

# JB Tractors: Living The American Dream

By Bas Nijland, JB Tractors LLC

I made my first trip to the United States of America in 2001. My dad and I owned a tractor dealership in the Netherlands that had been selling tractors worldwide for more than 30 years. At that time, we sold a New Holland 8670 to a customer in Brandon, Minnesota. After a few hours of use our customer told us that the tractor had a problem.

We told our customer to bring it to the closest dealer and have it checked out to see what was wrong. Sure enough, it was a major transmission problem. To have this fixed at the dealer would have cost a lot.

So my dad and I decided it would be better to fly to America and bring our best mechanic, Johan, and hope to find a local repair shop where we could work on the tractor.

So there we went, me and Johan, with our suitcases full of parts. Got on the plane in Amsterdam and, 8 hours later, we arrived in Minneapolis. It was another 2 1/2-hr. drive from the airport to get to Brandon.

Wonderful trip! As soon as we got out of city traffic and closer to Brandon we just couldn't believe how beautiful Minnesota was. Big farms, lots of land, hills, lakes, you name it. Coming from a very small crowded country - the Netherlands is approximately 1/5th the size of Minnesota but with 18 million people - I realised this was the land of freedom and opportunity.

When we arrived in Brandon, we were told to drive 8 miles further north to a small town called Millerville. Millerville has a population of 115. It's pretty much the same size of small towns in the Netherlands only in the Netherlands it would have a population of 3,000.

In Millerville we found a repair shop. The owner let us use his shop to fix the tractor and we had it up and running in a few days.

After our 2-week stay in Millerville I had a hard time leaving. In that short amount of time we got to know pretty much the whole town, and everybody was so friendly and made us feel at home right from the start. Something I wasn't expecting at all. I thought most people would see us as foreigners with a funny accent that don't belong in a small town where everybody knows each other. But I couldn't have been more wrong.

After Johan and I got back home to the Netherlands, I talked to my dad and told him about my experience and my dream to start a business in Millerville. After I got to know George, the owner of the shop where we fixed the tractor, he told me he wanted



Bas Nijland came to Northern Minnesota from the Netherlands to repair a tractor and never left. His dealership in Millerville now sells tractors all over the U.S. and Canada.

to retire and sell his shop. So I thought this would be the perfect opportunity for me to start a business.

After a lot of hassle and tons of paperwork, in 2003 JB Tractors was finally born. JB stands for my full name Jan-Bart. But everybody calls me Bas.

## Meeting My Wife

In 2008 while on a work/vacation in Austria (visiting dealers in the morning and skiing in the afternoon), I met my wife Anneke. She worked in a flowershop.

She was also from the Netherlands and we only lived 20 miles apart. But we had never met before. I told her I had my work in America, and she told me that it has always been a dream of her to go to America. She asked me what kind of company I owned and I said, "I work with John Deere, Case, Massey Ferguson...and she replied, 'Oh...I don't know those people'."

In 2008 we got married and she came with me to America. She never touched a flower again and started helping me out with the tractors full-time.

## About Our Tractors

I sell mainly John Deere, Case IH, New Holland and some other brands like Massey Ferguson and McCormick. We also sell some telehandlers.

I get most of my tractors from my dad's company in the Netherlands. My dad travels all over Europe looking for high-quality used tractors and, because he has been doing this for more than 30 years, it's safe to say he knows exactly where to buy.

Before he sends the tractors to me they go through his shop and mechanics put on brand new tires and each tractor gets thoroughly polished. They also install a new interior, when necessary.

When the tractors arrive at my shop in the U.S., my mechanics work on the drivelines of the tractors and make sure each tractor is field ready.

I sell my tractors with a 30-day/30-hour warranty. This is used equipment so you never know when something might break

down but I want my customers to know that I stand behind my tractors and services. If anything goes wrong, I appreciate them giving me the chance to fix it.

## "Why ship tractors back to the U.S. that were originally built in the U.S. and shipped over to Europe?"

We get that question a lot.

It's very simple. For example, in Europe, John Deere is not the most popular brand because there are more popular European-built brands like Fendt and Deutz, so Deere tractors sell for a lot less there.

Also, these European models carry some extra features like longer fenders so mud can't fly up at the cab; an extra parking brake; faster road speed; 2-door entry; and shorter axles, which make it easier to drive into smaller places (you can still use duals).

All parts are the same. We have been getting parts from local Deere, Case IH, and New Holland dealers for more than 10 years. We also have plenty of attachments available at all times. Trades are welcome.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions, and check out our website. We have a nice video that will give you a virtual tour of our company.

Also, give me a call if you don't have access to the internet and we will send out brochures, pictures and price lists to your regular mailing address as well.

Thank you for your interest in my story, and many thanks to all the customers and friends that have made JB Tractors LLC successful.

And a special thanks to the town of Millerville that has supported my business and made me feel right at home from the very start.

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