

INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER TRACTORS from 1921 to 1960

including FARMALLS



and STANDARDS



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Forward Topics

Thanks and Appreciation

My wife, Gail, has been wonderfully supportive and helpful. It has taken years to locate and buy these tractors. She has at all times accepted the expense in money and time with great humor.

I have no doubt that she has been more encouraging and more tolerant than any spouse in the history of tractor book writing.

Our friend and photographer, Cindy Mendel, is responsible for the great photos in this book. I am pretty sure that Cindy had no idea of how much work she was getting into when I asked her to take these photos.

Neither did I, actually.

Long photo sessions started in the summer heat and ended in freezing cold. Throughout the process, Cindy produced thousands of excellent photos. Many of the photos are both beautiful and unique.

My daughter Shannon has been enthusiastically supportive and helpful every step of the way. Especially helpful when we did the actual work of book building. Fortunately, Shannon was already experienced in that craft.

Thanks to granddaughter, Ella, for her encouragement and help.

Thanks to my good friend and South Dakota farm boy, Russ Armstrong. Russ has given me solid help and good advice. Russ got this enterprise started by providing his family's Super M.

Russ accompanied me on dozens of long, but joyful road trips for tractors. He was also a big help with the manuscript work.

Thank you to family friend Terrill James for help to set up the manuscript.

Thanks also to Blake, my son Joel, Owen, Isaac, and Aaron for tractor driving on those exciting photo days.

To Mary, Janelle, Gail, Emma, Owen, Blake and Aaron for tractor cleaning and painting.

Thank you to Greg Novak. Greg shared his expertise and contacts to help me locate and haul tractors.

Why did I write this book?

For several reasons.

1. There are many Farmall tractor books, but none of them cover the Standard tractors thoroughly. I wanted to do so.

2. I thought it would be good to photograph the Standards and their corresponding Row Crop (Farmall) tractors side by side. So, we did that.

3. None of the books I have read actually have photos of all the common tractors. No matter what they claim on the cover. The books seem to have an excess of pictures of some tractor models and a dearth or absence of others. Perhaps because the guys writing the books are not the same people who collect and own the tractors.

To remedy that, I wanted to present as complete a photographic record as I could.

4. Group photographs of the tractor series or the tractor families are hard to find, even using the Internet. To prepare for this book, we have made photos of all the series and all the families. Those photos appear in this book at the beginning of each chapter and in the Family Album section.

5. Cindy took literally thousands of photos for me to work with. Over time, I intend to make most of those photos available on the Internet.

6. Writing this book is a plausible excuse for owning sheds full of beautiful tractors. I can imagine that many old men would like to pull that off.

7. These tractors take me back to my youth as a 1950s farm boy. The 1950s were a good time to grow up. These tractors bring me close again to the good men I worked with and admired.

My Father, my uncles Louie, Norman, John, Pete, Benno and many other dead old farmers that I have known throughout my life.

But, ultimately, I collected these tractors and wrote this book because I wanted to.

So, I did.

Description of this Work

This book is fundamentally a picture book with enough text to tell the story of the tractors.

This book is not about the founding families, the company management or the company operation.

This book is about the tractors.

The bulk of the book describes and pictures the tractors, series by series, tractor by tractor. Every tractor has at least two pages and at least four photos, with specifications.

Each series has a graph that shows the horsepower of each tractor, and a second graph of weight.

Embedded in this book are what I call Side Stories. The Side Stories are normally two pages in length. Each Side Story has photos and enough simple text to explain a single topic. Eighteen topics are covered on fuels, engines, steel wheels, tractor fronts, body types, fenders, brakes, etc.

There is an IH Family Album section. This contains a unique collection of photos of IH tractors in genealogical grouping. For example the H Family photo includes the Regular, F-20, H, Super H, Farmall 300, Farmall 350, Farmall 460.

Each Family has a horsepower and a weight graph.

There is an IH Couples Album. The section contains photos of Row Crop-Standard pairs.

For example, a 560 Farmall and a 560 Wheatland, side by side.

In total there are around 400 photos and over 50 graphs.

Disclaimer for this Work.

I have not done any original research for this book. All the information in this book is commonly available. I have simply compiled it.

I make no guarantee or promise relative to the accuracy of numbers, statements or opinions in this book.

Many numbers such as exact production numbers, or dates for specific models, are not knowable with accuracy. The numbers I present here are often approximations or guesses.

I think they are good guesses. And, I believe an approximate number is much better than no number. But that is for you to decide.

Many of the statements I provide herein are based on common knowledge or my experience. That means that many are correct and at least a few are wrong. That too, is for you to decide.

I am neither a restorer nor a good mechanic.

There are thousands of good mechanics and restorers in the world of old tractors. I am not one. At best, I am an old farmer who collected some tractors and works to preserve them.

About the Author.

I am a life-long farmer. Born and raised on a central Minnesota dairy farm.

I have enjoyed writing throughout my life. I have had many articles or vignettes published but nothing anyone paid for.

The first tractor I operated was my Pa's 8N Ford. I cannot say I actually drove it. I was only four at the time. Pa had me start and stop it by standing on the clutch pedal. With both feet. He hand-picked corn for the hogs while walking behind. The Ford was running at idle. It barely purred. I can still feel the delightful fall sun, smell the drying corn and hear the ears hit the bang-board.

In 1955, Pa bought a new IH 300 Utility. He never bought anything but red after that.

Pa's brothers all farmed with IH too.

The first tractor I bought was an Allis WD. Over the decades, I have worn out many good Allis-Chalmers, Massey Harris, Massey Ferguson, Oliver and IH tractors.

Now, I own only IH tractors, and a fair number of those.

I never have owned a John Deere.

I am however, fond of the sound of an old Popping John.

I once mentioned to my wife that I might buy one just for that sound. She said she would be happy to call our good neighbor Arne and have him fire one of his up whenever I feel the need.

Prologue

International Harvester Company History and Story Overview

The International Harvester Corporation, (IHC or IH in this text) was established in 1902. IHC was formed by the merger of the McCormick Harvesting Company, the Deering Harvester Company and several other farm machinery makers.

J. P Morgan financed the new corporation. His goal was to create the world's largest agriculture machinery company.

In 1902 the McCormick and Deering companies both had extensive dealer networks throughout North American.

By 1909, IHC was the fourth largest US corporation.

From 1902 until 1920 both McCormick and Deering produced tractors. Mogul branded tractors for the McCormick dealers. Titan branded tractors for the Deering dealers.

Farm tractors in the early 1900s were enormous and expensive machines. The size and cost of early tractors limited their sale to only the largest farms.

These early tractors had two primary uses. They were used as large traction engines to pull 8 to 20 bottom plows on huge tracts of land. Or, they were used as stationary engines to run threshing machines.

By 1918, with the end of WWI, farm equipment manufacturers were attempting to tap into the potentially huge market for cheaper, smaller and more versatile tractors. Tractors that could do the work that was done by millions of horses and mules. Tractors that could be sold to family sized farms. At that same time, the US government was pushing IH to combine the two dealer networks into one for anti-monopoly reasons.

Around 1920 the two dealer networks were combined into one. Of course, that meant some dealerships were eliminated.

Both the Titan and the Mogul lines were ended.

IH then branded their tractors as McCormick Deering. At least initially.



In 1921, IHC introduced its model 15-30

tractor. The 15-30 tractor was of the “Standard” form. It was a basic tractor that produced about 30 horsepower on the belt and 15 horsepower when pulling field machines. The 15-30 was low priced and versatile with numerous innovative features.

The 15-30 provided much greater power with much less weight than its predecessors.

The new tractor had enclosed gears which made a major improvement in reliability. Previous tractors used open gears and drive chains. Those open drive elements suffered greatly from dust and weather.

The 15-30 was a big success. IHC sold 160,000 15-30 tractors between 1921 and 1929.

The 15-30 was followed by many other Standard models. A majority of the Standards were sold in the western US and Canada for wheat farming. Those western farms and ranches had larger fields where raw pulling power and reliability were needed. Maneuverability was not particularly important.

IH produced tractors of the Standard type into the 1960s.

Standard tractors are sometimes called Western, Wheatland, or Utility tractors.

In 1923 IHC invented the second tractor form, the Row Crop tractor. IHC branded that first Row Crop tractor the “Farmall”.



The Farmall had closely spaced front wheels and high clearance. Both requirements for working in growing row crops such as corn or soybeans.

The Farmall had a high power to weight ratio, the ability to make very short turns, easy handling, reliability and low cost.

It was a huge success. Somewhat to IH's surprise.

The Farmall established the classic form of the farm tractor for the next 40 years.

IHC sold 135,000 Farmall Regulars from 1923 until 1929.

Overtime, IH provided both larger and smaller versions of the Farmall and the Standard types.

The company produced millions of tractors in both forms during the next 40 years.

By 1930, IH was recognized as one of the world's greatest corporations.

In this book, I will introduce and describe IH's significant tractor models, both Standard and Row Crop, from 1920 to 1960.

Starting with the 15-30 and the first Farmall, IH tractors had a superb reputation for both innovation and reliability. Reliability was based on good engineering and careful field testing. That reputation combined with a superior sales network kept IH first in world tractor sales for decades.

By the late 1950s IHC was under great competitive pressure from the John Deere company. Over the years IH had expanded and diluted its business focus. IH expanded into many diverse markets, from trucks to refrigerators.

John Deere kept its focus on tractors and farm machinery.

In the 1950s, farmers were under exceptional pressure to expand to survive. That created a demand for substantially larger tractors.

IH management recognized the need for new and larger tractors a little late.

Competitive pressure led IH executives to bypass crucial field testing of its larger and innovative 460 and 560 model Farmalls. The rear drives of both tractors failed catastrophically after a year or two of hard use.

Of course, those breakdowns occurred at the time of the year when farmers needed their tractors the most. Many farmers never forgave IH.

That devastating failure occurred just as John Deere was introducing a great new series of farm tractors. The 3010-20 and the 4010-20.

IH never recovered. The company struggled on for two more decades and produced some excellent tractors. Nevertheless, IH reached the point of bankruptcy in 1984.

In 1985, IHC's agricultural assets were merged with Case, a subsidiary of Tenneco Corporation.

Case IH swept in many other agriculture lines over time. The company is now known as Case New Holland, (CNH). CNH is the second largest agricultural equipment maker behind John Deere, and apparently doing well.

After a forty-year lapse, the Farmall brand, still owned by CNH, was reintroduced in 2003. No doubt to take advantage of the fond memories of old farmers.

It works, I own a 2010 model.

The McCormick brand, which was sold by CNH to AGCO in 2000, has also been resurrected. The brand is affixed to a full line of red tractors, sold world-wide.



LEFT: The Farmall F-30 row-crop and the McCormick Deering W-30 standard shared the same engine and many mechanical assemblies.