



## The Right Equipment

### KENT SHERMAN AND BOB DOWNHAM

worked closely together when it was time to modernize the Woodbine tractor fleet in 2009. Sherman is service/fleet manager here; Downham is the president of Connect Equipment, which supplies Woodbine with its Massey Ferguson tractors. Now 12 Massey models are at work, with more on the way.

Using Massey Ferguson equipment wasn't a given, though. Sherman presented his needs to dealers of two brands, and they gave it their best shot. A major need was absolute reliability of product and service, since racing 5 days a week for most of the year allows little breathing room. "Over the years, we had acquired a lot of different brands of tractors," Sherman says. "We were looking to upgrade and homogenize the fleet, and to find a company that could satisfy all our needs. Connect gave us great confidence. We have to have someone in partnership with us, so if we do have an issue, they'll deal with it as quickly as possible."

There have been few breakdowns, even with a lot of hours run—1,000 to 1,200 per year on some of the tractors. Downham recalls one time (the malfunction of a MF6490) and a replacement was immediately substituted while the machine was fixed.

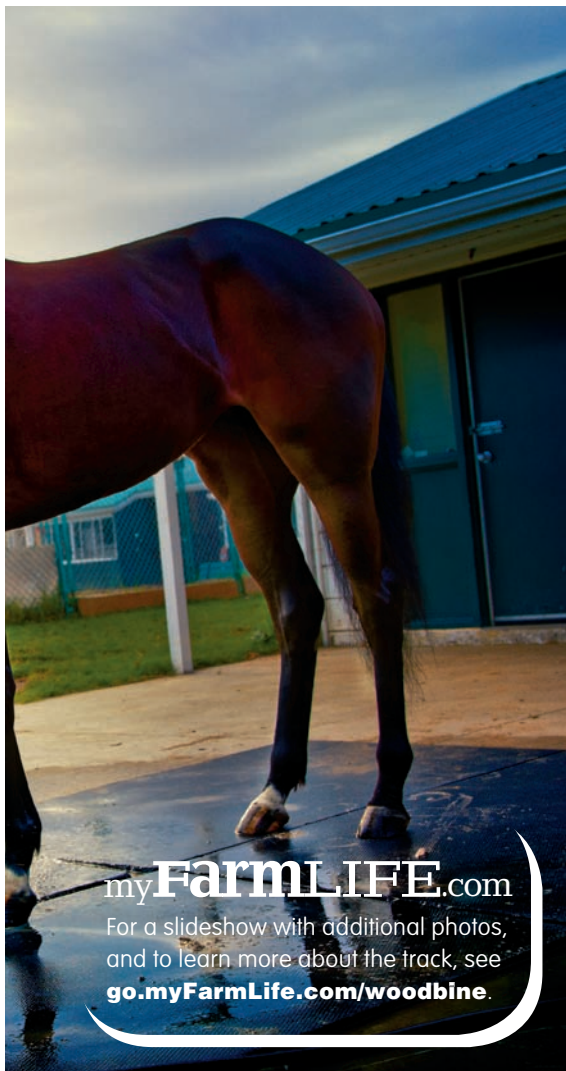
Each track surface has its own needs,

and the men have selected the tractors to meet them. "On the turf track we use 2660s, which are the right size and weight to handle mowing, thatching and vacuuming," Sherman says.

Crews use Massey Ferguson 5400 Series tractors on the Standardbred track for pulling harrows through the crushed traprock, referred to as hard dirt, keeping it smooth and level. This one is graded with lasers to maintain its contour. The Polytrack is worked down 7 to 8 inches weekly and fluffed up, with more material worked in as required. Cultivators and roto-tillers are used for this purpose, and the current Massey Ferguson 6400 and 7400 Series tractors are best suited to this task. "Fuel consumption has always been good with the Masseys, but also there are less emissions into the atmosphere," Sherman says.

"That's hugely important to us. We burn almost \$200,000 in diesel fuel annually," says Steve Koch, Woodbine's vice president of Thoroughbred racing. "We expect Massey Ferguson technologies to help us curb this."

Woodbine is an environmentally sensitive company, and its managers wanted to reduce their carbon footprint with this new fleet. A new crop of Massey Ferguson 7600 tractors being delivered this year will further that effort.



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For a slideshow with additional photos, and to learn more about the track, see [go.myFarmLife.com/woodbine](http://go.myFarmLife.com/woodbine).

Woodbine's racing history: **Dates back to 1874**