

# Horse-Drawn Mower Collection Spans The Ages

Lowell Grave collects horse-drawn mowers like most people eat caramel corn: once he started he couldn't stop. "When I bought the first one I never imagined I'd have more than 100 after 20 years. It's been interesting because I've not only learned a great deal about the mowers themselves, but I've met a lot of great people, too."

Grave began collecting in the late 1990's after restoring a one-horse McCormick mower that his dad used on the family farm. He exhibited it at a threshing show that day and got to wondering how many different mowers were made "back in the day." Within a few months he'd found out there were well over 100 brands made from the 1850's forward into the early 1900's. Now his collection includes rare names like Adriance, Dain, Milwaukee, David Bradley and many more. Some carry the trademark name cast in the mower seat, others have it embossed on the steel frame and still others have a steel plate attached to the frame.

Grave says all the mowers in his collection were pulled by one horse or a pair, and the driver may have walked behind the machine or ridden on a seat. They were different sizes, colors, weight and had different size wheels. Some had closed gears, others open gears, some had a vertical lift and others were non-vertical. Standard components included a cutting sickle, knife guards, a grass board, lifting springs and a pittman drive.

Grave says one of the oldest pieces in his collection was built by the W.A. Wood Mowing and Reaping Machine company in New York in 1875 or 1876. The mower is distinguished by its enclosed gearing designed to prolong machine life. Some mowers Grave has purchased in the tri-state area, others have come from farther east. He purchased several from a retiring farmer near Rock Rapids, Iowa, including a rare Milwaukee chain-driven mower and the Adriance.



Photos by Loretta Sorensen

Each of the rare mowers in Grave's collection has been meticulously restored.

Grave enjoys providing the history of several models, including when, where and how long they were built and how the names changed based on who the owners merged or partnered with. His Dain mower was built in Ottumwa, Iowa and that company eventually was purchased by Deere.

Each mower in Grave's collection is meticulously restored and, thanks to a neighbor who enjoys painting, carries shiny colors of red, yellow, green, gray, white or whatever color the original manufacturer specified. One of the most recent machines in his collection is a mower on rubber tires, given to him as a surprise Christmas gift from his grandchildren. His old machine collection also includes vintage corn shellers, plows and manure spreaders.

Grave says with enthusiasm, "I've enjoyed every minute of this and hope to keep at it for the foreseeable future."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Lowell Grave, 46182 265<sup>th</sup> Street, Hartford, S. Dak. 57033 (ph 605 526-3459).

## Tractor Whistle Sounds Like A Train

When Justin Kelzer equipped his D-17 Allis Chalmers diesel with a realistic train whistle, he used exhaust to power it.

"I used to blow a mouth whistle to imitate a train engine when I drove the D-17 in a local parade," says Kelzer. "When a friend of mine started making brass whistles, I bought one and used air pressure to blow it at first."

In his search to be more authentic, Kelzer figured out a way to use exhaust to blow the whistle. He first made a bracket to mount the whistle to the exhaust pipe.

"Then I found a cut-out valve from an old GMC truck," says Kelzer. "I installed it below the muffler and connected it to the whistle. When I trigger it, it directs exhaust to the whistle."

Still not satisfied, Kelzer bought a cast iron school bell, fabricated brackets for it, and mounted it on front of the D-17. Now he can blow the whistle and ring a traditional sounding train bell.

"To complete the train theme, I named the tractor the Apron Road Express after the road I live on," says Kelzer. "It was a big hit at the local July 4th parade."

Kelzer says his friend Arnie Hoppe has his whistles priced from \$150 to \$350. "He made more than 80 of them originally," says Kelzer. "He even customized mine with an oil cap with the AC logo."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Justin Kelzer, 1312 Apron Rd., Randall, Minn. 56475 (ph 320 749-2805; justin\_kelzer@yahoo.com).



Justin Kelzer uses the exhaust from his D-17 Allis Chalmers diesel tractor to power a whistle that sounds like a train. A cast iron school bell mounts on front of tractor.



Using air supplied by a 500-gal. propane tank, this truck-mounted cannon propels 8-lb. pumpkins more than 1/2 mile. It's a big draw every fall at Walters' Pumpkin Patch in Burns, Kansas.

## Truck Cannon Shoots Pumpkins

Nowadays you can't have a pumpkin patch business without having some kind of pumpkin chucker. In Burns, Kan., at the Walters' Pumpkin Patch the theory seems to be "go big or go home."

With 500 gal. of air at 40 psi propelling 8-lb. pumpkins more than half a mile, Carroll Walter's Pumpgun Cannon attracts a crowd. "The dads love it. There's nothing more fun than watching a pumpkin flying through the air," says Carroll's wife, Becky, who planted the seed for the pumpkin business when she started growing and selling mini pumpkins in 1986.

To promote the business in area parades, her husband, Carroll, mounted the cannon on a 1954 Chevy grain truck with a 14-ft. bed and a hoist. He painted the truck orange and black and mounted an empty 500-gal. propane tank on back.

Becky dubbed it the Pumpgun Cannon, and it's a big draw every weekend from the

third weekend in September through October. On the hour, an air horn is blown. A large air compressor fills the tank with air. The hoist raises the "cannon" to about a 30-degree angle. After a countdown, the large valve releases a blast of air to shoot the pumpkin out of a 20-ft. long, 8-in. dia. oil field pipe.

It's just one of the many attractions the Walters offer, but it's the loudest. "It makes a big boom when the air is released," Carroll says. "Ninety percent of our customers live in the city. The men say, 'I've got to have one of those.' It's comical to hear people's reactions. They ask questions and are interested and fascinated."

See it in action on YouTube at Pumpkin Cannon.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Carroll and Becky Walters, Walters' Pumpkin Patch, 10001 NW U.S. Highway 77, Burns, Kan. 66840 (ph 316 320-4150; www.thewaltersfarm.com).

## Windmill Made From Rotary Hay Rake Wheel

"It rotates even in the slightest wind and turns 360 degrees just like a real windmill," says Robert Bach, Barriere, B.C., about the colorful ornamental windmill he made using an old rake wheel.

The 4-ft. dia. wheel iced off a 30-year-old Massey Ferguson ground-driven windrow rake. It's mounted about 15 ft. high on top of a 3-in. dia. metal post. The wheel's original center-mounted bearing is welded to the top of the post. A shaft runs down from the bearing into a greased metal tube that allows the wheel and weather vane to rotate 360 degrees at the top of the post.

The blades are made from 3-in. dia. irrigation pipe and measure 1 ft. long by 6 in. wide. They're set at a 15 degree angle to catch the wind. Bach cut the pipe in half and flattened it, then cut the blades out to the appropriate length. He pop riveted them to a 1-in. wide, 1/8-in. thick metal band already on the wheel that supports the rake's tines.

Bach made the windmill's 3-ft. long, V-shaped weather vane out of aluminum sheeting. He also clipped a series of small wheel rim weights off a car onto the wheel to help balance it.

"It takes very little wind to rotate the wheel, yet the wheel is heavy enough that even in strong winds it turns at just a moderate speed," says Bach. "To spruce the windmill up I put a fresh coat of yellow paint



Windmill's metal blades are pop riveted to rake wheel's perimeter and set at a 15 degree angle to catch the wind.

on the wheel and painted the blades black." His next brainstorm? "I plan to build a windmill with 2 rake wheels, one located behind the other, where the blades will turn in opposite directions. "It should be a good show," he says.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Robert Bach, P.O. Box 324, Barriere, B.C., Canada V0E 1E0 (ph 250 672-9218).