

Engineers design ultimate farm truck



Seek comfort in the Quad Cab® option available for the Dodge Ram 4500 and 5500 Chassis Cabs, and you get plenty of room for hauling yourself and the farm crew.

At first glance, the new 2008 Dodge Ram 4500 and 5500 Chassis Cab trucks are deceiving since they look a lot like their smaller sibling, the Dodge Ram 3500. But take a closer look and you can see right away these new machines raise the bar. Just check out the front axle alone and you'll get a surprise.

"We have the largest possible axle on this model," says Brad Pugh, Dodge Ram Chassis Cab Product Planner. "This is a 7,000-pound axle."

That feature puts these new Class 4 and 5 trucks in higher-performance territory. Pugh notes that these new trucks can use serious attachments up front,

including a 9.5-foot snow-plow blade. "That's the largest you'll typically use in this class," he notes. And cutting that wide a swath on each snow-clearing pass is a productivity booster for these trucks.

That's a key approach engineers and designers took when they started developing the new Dodge Ram 4500 and 5500 Chassis Cabs: Make these trucks more productive for the market. It starts with that beefed up undercarriage. But as engineers went with the larger axles and thicker frame, they also kept in mind other issues. For example, these new models actually have a 5-foot-tighter turning radius than the smaller Dodge Ram 3500 Chassis

The stake bed is just one upfit option available in the new Dodge Ram 4500 and 5500 Chassis Cabs. Designers consulted with a group of upfit suppliers to make sure the frame rails were designed to work with a range of options. The stake bed shown here is one of dozens of options you can choose from third-party suppliers.

Cab. "We've built a bigger truck that's heavier duty, but it's more maneuverable," notes Pugh.

Built for upfitting

A chassis cab Class 4 or 5 truck is designed for add-ons, and Dodge engineers knew that from the start. The rails are designed so added beds or other accessories attach easily. "We have the fuel fillers through the rails, and we've made our frame rails as accommodating as possible," Pugh says. "We worked with an advisory committee of upfitters who were pretty blunt in their assessments of our designs. We wanted a vehicle that would meet industry needs."

Upfitters weren't the only group Dodge engineers consulted, as they worked with target customer groups to learn more about their needs and to make sure these trucks would deliver. The very decision to develop a Class 4 and 5 truck came from customers. "We would keep getting feedback from customers asking when 'the bigger one' would come out. After a while of hearing that we asked – as a company – if we could step into this Class 4 and 5 series market," Pugh recalls.

The answer was a resounding "yes" from the corporation, so engineers went to work and they started with a clean sheet of paper. "We were told to use what we can, but where testing and loads told us we needed to go

bigger, or change an approach, we were told to go for it," Pugh says. "We conducted extreme tests with these trucks at our Chelsea, Mich., proving grounds. These trucks had to pass all our durability tests."

Testing involved running prototypes for more than a million cumulative miles on roads built to test these new machines to the limit.

Thinking 'livability'

These new trucks offer day-to-day comfort and features that will make them a trusted workhorse. In this class, the Dodge Ram 5500 Chassis Cab, for example, has a top gross vehicle weight of up to 19,500 pounds. "We designed the trucks so the payload could be a bigger part of that gross weight," Pugh explains. "For the Dodge Ram 5500, its payload capacity is up to 800

to 1,000 pounds more than the competition in some configurations."

But what about stopping all that weight? "Our brake supervisor is a mad man for detail and he had a major goal up front," Pugh says. "These trucks have a 19.5-inch wheel as standard. His goal was to use every possible bit of space in that wheel for brake capacity. He also worked on the wheel design to maximize brake cooling to help reduce fade."

As a result, the Dodge Ram 4500 and 5500 Chassis Cabs have a 390-mm disk on all four corners with a 66-mm twin-piston caliper. "Our brake supervisor Dean Puzdrakiewicz was a stickler, and we have larger front brakes than Ford and GM Class 4 and 5 conventional chassis cabs," Pugh says. "These are huge brakes,

and we have designed the package so that the brakes stay cool, which helps enhance brake life."

The cab itself is designed to reduce wind noise, and the base radio includes a CD player and an AUX port for connecting an MP3 player or other external device – not a feature you find often in a base radio. "We even designed the frame to better isolate the cab from the load, which enhances ride comfort," Pugh notes.

Add in a 5-year/100,000-mile diesel engine limited warranty* for the Cummins® Turbo Diesel engine, a 3-year/180,000-mile AISIN transmission limited warranty* for the available AISIN 6-speed automatic transmission, and the new Dodge Ram 4500 and Dodge Ram 5500 Chassis Cabs deliver.

60 TIMES AROUND THE WORLD!

When Dodge engineers sat down to design the new Class 4 and 5 chassis cab rigs, they wanted to be sure commercial customers would get the dependability and reliability they needed. And the best way to do that was to put the rigs on the road and drive them. During the vehicles' development, Dodge Truck engineers put 1.5 million cumulative customer-equivalent miles of testing on these rigs. That helps ensure these new rigs can stand up to almost anything your farm operation can dish out.

Check out the Ultimate Farm Truck online at www.FarmProgress.com/UlimateFarmTruck.

You'll find in-depth specifications, pictures and other information you can use to learn more about the Dodge Ram 4500 and Dodge Ram 5500 Chassis Cabs.

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The Cummins Turbo Diesel engine is protected by a separate Diesel Engine Limited Warranty, covering the engine for 5 years or 100,000 miles, whichever comes first. See your Dodge dealer for complete details.

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See your Dodge dealer for a copy of this limited warranty.