

# 15-Piece Tractor Train Is A Big Hit At Iowa Parades

Even though he retired from farming, Gene Huelman has found a way to use his favorite tractor – a 1947 MD Farmall diesel. Instead of working in fields, the MD pulls Huelman’s 15-unit tractor train to the delight of parade-goers in towns in northwest Iowa.

“I don’t know exactly how I got the idea,” admits the Schaller, Iowa, resident. “I had parked some tractors in the driveway in a row and got the idea to hook them together.”

Huelman, who has collected and restored all of Farmall’s letter series from the 1940’s and 50’s, had plenty of tractors to choose from, including approximately 350 farm toys.

“It’s a good lineup,” he says. “They really gradually go down in size.”

Huelman’s tractor train includes the following models: 1947 MD, 1954 Super H, 1949 C, circa 1947 B, 1949 A, 1947 McCormick Deering Farmall Cub, 1970’s 682 Cub Cadet garden tractor, 1970’s 282 Hydro Cadet garden tractor, 1949 open grill H pedal tractor, 1/8-scale Super M, 1/16-scale M, 1/32-scale M, 1/16-scale Cub Cadet, 1/64-scale Farmall 400 and a 1 1/2-in. long Farmall tractor Huelman found on a keychain.

The 125-ft. train maneuvers surprisingly well around corners, he says.

“One thing about the Farmall tractors is that they have a place up front to put hitches on them,” Huelman says. He customized tongues made of rectangular steel tubing between the large tractors and made hitches out of scrap iron between the smaller tractors. He has them hooked up so the MD steers the whole line. The hitches for the toys connect to the tires so they don’t break off in cracks or holes.

Huelman laughs as he recalls how the toys went underwater through puddles at a parade just after a rain. He adds that though his big tractors are restored, the toys get the most attention.

“It’s just comical. The little kids get down on their hands and knees looking at the little ones,” he says. Collectors appreciate the 1949 pedal tractor, which was a wreck before Huelman restored it.

“It was the first pedal tractor that Eska made that really resembled a tractor,” he says. “It has some real value.”

With all the restoration work and hitch design finished, Huelman’s biggest challenge is transporting all the pieces. It takes him three trips with a 25-ft. trailer. Attending parades is easier when a company sponsors him and picks up his big tractors in one load, and Huelman can bring the rest on his trailer.

After a busy summer, Huelman threatens to “retire” his tractor train, though his wife,



Photo courtesy, Betty Bailey, The Schaller Herald

People in northwest Iowa love watching Gene Huelman pull this 125-ft. long tractor train in parades. The 15 hooked-together tractors gradually go down in size, starting with a 1947 MD Farmall diesel that pulls everything down to a 1 1/2-in. long Farmall that Huelman found on a keychain.

Marguerite, doesn’t really believe he will quit because showing it has been a lot of fun.

“People are welcome to copy it,” Huelman says.

And, he throws out a challenge. He’d like to see the green guys (John Deere) come up

with a tractor train, too.

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