

How To Build A Tractor

*Not that you'd want to try it at home. Take a tour
of our factory where people do it right—with pride.*

Photographs and story by Joe Link

WELCOME TO BEAUVAIS, A SMALL city about 40 miles (64 kilometers) north of Paris. In the old part of town, picturesque old buildings line the narrow, winding streets, just as any tourist would expect of France. On the city outskirts, however, modern industries are bustling with work. One of the giants is AGCO, whose factory here assembles high horsepower Massey Ferguson tractors.

The company has a strong presence in Beauvais (BOO-vay), employing 2,300 workers on the factory floor alone. In offices next door are 320 engineers who, having just designed the new MF8600 Series of tractors, are already working on the next generation of.....well, that's a secret, of course.

Marc Petronin is kind enough to be my guide at the factory. He retired from the engineering division of Massey Ferguson a few years ago, but he returns often as a volunteer at the visitors' center. He simply enjoys showing what the people here do. It's not unusual to see a busloads of farmers from all over the world pull up to the visitors' center before heading across the street to watch tractors being assembled. Last year, more than 15,000 came for tours.

"The people here are quite proud of what they produce," Marc tells me as we begin our walk on the factory floor. "It's easy to catch the spirit of the people in this factory. They're a multi-talented group." Indeed, as we pass by the assembly lines, the friendliness and camaraderie

Workers on the hydraulic sub-assembly line custom build auxiliary system connectors as required by the tractor order.

