

Smörgåsbord



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**Tracking Down The
"Tracked" Tractors**

Caterpillar's spectacular success with its revolutionary rubber-tracked Challenger tractor has prompted other manufacturers to get into the act.

In Australia, Waltanna—a veteran tractor manufacturer—has unveiled the Trac 200, a rubber-tracked tractor that, complete with steering wheel, looks suspiciously similar to Caterpillar's Challenger. And rumors are flying that Deere may have an experimental crawler under wraps.



"We know about the Trac 200 and, because of design conflicts, have asked Waltanna to stop production under a cease and desist order," Steve Newhouse, Caterpillar's spokesman, told FARM SHOW.

A recent feature story on the Trac 200 (pictured) in FARM, a leading Australian farm magazine, cites these key features: lower price (\$10,000 to \$15,000 less expensive than a 250 hp wheeled tractor); only 4% slippage compared to a 4-WD at 10 to 15%; less compaction (4.9 lbs. per sq. in. ground pressure, compared to 9.5 lbs under a 4-WD tractor); and row crop capability (its 20 in. belts are spaced 2 meters apart from track center to center).

The word from Deere is that the company bought a Challenger "to study the competition" but is not developing a rubber-tracked tractor of its own.

Meanwhile, Caterpillar is moving full speed ahead with its best seller. More than 600 Challengers have been sold since they were introduced in 1987, putting sales 3 years ahead of projections. A larger, longer model of the Challenger is slated for introduction soon. And, as you've been reading in previous issues of FARM SHOW, Caterpillar has licensing agreements with other companies, including Claus of America which is putting rubber tracks on its combines, and Kinze Mfg., of Williamsburg, Iowa, which is putting them on large grain cars.

First "Veggie Oil" Car

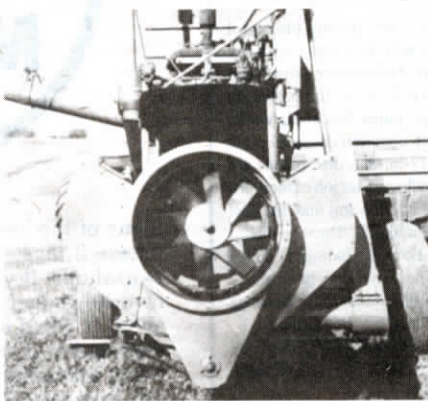
In Hurleyville, New York, environmentalist and tinkerer Louis Wichinsky is finalizing plans for his cross-country trip later this month in his Volkswagon Rabbit. Instead of gas stations, his fuel stops will be Burger Kings, Kentucky Fried Chickens, McDonalds and other fast-food places where he'll gas up "The World's Only Vegetable Oil Car" with used vegetable oil collected from deep-fat fryers. He burns it "as is" except for heating it up and straining out stray french fries.

Louis is convinced that "veggie oil" is the fuel of the future. "It's a lot less polluting than gasoline and other alternative fuels," he told FARM SHOW.

He says the "secret" to burning crude or refined vegetable oil in diesel engines is to periodically add a few ounces of a methanol (97%) and water (3%) mixture to the fuel tank. He's rigged up a device which, like a windshield washer, automatically injects a doze of the scrubbing agent every couple hundred miles. "It prevents harmful residues from building up inside the engine," he points out.

Instead of importing oil, Louis feels we should be taking steps to grow it—in the form of rapeseed (Canola) and other oil-producing crops. "Once we do, the price of vegetable oil will be more than competitive with gasoline and diesel fuel."

If you'd like to compare notes with Louis, you can contact him at: FARM SHOW Followup, Louis Wichinsky, Box 244, Hurleyville, N.Y. 12747 (ph 914 434-5067).



Rear view of Deere's XCC-1 rotary.

**The John Deere
Rotary Combine**

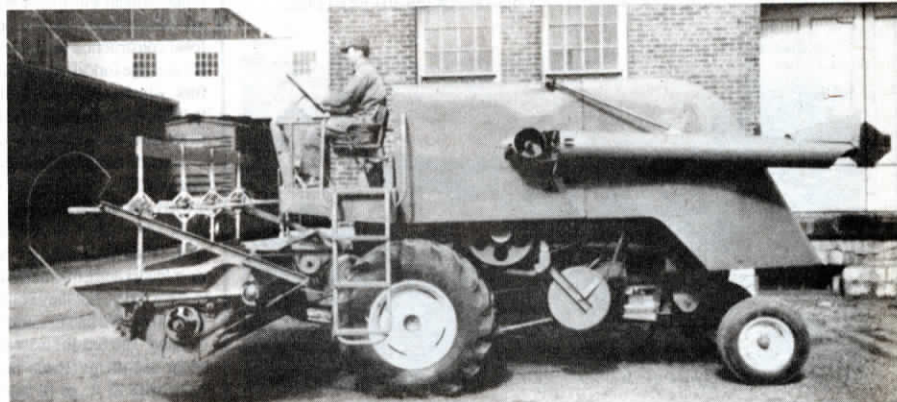
Before Deere and Company introduced their new Maximizer combines a year ago, there was much speculation as to whether the new machines might be the long awaited Deere rotaries.

Deere, the only major U.S. manufacturer not making a rotary, has been adamant in stating that in a variety of crops and conditions, the conventional combine is still superior. They backed up that statement by sticking with a conventional design on their new series.

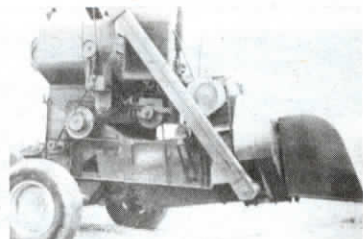
Deere should know what they're talking about since, as the photos show, they began with their own rotary experiments in 1957 with the XCC-1. At this point, Deere called these combines centrifugals. Thus XCC stood for "Experimental Centrifugal Combine." This combine was based on a pull-type model 65 chassis. The combine was tested in 1958. A product Research Department report stated that "field losses have been low and harvest capacity acceptable in rye, wheat and oats."

Encouraged by these early tests, a new model, the XCC-5, was built, based on the 95 chassis. This model was "styled" in 1959 by covering it with sheet metal. A series of four different sizes of this combine was considered in the winter of 1960. The name "Axial Flow" was often used for these machines. This name wouldn't be heard again until 1977 when IH introduced their first rotary, calling it the Axial Flow.

In 1960, it was reported that the concaves in Deere's experimental rotaries plugged with sap and weeds, and that



Left side view of Deere's rotary XCC-5 taken in 1958.



View of the XCC-1 based on model 65 chassis.

there were too many cobs in corn, and too many cracked beans.

In 1961, while being tested near Dalton, Neb., the grates built up with mud in soybeans. A high loss of grain was also experienced at low feed rates, due to ricocheting grain.

Despite these problems, Deere engineers had hoped to have the combines ready for market in 1964. In 1962, an industry rumor that IH was about to introduce a revolutionary rotary combine caused Deere engineers to worry that these would be the first commercially-available rotaries. Their fears were unfounded, however, as IH introduced the conventional 303, 403 and 503 models. These were little more than updates of the previous 101, 151 and 181 models which they had built since 1957.

Somewhere in the early sixties, Deere dropped their all-out efforts to produce a rotary combine, even though some experimentation continued right up until the time the 4400, 6600 and 7700 were introduced in 1969.

In 1975 New Holland introduced their TR70, the first rotary by a major manufacturer. We still haven't seen a Deere rotary and maybe never will.

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**Maturity Attracts
Strange Bedfellows**

Ever notice how everything is farther away now than it used to be. It's twice as far to the corner and I notice the township has added a hill.

I've given up running to catch the mailman. He leaves sooner than he used to.

They're making stair steps steeper than in the old days, too.

Have you noticed the smaller print they now use in newspapers? There is no sense in reading aloud. Everyone speaks in such a low voice you can't hear them anyway.

The material in clothes is so skimpy now, especially around the waist. It's almost impossible to reach my shoe laces, and I can't figure out why.

Even people are changing. They're much younger than they used to be when I was their age. On the other hand, people my age are so much older. I ran into a classmate the other day. Do you know that she had aged so much she didn't know me? I got to thinking about the poor thing while I was combing my hair this morning, and in doing so I glanced at my own reflection. Really, now—they just don't make good mirrors anymore.

Do you get lonesome? Living alone you say? What do you mean—alone? I live with four constant companions. I get up with Charlie Horse, have lunch with Arthur Itis, spend the day with Will Power, and go to bed with good old Ben Gay? (Anonymous.)