

## Check your PTO shaft

~ *Paul Moroni*

The other day I got a phone call about a Massey Ferguson compact tractor with a broken rear PTO. The shaft broke off where the safety lock pin groove is cut into it.

The owner was installing his rototiller on the tractor and was thinking about lunch and did not check that the shaft was locked correctly. When he started the unit, it began to whip around and broke the end off.

He called Big Boy Toys in NH and they told him it would take two weeks to get it. So I told him to call Wenger's tractor parts in Myerstown, PA for a used one. They had it in stock and told him he would have it in a couple of days. Of course, he has a vegetable farm and needs the tractor now, so that was good.

To replace the shaft, we had to remove the rear fenders and seat, then drain the oil out of the transmission case and remove the 3-point lift mechanism. To remove the shaft, I had to remove the PTO shaft seal. There is a retaining clip that holds the bearing and shaft in the case. The trick is you need to hold the gear and bearing on the inside to install the new shaft.

On these compact tractors you may notice there are control levers on each side of the seat for the rear hydraulic hose, the PTO lever, and the high low ranger for the transmission. I noticed that all the levers were hard to move. On these tractors, all the pivoting parts for the lever are under the operator platform and not easily seen. I had to remove all the levers and press them apart. When they're made, they use plastic bushing on the pivot points with steel shafts. If any rust gets in the shaft, it will make the bushing tighten around the shaft and then it will bind. So, all the parts had to be removed and lubricated. You need to go under the tractor and look at these things and lubricate them once a year because you may not notice until it is too late.

Please double check your shaft coupler lock and make sure it is on correctly and the safety shields are in place. Double check.