seems until something breaks mid-season. Fast access to the right part, and a shop that can turn a repair around quickly, often protects more

of your season than the equipment itself.

SPEC COMPARISON CHART

Tractors and hay equipment compared — match PTO HP to your heaviest implement

SERIES & MODELS	KEY SPECS	BEST FOR
L Series L2502, L3302, L3902, L4802	24.8–48.4 HP	General chores, feeding, light rotary cutting.
Grand L70 Series L3770DLX, L4270DLX, L3970PRM, L4470PRM, L5070PRM, L6070PRM	37–60 HP	Mid-size hay production — disc mower, tedder, rake, and a baler on the lighter end of its range.
MX Series MX4900HST, MX5400, MX5400HSTC, MX6000	51.8–63.4 HP	Full hay lineup without strain; 2,310 lb 3-point hitch.
M4 Series M4-071HDC12, M4D- 061HDC12, M4D-071HDC12	65.4–73.2 HP	Heavy daily livestock chores; cab-forward, class-leading turning radius.
M5 Series M5660SUHD, M5-091, M5- 091HDC12, M5-111HDC24	57.9–105.6 HP	Heaviest fieldwork and the widest mowers/balers in the lineup.
Disc Mowers DM1017, DM1022, DM1024, DM2028, DM2032	5'6"–10'6" cut, 36–55 min PTO HP	Match cutting width and minimum PTO HP to your tractor before buying either alone.
Tedders TE4052T, TE6576CD	17'1"–24'11" working width	Dries cut hay faster ahead of the next rain.
Rakes RA1035, RA1042T, RA2071T- EVO, RA2076	11'6"–25'7" working width	Set windrow width to match your baler's pickup width (79–86 in).
Round Balers BV4160 PREMNET, BV5160 NET	40–75 min PTO HP	Usually the heaviest PTO draw in the lineup — size your tractor to this first.

Specs shown are published Kubota/Land Pride figures for reference. Current pricing, financing, and trade-in value aren't listed here — call (330) 868-6419 or stop by and we'll run real numbers for your situation.

PRE-PURCHASE INSPECTION CHECKLIST

Bring this along whether you're looking at new or used equipment.

- ☐ Check the hour meter — and ask if it matches the maintenance records
- ☐ Inspect cutting edges, teeth, and blades for uneven or excessive wear
- ☐ Check gearboxes and driveline joints for play or looseness
- ☐ Inspect all hydraulic hoses for cracking, weeping, or soft spots
- ☐ Check pins and bushings on the loader and 3-point arms for wear
- ☐ Start the machine cold — note starting time, smoke color, and any warning lights
- ☐ Cycle the loader and any hydraulic attachments through their full range
- ☐ Ask for maintenance records — what's been done, and when
- ☐ Ask why the machine is for sale
- ☐ Ask about remaining factory warranty (new) or extended coverage options
- ☐ Ask the dealer about service turnaround time and what wear parts they stock locally

WHEN YOU'RE READY

If you want help putting real numbers behind a tractor or hay equipment decision, we're glad to walk through your acreage, your equipment list, and what you're actually trying to get done. Stop by Unkefer Sales at 1115 N. Market St. in Minerva, or call (330) 868-6419, Monday through Friday 8am to 5pm or Saturday 8am to noon. We've been outfitting farms across Northeast Ohio since 1968, and we'd rather size it right the first time than sell you more or less tractor than you need.

This toolkit includes a spec comparison chart and a pre-purchase checklist you won't find on the web page. If you'd like a written recommendation with real pricing for your property, or want to talk financing or a trade-in, just call or stop by — we're glad to run the numbers with you.