



Choosing the Right Compact Backhoe

Cub Cadet Yanmar product manager Roger Gifford offers tips on evaluating size, horsepower, usability, features and design to help you find the right compact backhoe for your needs.

Courtesy Cub Cadet Yanmar Getting Started

Consider investing in a compact backhoe for your farm. Not only will it help with routine maintenance around the property, but owning your own compact backhoe will eliminate the need to outsource projects like tree and stump removal or light excavation.

But with all the available options, it is easy to get overwhelmed when searching for the right product.

That is why before making your purchase, it is important to evaluate your needs and expectations by determining how your backhoe can make an impact immediately and what operations you may need it to perform in the future.

The right product should be powerful enough to handle all necessary jobs, easy to use and something you feel comfortable operating.

By taking some time to understand and evaluate factors like size, horsepower, features and design, you can feel confident knowing you have selected the right product to handle all jobs—big and small—for many years to come.

Size

The first and most important thing to consider is property or farm size and type. Will the product be used in relatively open spaces or will you need a tractor and backhoe that can fit in tight spots? Understanding how you will use your tractor and backhoe will make it easier to pick the right size.

If your property or farm is relatively small and has established turf, your needs probably fall into the sub-compact category.

Courtesy Cub Cadet Yanmar Sub-compact refers to tractors with power take-off (PTO) horsepower between zero and 20. Sub-compacts have features similar to their larger counterparts but offer users increased versatility and maneuverability.

If your property or farm is larger, more open and requires less maneuverability, a medium or large compact tractor might be a better fit. (Compact tractor refers to tractors with 40 PTO horsepower and under.) Medium or large compacts offer a great deal of features and functions but lack some of the maneuverability found in smaller sub-compacts.

Horsepower

After you select the right-sized tractor, you should look at the specifications on available products in the category, beginning with horsepower.

It is important to compare gross horsepower, which represents the amount of power that the engine produces, and PTO horsepower. PTO horsepower is what is left to operate the implements after losses for engine operation. PTO horsepower and reserve engine torque are the two most significant specifications to consider because they most directly affect the capabilities of the tractor and the ease of operation.

Reserve engine torque is used to maintain constant power and speed, even when the tractor is under load or operating an attachment.

It is important to understand that reserve engine torque is not a specification that is usually publicized. In order to understand reserve engine torque, you will need to actually get in the seat, feel how the machine operates in use, and test the tractor with attachments.