

FARM SHOW



Mommsen's catapult shoots pumpkins up to 100 yds. and 150 ft. in the air.

SMASHING PUMPKINS IN A BIG WAY

Giant Pumpkin Tosser Built "Just For Fun"

Hugh Mommsen sells thousands of pumpkins every year from his Rice Lake, Wis., farm. So he doesn't hate them. He just likes to hurl them through the air for hundreds of feet and watch them come down with a boom in his sorghum field.

He and his son Andrew built a giant catapult, finishing it on Labor Day just in time for the annual opening of the Mommsens' Produce Patch.

"Our catapult is based on a design that dates back to second or third century China, where they were used to attack and invade castles," says Mommsen who researched the subject thoroughly.

He and his son used mostly scrap parts for their catapult which is positioned on a high spot in the middle of a 12-acre field. Parts used included a truck frame, a potato conveyor and a bin unloader.

The 33-ft. long arm pivots on a 2-in. dia. shaft and is weighted with over 1 ton of concrete on one end.

The arm is winched down into a horizontal position and a rope is attached to the end

opposite the weights. A pumpkin is loaded into a sling and the rope is cut with an ax. When weights drop, the payload is hurled onward and upward eventually landing with a splat in a nearby sorghum field

"They really explode nice when they hit," Mommsen says. "Pumpkins will go about 100 yds. and maybe 150 ft. in the air. I can launch anything from 10 to 60 lbs. without affecting distance since I can adjust for weight by shortening the launch."

The catapult was fired every 12 minutes (that's how long it takes for the arm to stop swinging and retie and reload) on weekends up through Halloween.

"We've launched hundreds of pumpkins," says Mommsen, adding that the pumpkins used were rotten or damaged. Deer clean up the field at night.

Cost to build the catapult he calls "Mighty Awesome" was about \$600.

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THE GRANDDADDY OF BIG 4-WD'S

First Steiger Tractor On Exhibit At Farm Show

The first Steiger tractor ever built was on display at the recent Big Iron show at Fargo, N. Dak.

The tractor was displayed near the Case-IH exhibit, the manufacturer which recently reintroduced the big powerhouse machines under the Steiger name.

We dug up the history of this original Steiger with the help of Doug Steiger, Jack Johnson and Gene Dahl, all former Steiger Tractor Co. officers, as well Cliff Melroe, son of the founder of the Melroe Company.

The tractor was built by Doug Steiger, his brother Maurice, and their father John during the winter of 1957-'58 in the family's cattle barn in their farm near St. Hilaire, Minn.

The first Steiger was powered by a 671 Detroit Diesel engine rated at 218 gross hp. The engine came from Interstate Diesel in Minneapolis, Minn. Its used axles came off a big iron ore truck and the tires "were the biggest you could get in those days," recalls Doug Steiger, now 64, of Thief River Falls,



Built in 1957-'58, the first Steiger 4-WD tractor was powered by a 671 Detroit Diesel engine rated at 218 gross hp.

Minn. Part of the drawbar was fashioned out of plow beams, while regular steel and sheet metal were used for most other parts of the tractor.

It originally featured a tiller-type steering system that was later replaced with a conventional steering wheel.

The biggest challenge in building it was



Hartogh's pedal-powered Deere B requires relief pedalers every two blocks along parade route.

TAKES TWO STRONG MEN TO MAKE IT GO Pedal-Powered Deere "B"

It would take a pretty strong "kid" to power David Hartogh's pedal-powered 1941 Deere "B", which was recently featured in "Green Magazine". It's become quite a conversation piece around Riceville, Iowa, where Hartogh farms.

Some people think it's a trick when they see Hartogh pedaling the tractor in a parade. Others just want to know how to build one themselves, he says.

Hartogh used a tractor he got from his cousin for the "repower". The engine no longer ran and one day he just got a crazy idea "Why not rig it up with pedals?"

He installed the pedals and drive components on the tractor, mounting the rear sprockets on a driveshaft made of 5/16-in. rod running across the width of the tractor.

Two V-belts run from the pulleys on the shaft down to the tractor's belt pulley which

turns the transmission and drives the rear end. Flowers grow in the engine compartment and a stalk of corn sticks out of the exhaust pipe.

"We've had it in two parades since building it last spring," he says. "The tractor probably weighs 3,000 lbs. without the engine so it takes two adults to pedal it about two blocks. We need relief pedalers along the parade route in order to finish. They get on real fresh and get off completely beat.

"If I'd ever 'repower' another tractor, it would probably be a Deere 'H' since I believe they weighed about 1,000 lbs. less."

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designing gears for the drop box, Steiger points out. "We had limited tools so we had to do it unconventionally."

The tractor, including a cultivator hitch, was completed in time for field work in the spring of 1958.

"We used the tractor ourselves and put close to 10,000 hours on it," says Steiger.

"Steiger tractors like this one sold for \$20,000 to \$25,000."

The tractor was donated in running condition to the Bonanzaville museum on the northeast side of the Red River Valley Fairgrounds at Fargo in the early 1980's. About all the refurbishing it needed was a fresh coat of trademark lime green paint, says Steiger.