

## IH Museum Mixes Tractors With Refrigerators

When someone opens an International Harvester museum, you expect to see lots of red tractors and IH memorabilia. What you don't expect is a lineup of IH refrigerators and freezers.

Darrell Darst grew up with IH equipment and has been collecting for years. He opened a museum on his farm and has 3 additional buildings filled with tractors, combines and implements.

His wife, Kevin, says it's a surprise to many who visit the museum to learn that IH manufactured a line of refrigerators and freezers, air conditioners and dehumidifiers from 1947 to 1956. Irma Harding, IH's version of Betty Crocker®, was a personality created to lead a promotional team of women who answered questions, tested recipes and traveled the country giving demonstrations on how to preserve and freeze produce.

Kevin explains how honored she felt to meet Ruth Whiting, hired by IH to develop the campaign.

"At the time, freezing and how to freeze was new," Kevin explains. "Ruth opened up the kitchen in Evansville, Ind. She came up with the cookbooks, designed the packaging material, and trained the girls to do the demos. She called them 'her girls.'"

Whiting and others the Darsts talk to have fond memories of working for IH. After visiting with a former employee, he gave Kevin a travel clock that had been given away when IH manufactured its millionth refrigerator. Another couple delivered a refrigerator to the museum when they moved to a nursing home. They had used the refrigerator for decades, and it still worked.

The museum has 16 refrigerators, advertising and other items along with farming items, from small items to Tracto, a robot made with tractor parts including headlights for eyes, and piston head and muffler arms. The arm holding an oil can goes up and down, the head turns and the eyes light up. Darrell remembers seeing Tracto at a corn-picking contest when he was 13. By the time he found it in 1992, it had been painted blue by a Ford dealership. Darrell restored it to its original colors before placing it in the Darsts' museum. Other prized items in his collection include a no-till IH planter built after WW II and a 450-diesel cotton picker.

To tour the museum, call for a reservation.

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Steve Kenkel has created a museum tracing the history of seed corn on his Shelby County, Iowa farm, where at one time 18 companies sold hybrid seed corn. His collection includes old cloth seed corn sacks from all 18 companies.



Kenkel has plenty of room to display about 400 of his cloth sacks, along with other corn equipment, in his 5,000 sq. ft. museum.

## On-Farm Museum Focuses On Hybrid Corn

If there's a place in the country that should showcase the history of hybrid corn, Steve Kenkel figures it's Shelby County, Iowa, where 18 companies were selling hybrid seed corn back in 1946. Kenkel has created a museum tracing the history of corn on his Earling, Iowa, farm, and he welcomes visitors to check it out.

"My goal with the museum is that the younger generation doesn't forget what our forefathers did to make it so easy for us today," Kenkel says. His interest began when he discovered old cloth seed sacks in the attic of the family home. His grandfather had collected the sacks from area seed corn companies and, as Kenkel visited with older neighbors, he discovered the county's prominent role in the development of hybrid corn.

"It tripled corn yields and revolutionized American agriculture," Kenkel says.

Collecting seed corn sacks from the 18 Shelby County businesses was no easy task. One collector advised him that the only way it could be done was to go to century farms and see if the sacks had been stashed away. He spent a year going door to door before he found them all.

Meanwhile, he picked up other sacks.

"First it was Iowa sacks, then it became a free-for-all. Now, I have more than 1,200 sacks from all over the nation, plus several hundred duplicates for trading," he explains.

A few are from open pollinated varieties, but most are hybrid corn from the 1930's to the 1960's, before paper sacks were used.

Kenkel has room to display about 400 of the cloth sacks along with other corn equipment and memorabilia in his 5,000 sq. ft. museum. The fifth generation farmer plants three corn plots to show the dramatic difference in corn yields: from Reid's Yellow Dent open-pollinated corn that is check-planted; to US-13, the first American hybrid; to one of today's triple stack corn varieties.

Kenkel shares the information he has learned in his book, *Kernels of Corn History*, and holds a biennial open house in August with many corn-related demonstrations. At other times, he advises visitors and tour bus groups to call for reservations between June and September. His book is available through his website and on Amazon.

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## Giant Air Horn Made From PA Speakers

Dave Dam has been turning old artillery shells of various sizes into steam whistles for years. The Eau Claire, Wis., whistle expert recently put together 5 giant air horns of different sizes, all hooked up together on a pipe frame.

"It looks impressive and is twice as big as a 5-chime train horn," says Dam. "I use a large propane tank for an air tank in my pickup and usually keep the pressure at 125 psi."

All 5 air horns are made out of 3-in. dia. pvc pipe for the body and have 8-in. diaphragms made from in-floor house drains. The horn bodies measure 6, 9, 12, 18, and 24 in. long. The biggest horn has a 12-in. dia. public address speaker forming the flared end of the horn, while the smallest has an 8-in. dia. speaker. Dam made T-shaped brackets for each air horn and screwed them to a frame made from 3/4-in. dia. pipe.

The entire setup mounts on a single pipe



Whistle expert Dave Dam put together these giant air horns of different sizes, all hooked up together on a pipe frame.

"One pipe slides over another pipe so I can rotate it in any direction," says Dam.

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