

**EXCLUSIVE  
Tractors  
for 2016**

The entry-level 484 J provides a 10-speed shuttle gearbox and a heavy, robust front axle to combat a common failure of lighter tractors - it offers jobbing level engine power of 35kW (48hp)

The 534 J offers a 2-speed PTO with a two-stage clutch and dual remotes, an 80-litre fuel tank with a 39kW (53hp) engine in play

# WHM has toughest China build

## WHM J Series is the peak Chinese offer

It has been many farmers' worst nightmare, buying a low priced Chinese tractor just to end up stranded in the paddock, and then spending countless hours trying to get the machine fixed.

Or worse still, ending up in court to pursue compensation from a reluctant supplier.

Such has been the brutal affront that comes with the Chinese-built tractor market, that most have been filled with enough trepidation to shy away from such a purchase.

But that situation is rapidly changing with many of the world's best known brands readily setting up shop in China to secure the monetary gain that comes from having a billion-strong workforce.

Following, and in some aspects leading, this improved Chinese manufacturing story is a local company with a determination to be known for providing a quality Chinese build at a reasonable price.

WHM Tractors is a division of Weir and Harrod, a family owned Australian company in operation for more than 100 years.

Weir and Harrod are specialists

in precision engineering and manufacturing, and have now brought this expertise into building WHM tractors into a range of robustly engineered and low cost models.

Now with the release of the WHM J Series, these tractors have reached a point where the company is proud to take and withstand any quality test to prove how well suited they are to harsh local conditions.

On top of that, they are well prepared to back up their product in any circumstances.

WHM headed to China because it is the country where you can get a machine built at a competitive price point and also because global manufacturing of small tractors was concentrating there.

John Deere has two facilities there, Case IH has one and even Mahindra of India has two manufacturing facilities in China, among many other well known badges.

Following many years of research and perseverance to get its tractor range "just right", WHM machines are now building in a quality Chinese facility that turns out vehicles worth over US\$6 billion a year.

The factory is even contracted to manufacture a truck for General Motors.

But such have been the vagaries of building a tractor in China, you have to ask why WHM would want to join many other budding makers that have run the Chinese gauntlet seeking a cheap product, only to fail miserably when buyers found their machines not fit for purpose.

Well, we put that dilemma to WHM managing director, Gary Lynch, and he admits to having had his nose bloodied on this front.

He even cancelled an early order because the standard machines off the factory line that he was offered were simply not good enough to survive in Australia.

Re-grouping, WHM decided to engineer a tractor rather than buy a tractor and set about trying to track down where the big badges were getting their components made.

And as Gary says, he was able to discover the likes of where the John Deere and Case IH clutches were coming from. In that factory he found literally thousands of clutches.

Years of such work on the ground in China, led to finding quality component builders in engineering factories across its breadth and to specially designing and engineering between 50 and 100 custom parts to improve the build in each WHM J model tractor.

From best practice engine suppliers to clutches, pumps, radiators, wheels, tyres and front end loaders, WHM says you can be sure they've studied, sourced and selected only the best available.

While this makes these J models unique for a Chinese build, the machines still retail at prices that are nearly half that of the mainstream brands.

Another particular focus of the WHM team was to increase the strength and weight of their tractor by over-engineering them in an effort to de-risk them in terms of standing up to heavy use, and occasional misuse, without failure.

As Gary readily admits, brands like John Deere and Case IH have advanced technological expertise on their side in terms of being able to build lighter components to

higher tolerances, but, he says, they have also introduced a staggering level of complexity in doing so.

Their machines are run by advanced electronics and tend to employ small, turbocharged powerplants to meet criteria like very tight emissions standards that now apply in all developed countries, except Australia.

At WHM's Chinese facility, some 40 of the company's hundreds-strong team of engineers were employed to specify and design the WHM tractors to the required standard.

This has worked so well it has made the WHM J models by far the heaviest and strongest tractors in their price bracket, so far available on the local market.

Coupled with that strong build is an uncomplicated design that can easily be maintained by local workshops and mechanics.

Gary does not deny that the sophisticated electronics in current model tractors bring undeniable benefits but often at the expense of high outlays for repairs and servicing.

He sights examples of machines being shipped long distances to facilities able to carry out repairs, and the impacting productivity losses.



Gary Lynch gets out a tape measure to prove WHM tractors are over-engineered in terms of strength and weight in an effort to de-risk them in operation. WHM works on the theory a heavy, strong tractor will stand up much better to over reaching or occasional operator error without failure than a lightweight and fragile one. As a prime example of this engineering philosophy, the front axles of the WHM machines are much bigger in size and often up to 50 per cent heavier than the axles on competing machines. This is important because lightweight front axles are one of the prime points of failure of many smaller, cheaper tractors on the market, and this problem is made far worse when you try to attach a front end loader. WHM J tractors are specced to carry front loaders as standard or as a factory fitted option and the last thing they want is a collapse at the front end. In the same vein, the WHM chassis as a whole is far heavier and stronger than that on competing production line tractors of the same power made in China and the engines, being large and naturally aspirated also add to the overall weight and durability.

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The 1164 J has a 5-tonnes weight, an air conditioned cab with in-cab control of the 3-point linkage and a 4-in-1 FEL fitted as standard - engine power can charge out a utility rate of 85kW (116hp)



When you're a long way from anywhere, Gary says, you want a reliable machine that is easily repaired where it sits or very nearby.

This same philosophy applies to the choice of engines for the current WHM J Series tractors.

They are armed with big, reliable, naturally aspirated, non-turbocharged powerplants chosen to offer plenty of grunt, but again with simple servicing.

For instance, the WHM1164 J has a 7.5-litre, 6-cylinder engine in a chassis that many international brands would now power with a 4-litre, turbocharged, 4-cylinder engine with a truck-load of electronic management required to attain its power.

And while there are farmers with enough faith in their supplier to keep their complex tractors running at a reasonable maintenance cost, it is the farmer that wants a simpler type of maintenance with hands-on involvement that WHM see as farmers most interested in their build.

It is just possible WHM can believe the feedback they gained from a recent field day, where it was commented by an opposition badge, "You seem to have gotten this tractor just about right."

Other standard builds that

make the WHM models well-suited to local work include big radiators to operate in hot conditions, 10-ply tyres to resist hard gum tree punctures, big batteries, and wide operating decks.

Added to these are ceramic clutches, 5-stage paintwork, wider sunroofs and 2-speed PTOs with remotes. Most J models also include a 4-in-1, self-levelling front-end loader as standard.

Three standard models currently make up the WHM J range, the 1164 J leads the charge with engine power of 85kW (116hp), the 534 J offers 39kW (53hp) and the 484 J has 35kW (48hp) to offer.

The 1164 J weighs in at 5-tonnes, has an air-con cab with in-cab control of the 3-point linkage and a 4-in-1 FEL fitted as standard.

The 534 J offers a 2-speed PTO with a two-stage clutch and dual remotes, an 80-litre fuel tank and a 120 amp hour battery.

While, the entry-level 484 J provides a 10-speed shuttle gearbox and a heavy, robust front axle to combat a common failure of lighter tractors and to make it better suited to working with a front loader.

WHM also states, what sets it apart from many of the Chinese tractor importers is a

commitment to quality control through all stages of sourcing, assembly, pre-delivery and service support of its WHM tractors.

The company also oversees rigorous component checking and testing of every single tractor build before it is loaded into a container for shipping.

The result, says WHM is a well-built, rugged, robustly engineered and lower priced range of tractors that can be easily maintained in rural areas by local service providers.

WHM's commitment doesn't stop there, either. Their after sales service and support team ensure the best quality parts and service work are available for all models.

The Sydney factory keeps a full range of spare parts onsite and offers an engineering workshop staffed by skilled mechanics and tradesmen should anything need to be modified or made from scratch.

WHM says customers can also rest easy knowing their warranty is genuine and is not

outsourced to a third party.

In the event that something does go wrong, owners will be dealing direct with the team who knows more about their tractor than anyone else.

Gary Lynch makes the point that the WHM tractor brand will still continue to improve their range, but they have also reached the point where they can offer models' with good performance and reliability in customers hands - to now start selling them interstate.

Initially, they kept sales to NSW but are now shipping into Victoria and Queensland.

We knew you were going to ask, and when it comes to price, the WHM models shine.

The top-of-the-range 1164 J with 85kW (116hp) on tap retails for just \$53,000, while the 39kW (53hp) 534 J and 35kW (48hp) 484 J have sticker prices of \$26,600 and \$23,900 respectively in base formats.

For more information on the WHM J Series tractors, go to [www.whm.com.au](http://www.whm.com.au) or call on tel: 1300 851 600. □

**WHM J SERIES**

Model	Engine -	Power -
484 J	2.54-litre/4-cylinder	35kW (48hp)
534 J	3.1-litre/4-cylinder	39kW (53hp)
1164 J	7.5-litre/6-cylinder	85kW (116hp)

Transmissions: 16F/8R on the 1164 J, 8F/8R on the 534 J and 10-speed on the 484 J. All with Shuttle shift