



In control: the Mahindra's controls (above).
Baled up: Andrew Russell puts the tractor through its paces.

Simple, sturdy power

Terry Russell does not give up on his tractors easily.
Andrea Mayes reports

THE newest machine at Terry Russell's Green Dale farm at Orbost is a 48.5kW Mahindra 6500 utility tractor.

Terry bought the tractor with a front-end loader in March, trading in a 30-year-old Massey Ferguson 175.

He said his new tractor is simple, sturdy and does absolutely everything he wants it to.

Terry bought his first tractor 38 years ago at the age of 18. He paid \$3000 for the 33.6kW Massey Ferguson 135.

He traded it in after eight years but bought it back because he missed having it around. It's still going.

Terry works the 160ha farm on the Snowy River flats with his father, Frank, 78, and son, Andrew, 21.

Andrew's great-great-grandfather, John Russell, was the first in the family to farm at Green Dale.

Terry's eldest son, Jason, 31, works off-farm at Snowy River Seeds but helps out in the hay season, when the family also does hay and silage contracting.

"We've been contracting for 20 years. Ever since we stopped milking cows," Terry said.

"Oh yes, we had a dairy farm. I know what pain is."

The Russells' customers are mostly dairy farmers, who buy in silage and round bales, as well as hobby farmers and horse owners.

Terry plans to use the new Mahindra tractor mainly for loading and unloading silage and hay.

"The front-end loader capacity was a real attraction," he said.

"It lifts 1.5 tonnes, and you need that with silage bales.

"Heavy-duty components give you the greater lift capacity and it all adds up to getting the work done faster.

"It's a comfortable machine with a good road speed of 40km/h.

"That makes a difference when we're towing loads of hay.

"We load to four semi-trailers that we converted, installing a turntable under the front, and a drawbar."

Terry bought the Mahindra through Leon Suggate at Berwick Tractors and Trading.

"I got a good deal," Terry said.

In a word

MAKE: Mahindra
MODEL: 6500 4WD utility tractor.
BEST FEATURE: Terry said the front-end loader lift capacity of 1.5 tonnes was a real attraction.
LIST PRICE: \$32,890.

MORE INFO: Terry Russell on 0427 541 932, Berwick Tractors and Trading on (03) 9707 2240 or Mahindra Australia on (07) 3272 7020.

"The service they provide is excellent."

Terry's Mahindra 6500 is powered by a direct-injection, water-cooled diesel and has 8F/8R synchro shuttle, a full syncromesh transmission and wet disc brakes.

The front axle, with limited slip differential, provided additional pulling power in heavy soil conditions and also enhanced the loader performance.

A tight angle from the hydrostatic steering meant there were no problems in manoeuvring the tractor in confined spaces.

"We got a three-year engine and power-train warranty from Mahindra," Terry said.

"I don't know of any others who are offering that.

"It tells you something about their confidence in the toughness of these machines."

Mahindra's assembly and customer support centre in Brisbane was established to ensure that customers received strong after-sales support.

The centre maintains a comprehensive range of spare parts.

The Russell family runs 200 Angus-cross cows and calves on 130ha of grazing land.

The cows are joined to Limousin and Angus bulls and the calves sold locally when they reach about 400kg.

About 30ha is sown to lucerne.

The Russells have a 10-year-old 74.6kW MF399 tractor, an eight-year-old 63.4kW MF4245 and a two-year-old 93.3kW MF6465.

In addition to baling work, the Massey Ferguson tractors are used with two New Holland rakes, two Kuhn rakes and a big Howard 10-finger-wheel rake, which was bought last year.

Terry said the Howard rake made a good, big row for their Viccon round baler and saved a lot of time.

For five years they have had a



More power: a bale clamp takes full advantage of the Mahindra's front-end loader. Pictures: MARK GRIFFIN

Kverneland round bale wrapper that does about 4000 bales a season.

And for 18 years they've used a New Holland square baler.

"It's a good one," Terry said.

"We used to buy a new one every five years but now we upgrade certain parts and hold on to it."

Terry said the soil on the Orbost flats varied a lot.

"You can go from 2ft (0.6m) of topsoil to about 90ft (27.5m) but whatever you've got, once you've got lucerne established, you don't need to worry about irrigation."

He said they occasionally had to irrigate a new crop with spray lines.

However, the Orbost area had just had its heaviest winter rainfall in about eight years.

"The Snowy looks like a river again. Time to get the boat out and go after a few bream and mullet. Beautiful country and great fishing — the main thing is remembering to stop and enjoy it now and again," Terry said.