

FORD & Fordson TRACTORS

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Mint 4100 in South Africa



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South African Road Test

Peter Love takes a look at an interesting export specification Ford 4100 that he came across in South Africa and which just might be the type of 'blue' tractor you have been looking for.

When Wilfred Mole says "come and spend a few days with us here in South Africa" you know it's going to be good and that's exactly how it was. South Africa is a place of great beauty, one must always remember this is Africa and you need to be 'street wise' just everywhere.

On this occasion I travelled around Johannesburg, including Sandton where I took in H P Bronn "De Kroon" as he is known, the famous Ford/New Holland dealer, who at the time had more 1000 series parts than anybody else in the world. Many items were made in Mexico and such places. In fact he supplied not only South Africa with Ford parts, but much of Africa generally. For many years Ford was number one in SA, particularly in the 1940-80s, but as time has gone on Fiat became very popular and somehow got around the trade embargos that existed in the 80s. Then

Showing the character of the tractor, particularly those wings, air cleaner and front weights.

as Fiat/New Holland in the 90s (still in the Terracotta livery) they made great strides for simplistic and reliable machines.

Whilst travelling down through the Eastern Free State area to Wilfred's Hoggsville premises there were a raft of working tractors of different colours.

Included in this array of machinery was the rare to see, 1979 Ford 4100 that had been on mowing duties when I arrived. This was a type of tractor I hadn't had the pleasure of driving before so I was pleased to be invited to sample it. It looked very smart indeed, having been totally rebuilt and reconditioned by Head's Tractor Company from Hermastad, Pretoria.

They had certainly done a great job on this typical export configuration 4100 tractor. Of course it didn't feature a cab, owing to the sunny climate here and the fact that European legislation doesn't apply here. However the 4100 was offered by the factory with a safety cab and later on with a quieter Lambourn product, some were also to receive Duncan and Sekura cabs, particularly the example I remember well in west

Kent. Anyway, our 'road test' example came without the cab, but with a tall air cleaner pipe. It would be just as much at home working in North America as it would here in South Africa.

This 700 7A1 4100 series model was introduced in late 1975 and was basically a replacement for the French market 1970-74 three-cylinder 3055 that did especially well in the vineyard region. The 3055 and 4100 both have the three-litre 53bhp engine that produced 39 draw bar horsepower and 45.5 from the pto. The hydraulics were similar to the 3055 although upgraded with a more powerful pump arrangement. On entering the footplate you get the feeling this is not as small a tractor as you might think, it has a 'chunky' feel to it when you get down to it. The eight-speed transmission has well spaced ratios through the high and low range of gears. As for the driving position, I felt that one sits over the dash



and steering somewhat, as you do on the grey Fergie TE-20 range. However as a great lover of foot throttles I was in heaven here with the stout 3/8in throttle rod and pedal doing a good job and well placed on the footplate. The hydraulic controls are well situated to the right of the seat and hidden by the very strong and well made wings, just right for the harsh environment and terrain these tractors work in. Interestingly the lights are on the outside of the front cowl, not in the grill as per European specification.

As for road speeds, it went through the gears well and stopped pleasingly I thought. The handbrake was not sticking either, which is another trait of unserviced machines of this type that also tend to seize up after a while if not greased in certain places. All

told the 4100 I was driving was an impressive machine, but whether the driving position becomes tiring after a while is debatable.

It was in 1981 that the Ford ten series came along. That meant the new 4110 replaced the 4100 and with it came the 3.3 litre engine 57bhp engine that had been fitted previously in the

4600. In fact the new 4610 engine was redeveloped to produce more power, but that's another story. One could say the 4110 was more popular than the 4100 making the later model very collectable now. I certainly enjoyed the chance to road test Wilfred Mole's 4100 and learn more about these practical, simple, understated, 'blue' machines. ■



The footplate layout is very good for the driver.



Showing the dash arrangement and the very low hours of the 4100.



Changing those fuel filters is essential to keep this tractor on top form in the environment it works in.



Peter Love gives the tractor a full road test in South Africa.



The back end in simplified form, more parts available to fit when required.