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Next week
 We bring you a guide to keeping
 two-stroke engines running

In action You can see the two tractors featured in this week's test working mixed ground with a brace of four-furrow Dvlac ploughs. Just head online to www.fwi.co.uk/newholland-fendt

On test: Fendt 312 v New Holland T5.120

This month we take two tractors from either end of the 120hp price spectrum – Fendt's highly prized 312 versus the more workaday New Holland T5.120. **Edd Mowbray** and **Oliver Mark** find out whether they're as far apart in performance as their £54,000 price difference suggests

A 120hp loader tractor remains a must-have weapon on smaller mixed farms, but prices are skyrocketing out of the reach of their typical modest-acre buyers.

That's particularly the case as you climb up the spec lists. For the New Holland T5.120, there's a £15,000 void between entry-level models and the top-spec machine we tested. It makes even worse reading for Fendt fans, where the price of a fully loaded 312 comes at a £30,000 premium compared with the no-frills Power option.

It's a horsepower sector in which New Holland has traditionally been strong in the UK. The T5 has always been one of its strongest sellers, whereas up until recently Fendt was a small fish in the sub-150hp pond.

However, the company has reported a surge in sales of its 300-series – up from 12 units in 2012 to 80 machines last year.

ENGINE

The Fendt has the slightly bigger four-cylinder block of the two, with its Agco 4.4-litre having the edge in both capacity and power over the 3.4-litre FPT in the New Holland.

On tick-over, the Fendt offers up

a smooth, refined sound, while its rival is louder, lumpier and more intrusive, meaning Steve Wright's Serious Jockin' has to be cranked up a few notches louder.

That said, it seemed to put the power to the ground better when pulling a four-furrow plough in the field. The near-identical brace of Dvlac implements – one having slatted mouldboards and the other through heavier clay patches, but the New Holland rarely wilted and often pulled away from the bigger-engined Fendt on longer runs.

However, when we did hit a sticky patch, the Vario gearbox was quick to react to trouble.

Comparatively, if the NH dropped into the 1,200-1,400 rev bracket, the train-like pulling power between 1,600-1,900rpm all but vanished, leaving the driver frantically reaching for one of the buttons to drop down a couple of cogs before it conked out.

TRANSMISSION

Probably the biggest difference between the two machines, apart from the alarming price mismatch, is the type of transmission they employ. Fendt uses its time-proven

NEW HOLLAND T5.120

- * Engine 3.4-litre Fiat four-cyl
- * Power 117hp
- * Transmission 16x16 Electro Command – four range semi-powershift with auto function
- * Rear lift capacity 5,429kg
- * Weight 4,550kg
- * Top speed 40kph
- * Front tyres 440/65 R28
- * Rear tyres 540/65 R38
- * Hydraulic pump flow 84 litres/min
- * Fuel tank 165 litres
- * Price £77,046



- ### FENDT 312 VARIO
- * Engine 4.4-litre Agco Power four-cyl
 - * Power 123hp
 - * Transmission Vario CVT
 - * Rear lift capacity 5,960kg
 - * Weight 4,970kg
 - * Top speed 40kph
 - * Front tyres 480/65 R24
 - * Rear tyres 540/65 R38
 - * Hydraulic pump flow 110 litres/min
 - * Fuel tank £10 litres
 - * Retail price £131,000

CAB

The quality of the cab layout, fixtures and fittings is noticeably different. The Fendt is light, roomy and almost as nice as the 1000-series, which is its superior by 400hp.

However, it was let down by mounting the controls on the side console, rather than the armrest position of the larger models. This means that as you bounce around in the seat, it's hard to keep a steady hand on the joystick.

The seat base was also too short for anyone much more than 5ft tall and the open screw heads on show left us feeling like the quality of finish was a fraction short of the bigger models.



Fendt fits a touchscreen on the side console, along with the two joysticks

Both tractors were fitted with four-furrow Dvlac ploughs

Choosing the top-range Profi-Plus specification offers up guidance capabilities and a 7in touchscreen housing all tractor functions and switch which buttons are connected to the different spool valves.

This makes changing settings far easier than non-Fendt users might think, and the brand's old reputation for complexity is now slightly unfair.

In stark contrast, the New Holland's cab is awkward to access via some angled steps and the living space felt smaller, emphasised by the cheaper plastics and six boxy pillars.

It also comes with a rather winky screen mounted in the centre of the dashboard, which stores very basic tractor information and makes it far more difficult to adjust any settings and monitor information.

LOADER

Surprisingly, the New Holland wins in the loader department. The electric joystick is mounted on the right hand armrest, which falls into the hand comfortably and has thumb-positioned auxiliary controls along with gear shifters on the rear for finger operation.

While the Fendt also has electronic controls, they are mounted further away from the operator and probably the better choice. It's a

don't move with the seat.

Views from the cabs to the front loaders were similar. Fendt uses a one-piece curved glass that extends the full length of the front window and swoops into the roof, doing away with crossbars that obscure vision even at full height.

Its rival has a slide-back sun visor to reveal the roof window when needed, and so has a narrow bar across the top and means the driver still has to lean forward to follow the bucket through the lift arc.

VERDICT

If a majority of your work is loader-related then the New Holland is probably the better choice. It's a

FENDT 312

LIKES

- ✔ Quiet and comfortable
- ✔ Transmission reacts quickly to conditions
- ✔ Easy access, spacious cab
- ✔ Surprisingly simple to use

GRIPES

- ✗ Loader controls sit on the side console
- ✗ Seat base too short
- ✗ Transmission neutral position hard to find

NEW HOLLAND T5

LIKES

- ✔ Strong pulling power
- ✔ Armrest-mounted loader joystick
- ✔ Lots of powershift button options
- ✔ Smooth shifting under load

GRIPES

- ✗ Noisy
- ✗ Gives up easily below 1,400rpm
- ✗ Small-feeling cab
- ✗ Winky in-cab computer

little noisier than the Fendt, but you will most likely be paying the Germans a lot more cash for electronic wizardry that you may never use and, at well over £50,000 difference in list price, that's a lot of money to justify parting with.

There are obvious comparisons to be drawn against the transmissions, but it really comes down to whether you're dead set on having a CVT or not.

If, on the other hand, long days in the field make up a large portion of the machine's workload, then the Fendt has to be a contender purely for the comfort it brings to the operation and features such as headland management make life pretty easy for drilling or cultivations work.

Of course, it will be worth a fair bit more when you come to sell it on, too.

If neither machine tickles your fancy, we have picked out three alternatives with a few hours on the clock that come in at a fraction of the price of a new model (see "Second-hand options", left).

Year	2016	2015	2009
Hours	1,200	1,550	3,060
Power	120hp	100hp	110hp
Transmission	Semi-powershift	Powershift	Dyna-4 semi-powershift
Loader	Factory fitted	Factory fitted	Quickie Q55
Road speed	40kph	40kph	40kph
Price	£52,778	£44,055	£29,076

Second-hand options
 If the sky-high list prices are too much to stomach, we have picked out three second-hand options with a few hours on the clock that may tick your box.



John Deere 6120M, Claas Axion 420, Something a bit older MF 5455