

Pavesi tractor

One of the earliest vehicles capable of four-wheel drive cross-country work was the Pavesi tractor, originally an agricultural machine, first produced by the firm of Pavesi-Tolotti of Milan in 1913. This ingenious machine depended for its remarkably good cross-country performance on an articulated chassis so that the front and rear ends could move laterally and vertically almost independently of each other as is apparent from the chassis drawing. There was a front-mounted engine, and drive to the rear wheel was by double-jointed universal shaft with bevel gearing. Large diameter wheels (1300 mm) were fitted and a variety of types-steel-studded, solidtyred, double, etc were offered to suit customers' requirements. (The usual type of wheels came with large grousers that normally were folded inward on the wheels, but could be folded outward to provide extra traction when necessary.)

In 1914 senior French officers watched a demonstration of the machine's abilities and were impressed enough to seek further details. However, when war came interest in such out of the way types was shelved.

In the twenties military interest in the capabilities of the Pavesi tractor were revived. The Italian Army experimented with vehicles fitted with armoured bodies and turrets - they were popularly known as the "Pavesi Wheeled Tank" or Pavesi 35 PS, using the model P4 chassis, then the latest in the Pavesi range. Two types were built, one a vehicle equipped with a 8mm HMG with 1000 rounds, the other armed with a 7.5cm gun with 30 rounds. Armor thickness varied from 4mm to 16mm. It's weight was some 5 tons, and it could do 30km/h on roads. It was in use until the late 1920-ies. From 1926 the P4 type, now produced by Fiat who had bought up the original firm, was used widely by the Italian Army as a gun tractor. A few of these vehicles were still in use in the Second World War. The P4 had a four cylinder, 7000 cc, water-cooled motor that developed 48 horsepower at 1250 rpm. The tractor itself weighed about 4 tons, and could tow just over 3 tons.

In Britain from 1923 Armstrong-Siddeley had the agency for Pavesi tractors and built some under licence. They tried to interest the British Army in this type of vehicle. Between 1924-30 however, the military authorities purchased only three and borrowed two others for trials. It had a plain open box body differing from the type used on the Italian Pavesi. A few other Pavesi tractors were used in Britain by firms specialising in hiring out vehicles to military and other authorities for contract work.

<http://archive.is/EnSyY#selection-57.0-179.315>