

Tractor Hitches

Hitches are relatively simple.

The primary purpose of a hitch mechanism is obvious.

A hitch safely connects a load in a way that enables the tractor to apply maximum force without damaging the tractor. Generally that means a line of draft that is low and anchored to the center-rear of the tractor

IH tractor hitches took a number of forms between 1921 and 1960.

The first Standards have a secure, semi-fixed, medium width drawbar.

The Farmall Regular has a wide, semi-fixed, drawbar. By semi-fixed, I mean the vertical angle of draft could be adjusted over a range. Adjustment required tools and time. I suspect it was seldom adjusted or changed.

The first Farmalls also had an optional swinging element. The “swinging drawbar” moved horizontally with the line of draft. That action improved the tractor’s ability to apply pulling force when turning.

The F-12, uses a narrower fixed drawbar, with or without a swinging element.



This basic drawbar was used on all IH Standards from 1921 until the W Series was introduced in 1939. It is fixed robustly to the rear axles. There is a turnbuckle above the bar which can be adjusted to change the vertical line of draft.

The W Standards, which were introduced in 1939, had an option swinging bar. In the larger models, the swinging bar was heavily secured.

By 1939 the basic swinging drawbar design was optimized as embodied on the Farmall H and M. That configuration was still available in 1958.

IH introduced Fast Hitch in 1954. Fast Hitch is a system that competed with Ferguson’s three-point hitch.

Harry Ferguson patented his three-point hitch in 1926. It is an ingenious system for connecting implements directly to the tractor. The greatest advantage is a significant improvement in pulling force. The hydraulic element of the hitch responds automatically to changes in draft thereby improving efficiency. A lot.

Since Ferguson had patents, IH developed its own system which many actually consider superior to Ferguson’s.

Fast Hitch is much simpler for hook up. Later versions also had better draft control than a three point hitch.

Nevertheless, Ferguson’s system was so embedded into the machinery industry that eventually IH abandoned Fast Hitch.



The drawbar on the Farmall Regular is especially wide. It can be vertically adjusted to correct for draft by loosening and changing the connection points for the hanging bars at both ends. The early Farmalls were incredibly hard to mount. Most of these tractors have a board like this one. The board is useful as a auxiliary work platform and also when climbing to the seat.



ABOVE: The center bar on this F-30 drawbar is the swinging portion. In use the bar is anchored under the tractor and allowed to swing in response to the angle of the following load. A great aid to efficiency.



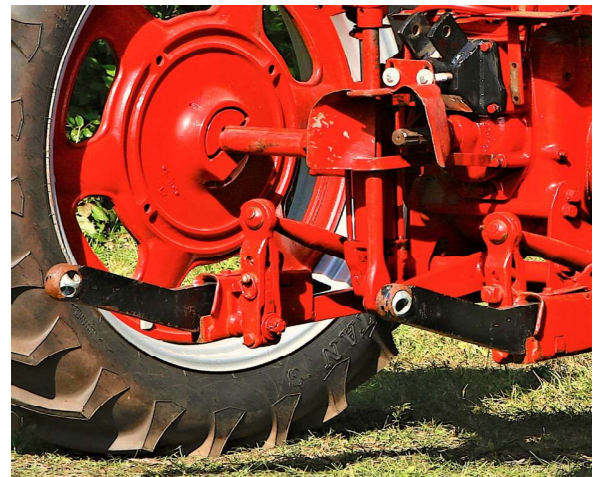
ABOVE: The same swinging bar concept on a W-6, Standard tractor.



ABOVE: This front-toward-the-back view of a Farmall 400 swinging drawbar, shows the optimal-draft attachment point. Low and mid-body on the tractor.



ABOVE: This is a good example of Fast Hitch on an International 300 Utility. The white drawbar is easily removable. The vertical angle of draft is easily changed hydraulically. Little horizontal movement is allowed, unfortunately.



ABOVE: This Farmall 200 has the IH drawbar removed and two 3 point like arms inserted. It also has the third mounting point affixed just above the PTO shield. This alternative method of utilizing both three point and Fast Hitch is OK, but it never caught on. Fast Hitch is a 2 point system.