



*When the going gets tough, the 310 h.p. Versatile 936 tractor keeps going. The unique modular design of the powertrain components allow quick servicing in the unlikely event of a breakdown.*

sales to large-scale farms in the Dakotas and Montana soon followed. Australian farmers also found the Versatile tractor suited their requirements and travelled to Winnipeg to purchase a number for use at home. International sales were further boosted when the Canadian International Development Agency funded the purchase of three hundred 4WD tractors for use in Algeria. Without making exports an explicit goal, overseas sales quickly became an important source of income for this small but growing Canadian-owned company.

In 1977 the company was acquired by Cornat Industries Ltd. of Vancouver (later renamed Versatile Corporation), and a new management team, headed by Paul Soubry, sought and obtained support from the board of directors for a growth strategy based on aggressively seeking international sales. An early step in implementing this strategy was to tighten control of marketing in Australia by buying out its distributor and establishing its own operations. In 1980, Versatile entered into a marketing arrangement with Fiat Trattori in which Fiat agreed to purchase 4WD tractors from Versatile for international distribution in specified markets. The tractors sold under this arrangement were marked "Manufactured in Canada by Versatile." In the United States, the company's own marketing efforts continued through their two offices and extensive distributor network. Other international sales were handled directly from Winnipeg.

The following year, the demand for agricultural equipment began a precipitous decline with the total number of 4WD tractors sold worldwide falling from a peak of 16,000 in 1977 to 5,700 in 1984, and with sales of only 4,000 projected for 1985. Lying behind this gloomy trend were such factors as increased protectionism in agriculture, slower