

Wheels: D.E.P. writes by e-mail, "I own two farm tractors, a 1951 International Cub and a 1965 Massey Ferguson Industrial model. When the lead was taken out of gasoline some years ago, I have had to add lead additive to every tank of gas. If not, the manifold would very soon get red hot and the tractor would lose power, stall out, and then I'd have to let cool. Adding lead additive to the gasoline cured that, but it can also gum up the carburetor and gas line if too much is added.

Talking to others with 1950s and 1960s models, some of them don't have to ever mix lead additive and have no problem, and some say they do. Newer models they say don't need it.

When this first began giving me problems, I was told at an automotive parts dealer to use lead additive because the lack of lead in the gasoline could burn the valves. The parts dealer said he sold plenty of lead additive to farmers for that same reason.

Since some tractors have to use lead additive and some don't, is there any way I can get around this, maybe advance the timing or something? Any comment you may have certainly would be helpful. The tractors are only run a couple or three times a year for about 3 to 6 days each by a city boy on the farm - you know like bush hogging, mowing weeds, playing farmer for few days each time. (You can take the boy out of the country but you can't take the country out of the boy.)

Halderman: You are correct that some older engines built before about 1974 will often need to use a lead additive. What is happening is that the valve seats can become worn if lead is not used in older engines that do not have hardened valve seats. Some older and industrial engines did have hardened valve seats and therefore do not need the additive. Also the additive is mostly required if the engine is being operated under full power for long periods at a time. If the tractor is only used for mowing and other light service, valve seat wear will not occur and an additive will not be needed. What would I do? I would ask a technician to check and adjust the valves as needed, especially if this has not been done regularly. This could solve the engine running problem, too.

