



Copenbarger's half-scale combine and grain truck are popular at parades near his Illinois home.

Amazingly Detailed Half-Scale Combine

Marvin Copenbarger has built more than 20 replicas of tractors and farm implements, several described in FARM SHOW articles (Vol 25, No. 5; Vol 45, No 6).

"I own a 1964 Deere Model 45 self-propelled combine and decided to build a 1/2 scale model for parades," Copenbarger says. "Just about everything on it is half size to the real one I've got in the shed, except for a larger operator platform. I needed that so I'd have a comfortable place to sit and drive it in parades."

Always looking for authenticity and features that attract attention, Copenbarger built a direct cut grain platform for the combine with a scale model reel that turns as he drives the machine. The chaff spreader also turns "so that people watching the parade can see something moving," he says with a laugh. The combine measures about 12-ft. long and 6-ft. tall, slightly higher when the discharge auger is extended. The small diesel engine that powers it sits on top of the

threshing chamber, accessible with a small step ladder. "If someone wants to get picky, they can see that my model has a square back and real ones have a rounded metal chamber," Copenbarger says. "Otherwise, everything is pretty much real."

After finishing the combine Copenbarger decided a nice addition would be a truck for hauling the make-believe machine's grain. That led him to fabricate sheet metal and other parts into a 1/2 scale model 1969 C-50 Chevrolet grain truck. "It's painted the authentic 1969 Chevy red color and includes the blue insert bowtie emblem on the hood," Copenbarger says. "It has a 4-ft. wide by 6-ft. long grain box that raises and lowers with a tiny motor. The headlights and clearance lights work, and it rides on 12-in. wheels with duals in the rear."

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World's Largest Chickens Are "Gentle Giants"

Jersey Giants have a reputation for being the world's largest chicken, with roosters weighing in at 13 to 15 lbs. and hens weighing up to 11 lbs. Despite their size, breeders say the breed is a "gentle giant" and a great addition for poultry producers, especially if they like extra-large eggs.

The breed was developed by New Jersey brothers, Thomas and John Black, in the late 1800's. They bred Black Langshan, dark Brahma and Black Java chickens to create large meat birds that they called Black Jersey, after their last name. The only downside was that the breed takes 8 to 9 mos. to reach full size, so it didn't take off as a meat breed as they hoped. By the early 2000's, the Jersey Giant was a critically endangered breed.

Since 2017 it has found new interest by poultry producers for its eggs and as an interesting breed to add to a flock. Eggs and chicks can be purchased through many hatcheries.

It's one of the 160 breeds raised at Meyer Hatchery in Polk, Ohio, says Meghan Howard, website manager. The family business, started by Karen Meyer in 1985 has bred Jersey Giant chickens for more than 20 years and ships day-old chicks year-round.

"Most customers buy them for the XL eggs. But some also buy them for the meat," Howard says. "The breed is known as being calm and docile. Hens lay around three to five eggs a week. After a year, the eggs are typically XL in size."

They usually mix well with other breeds. Bred to be robust and do well in cold weather climates, the breed is not susceptible to many illnesses. And, with roosters 22 to 26-in. tall and hens 16 to 20-in. tall, they are too big



Jersey Giant roosters are 22 to 26-in tall and can weigh up to 15 lbs.

for hawks to carry away. Because of their weight, leg injuries are a potential health issue if they jump from a high space. Low perches are recommended as well as vitamins and minerals.

Though Jersey Giants hens are good mothers, they can crack eggshells with their weight so eggs should be removed and placed under a hen of a smaller breed.

Producers willing to provide a little more space and feed will appreciate the breed. Howard suggests checking them and the dozens of other chicken, duck, goose and turkey breeds available at Meyer Hatchery.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Meyer Hatchery, 626 State Rt. 89, Polk, Ohio 44866 (ph 419-945-2651; info@meyerhatchery.com; www.meyerhatchery.com).



A century-old mail delivery carriage, another pulled by a life-size horse, and a glamorous Victorian are part of a horse-drawn vehicle museum in Blackstone, Va.

Museum Features Rare Horse-Drawn Buggies

Robert "Bob" Thomas III is fighting to keep a unique piece of American history alive. In the fall of 2007, Thomas took his father's vast collection of antique horse-drawn carriages and buggies and opened the Robert Thomas Carriage Museum in Blackstone, Virginia. From pre-Civil War era carriages to mail wagons from the early 1900's, Robert Thomas Sr. had amassed a large collection of rare vehicles built before automobiles transformed society.

After spending thousands of dollars to restore the collection, Thomas's parents donated the carriages, buggies, wagons and carts to the town of Blackstone. The town received funding from the state of Virginia and with a \$50,000 donation from the Thomas family worked to keep the museum open.

In December 2021, the museum housed 35 vehicles. Thomas says there's room for a few more and he's open to vehicle donations, especially restored carts, buggies, wagons and carriages. "If it's something different than what we have, I can always pull one

out, try to sell it and replace it with a different one," Thomas says. "If I'm switching over to something new, that helps the museum, too. After a while, you have to bring in something new to keep people coming in."

The current collection includes a Victorian model, his father's favorite, generally used by upper-class citizens in the late 1800's. "This model is used in New York's Central Park," Thomas says.

Most of the carriages in the museum were used by middle-class people and farmers. Thomas's personal favorite is the Rockaway, built in 1812. The nearly 200-year-old carriage is the museum's oldest. The museum also has a U.S. Army ammo cart from World War I.

A new website for the museum was recently completed. Those browsing can take a virtual 3D tour.

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This antique threshing machine, which is powered by a paddlewheel, was spotted in Romania.

Waterwheel Powers Threshing Machine

Some FARM SHOW readers may be able to say they've tossed grain bundles into a threshing machine powered by a steam engine, but it's doubtful they've seen one that's powered by a paddlewheel. That's what Minnesotan Cliff Johnson saw while traveling near Sarbi in the Maramures region of Romania in 2021.

"We were touring along the fast-running Cosau river in northern Romania when our guide pointed out a large waterwheel that's been working for nearly 500 years," Johnson says. "It was churning away at a good clip, powering an array of 'brilliant equipment'" the guide noted, including a threshing machine, flour mill, power saw, fulling mill, whirlpool and distillery."

Horse-drawn wagons hauled grain shocks to the thresher from area farms. Stalks and chaff from the thresher are stored as feed and bedding for nearby livestock." Tourist signs

posted at the site indicated the machine was manufactured in Budapest, Romania, and was operated steadily "a century or two ago" for up to three months a year.

Johnson says the river currently powers a set of giant millstones for grinding corn and wheat. In Romania, ground corn is made into polenta, a side dish that's often consumed three times a day. "We were told that the best polenta is made from flour ground at this river mill!"

Another unusual device was a whirlpool, made of wood planks fabricated into a cone shape and fastened together with wattle. Village residents bring their carpets and rugs to the river and toss them into the whirlpool, where they're spun and battered by the roiling water until they're clean. They're retrieved from the whirlpool by long hoe handles, then laid on beams to dry.