

Brand names, IH, IHC, McCormick, Deering, International, Farmall, then and now.

The International Harvester Company was founded in 1902. The new company was referred to initially as “IHC” and later as just “IH”. The founders merged five prominent companies. The two main companies in the merger were McCormick and Deering. Both of those produced harvesting machines and traction engines, (huge tractors of the time).

The companies both had established dealerships, engineering and manufacturing. Initially, IH kept those entities intact. The merger was difficult because McCormick and Deering had been fierce competitors. By 1920, the companies were sufficiently merged to jointly produce their first tractors. The company branded those tractors and a broad line of farm implements as “McCormick-Deering”.

That brand was applied to Standard tractors and the various versions of Standard tractors until the 1940s.

In the 1940s, the name “Deering” was dropped from most or all IH products. It is impossible to assign a specific date for the switch. IH was always casual about the application of model names and brands. Among other factors, there seemed to be a strong inclination to “use up existing label stock”.

For example, the name McCormick Deering was on the “W” series of standard tractors when they were introduced in 1939, but McCormick only by 1949.

The “Super W” series that was produced in the early 1950s carried only the McCormick name. The Standard tractors of the 100 series, introduced in 1954 wore the “International” brand.

McCormick was gone.

International of course, draws from IH’s corporate name. International Harvester.

The brand “International” stuck to the end of IHC. In fact, “International” still lives on in the Case-IH models of today.

The Farmall brand was invented for IH’s first Row Crop tractor, which was introduced in 1923. The tractor we now know as the “Regular” was simply branded the Farmall. That application of

“Farmall” became a problem. IH soon realized that the row crop design was taking off. IH needed to produce more models of row crop but wanted to use the now-popular Farmall name. In 1932 IH introduced both smaller and larger row crops and designated them F-30 and F-12. Properly named the Farmall 30 and the Farmall 12.

To reduce the obvious confusion with the original Farmall, farmers referred to that first tractor as the “Regular”. An unofficial moniker that it carries to this day.

Later in the 1930s, IH replaced the Regular with the F-20. In 1938 IH introduced the F-14.

Not knowing how popular the Farmall name would be, IH also introduced a tractor for golf courses named the “Fairway”. That name referred to a specific tractor type, not to a Fairway version of the Farmall. Eventually, the brand Fairway was downgraded and golf course tractors were simply a fairway subset of the Farmalls.

In the 1940s and into the 1950s, Farmall-branded tractors often carried the brand McCormick, in a smaller decal.

The Farmall name grew in importance until the mid-1950s. By the 1960s, herbicides and other chemicals reduced and then eliminated the need for cultivation. Farmers needed tractors so large they could not properly be referred to as row crop. Gradually the Farmall name was replaced with “International”. By the mid-1970s the great brand name was phased out entirely.

The standard and row crop tractor lines were combined under the brand name International. In 1985, IHC collapsed financially. The assets were purchased by a holding company that already owned the Case tractor and machinery line.

The assets and trade names of IHC still exist.

Through several ownership changes the old IH brand name was retained as unused assets.

Until CASE IH acquired New Holland in 2000. The European monopoly regulators required the sale of some specific McCormick assets which

included the ability to produce tractors and use the McCormick brand.

CASE IH became CNH (Case New Holland).

CNH is primarily owned by Fiat.

The grand old brands still have power with farmers.

In the early 2000s, CNH revived the Farmall name and applied it to red tractors.

I own a 2010 Farmall myself.

The company that bought the McCormick assets from CNH is named ARGO.

ARGO is now selling red tractors, branded McCormick, world-wide. Those new McCormick branded tractors are mostly manufactured in an Italian Landini plant.

Maybe I should buy a new McCormick too.

