

## Down on the Farm

**Robert Incerti**

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*Down on the Farm is a charming picture book depiction of farm life.*

Robert Incerti's picture book *Down on the Farm* paints a picture of farm life as four horses face their possible replacement.

Dobbin is one of four cart horses on the Greens's farm. All four horses perform different chores for the farmer and his wife, and Dobbin's main job is to take the farmer's wife into town to sell her products at a local farmers market. On these trips, Dobbin receives treats and compliments from the townspeople, and the attention goes to his head.

One day, after boasting to the other horses about his lucrative duties, Dobbin mentions that a tractor salesman will be coming to visit the farm "to show the farmer how good they are. And much cheaper than us horses, they are." The next day, anticipating the salesman's visit, the horses work their hardest to show the farmer that he doesn't need a tractor.

Rich details about life on a working farm fill the story, walking the audience through tasks like plowing and seeding a field or felling a tree. While the plot is easy to follow, its ending is abrupt, and the book's main questions—Will the farmer buy a tractor? Will Dobbin suffer consequences for bragging?—are unanswered.

The text runs long for a picture book. The book's computer generated illustrations are bright and colorful, their subjects made easy to identify by their different markings and mane colors. Visual textures capture the muddy earth around the felled oak tree and the spiky hay bales in the horses' stables. Most of the book's pictures are grouped at the beginning of the story, while several pages toward the end don't include accompanying illustrations.

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ANITRA BUDD (May 7, 2019)

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