

Restored 80-Year-Old Grader Looks Like New

"My dad drove a 1942 Allis Chalmers WC grader on our township roads for nearly 50 years until it was too tired to work anymore," says Minn. farmer Al Hernke. "He parked it in a grove about 1990 and it sat for 30 years until my hired man and I rescued it in 2020."

Hernke says the old grader was a rust bucket with a frozen engine, flat tires and a few broken parts. The engine was basically beyond repair, so they decided to swap out the WC engine with a larger one from a WD 45 tractor.

"We extended the front chassis about 6 in. to make room for the longer engine and built a new steering linkage because the old one was frozen in place and not long enough. The 45-engine mated to the drive train after a few stern words of encouragement," Hernke says. "We installed a new starter, a new generator, new wiring and hoses, put in a new battery,

and cleaned out the gas tank and gas lines." New gauges, a new seat and four new tires brought the tractor to running and roadworthy condition."

Hernke says the control wheels for raising, lowering and tilting the blade were rusted in place, so getting those free was a major job. "We used about three different kinds of rust release and penetrating products along with plenty of prying and wedging to move the worm gears and wheels, and finally they moved," Hernke says. After lubing all the moving parts, they had the whole grader sandblasted. Two coats of Allis-Chalmers orange paint and authentic decals brought the grader back to "like new" condition.

"The engine starts just like a new WD 45 and purrs like a kitten," Hernke says. "The nine-month project was definitely worth it when we drove it out in the yard last summer,



Al Hernke restored a 1942 Allis Chalmers road grader and added an engine from a WD, while extending the chassis by 6-in.

put the blade down and leveled some gravel," says Hernke. "This grader requires two people, one to drive and the other to operate the blade controls."

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Marvin Copenbarger poses with one of the 25 half-scale models he has built.

Retired Farmer Built 1/2-Scale Farm Equipment For 25 Years

"I've spent my whole life on this farm and more than 25 years building realistic 1/2-scale farm tractors and implements," says 87-year-old retired Illinois farmer Marvin Copenbarger. "As a kid, I always enjoyed tinkering with equipment and

eventually started building things I could use on the farm. That evolved into mini tractors when I retired."

Over the years Copenbarger has built more than 25 working replicas from the ground up, more than half of them since FARM

SHOW featured him in a story 20 years ago (Vol 25, No. 5). Most of them took 6 mos. or more to build, and some well over a year. "I wanted each one to look almost exactly like the real ones do," Copenbarger says. His collection includes several Case tractors and implements because that's what his dad owned when he was small and that's what he grew up driving. Copenbarger bought a new Case 1370 in 1977, which he still owns, and built a 1/2-scale replica of it in 2009. It has an 18 hp. 3-cyl. Kubota diesel engine, dual wheels and a 3-pt. hitch. The cab is slightly larger than half scale so he can fit in and drive the tractor.

Copenbarger built a Case 4-WD using "his own imagination because Case never had one of its own. If they'd have built a real one like this maybe the original Case brand would still be around," Copenbarger says with a laugh.

His 4-WD uses an engine and drive train from a garden tractor and a frame design similar to that of 2-WD Case tractors. The Model 934 he calls 'Lil Brute' includes all-wheel drive and working hydraulics. The 4-ft. tall and 10-ft. long tractor has 8 shiny deep-tread tires and 18 hydraulic lines. It's painted in authentic Case flambeau orange and desert sunset colors. Hitched to the drawbar is a

realistic-looking 6-ft. chisel plow that rides on rubber tires and raises and lowers with the tractor hydraulics.

"I've never used it in the field, but I might try it if someone offers to clean it up once it's been in the ground," he says with a grin.

One of the first tractors Copenbarger made was modeled after his father's 1947 model Case L.A. His 1/2-scale version is almost an authentic replica, down to the tiniest details including its frame, drive train, wheel size, hood features, seat and operator station, air cleaner, muffler and belt pulley. Copenbarger says, "It purrs like a kitten, has a starter, generator and lights."

"I didn't have any special training to build these things," Copenbarger says, "but I spent a lot of time with my uncle and learned from him. I started going to Case shows and got to be friends with a fellow in Dayton, Ohio who encouraged me, so I decided to try it myself. After I retired from farming, building these was good for my mind and my muscles. I didn't build anything that I couldn't drive. My wife and I have sure had fun taking them to parades and shows."

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See The Old And New At "100 Years Of Horsepower"

The "100 Years Of Horsepower" show is a cross between the country's largest working antique farm show - the Half Century of Progress - and the best modern outdoor show - the Farm Progress Show. It is scheduled for August 25, 26 and 27 of 2022 near Belleville, Ill. And it's free.

"We're different from any other event because we have everything from the very, very old to the very, very new," says Tom Renner, Renner Stock Farms, home of the show. "We'll have the latest computerized combines alongside plows pulled by oxen and draft horses."

Renner and a small group of old equipment enthusiasts held a draft horse field day in 2006. It became a biennial affair. Over time Tom and his son Jake included all types of mechanized equipment. As the show grew, others brought their equipment too. The 2021 show was canceled due to the pandemic and rescheduled for 2022.

"When we canceled, I had people call us from 33 states," says Renner. "We expect around 20,000 people this year."

He is quick to give credit to more than 25 corporate sponsors like Corteva Agriscience, Bunge Grain, Nutrien Ag Solutions, Dekalb/Asgrow and more. Rural Heritage, Heritage Iron and Big Tractor Power are also sponsors.

"We couldn't do it without our sponsors," says Renner. "The only fee is for gators and golf carts brought to the show, and that money goes to the local 4-H."

Two things set this show apart. One is its inclusiveness, and the other is the emphasis on demonstration. Anyone can bring their farm-related equipment to participate. Renner and his family have set aside 375 acres for the show for good reason. Just those scheduled to attend and demonstrate will take a lot of space.

"This is a working show, not just a walk-by," says Renner. "We have people from long distances bringing equipment and exhibits. There is something for everyone."

Already on board are steam engines, tractors of all sizes and ages doing tillage, and more than 80 teams of horses plowing and seeding fields. Other horses will be on treadmills or working a sweep to power equipment. There will be blacksmithing, threshing, a working sawmill, a shingle mill, and rock crushing for field lime. Horse logging, corn shucking and chainsaw carving are also planned.

"The national corn husking championship was supposed to be held here last year," says Renner. "This year we will have our own contest. We'll have everything from



The 100 Years of Horsepower show is scheduled for August in Belleville, Ill.

handpicking to very early corn pickers and combines."

Renner will have his own 1904 bandsaw and edger operating. Others have indicated they will be bringing their own.

At the suggestion of wives attending the show, organizers have added a new section called "She Show". It will include beekeeping, weaving, broom and soap making and other aspects of farm home life.

If the farm and home demonstrations weren't enough, the big event will also host a junior rodeo and live music. The local Grange and other organizations will provide food, and not just burgers and hot dogs.

"They will be serving farm food," says Renner. "Sweet corn and food that would be

served at the farm table. We want to keep to the rural theme."

Attendees will also be able to sign up for a special treat. The Renner family equipment collection (see accompanying story) will be open for tours. Normally tours must be scheduled by groups and in advance.

"We will be holding tours in small groups, following COVID recommendations," says Renner.

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