B.F. AVERY TRACTORS "REDESIGNED" IN IMAGINATIVE WAYS

"Believe It Or Not" Tractor Collection - - Part II

In the last issue FARM SHOW reported on an unusual collection of radically modified Wheel Horse tractors put together by Ohio tractor collector Charlie Melton. Melton has a similar collection of B.F. Avery tractors. "All the Avery tractors in my collection were originally built in the mid 1940's. I buy them cheap, put new engines in them, and paint them with original Avery red and yellow colors. Most of the tractors are equipped with large lights off highway trucks and antique truck horns."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Charlie Melton, 6941 Eyman Rd., Washington Court House, Ohio 43160. Thanks to photographer Gail Streitenberger for supplying most of the photos.

Half Track - This 1946 Avery is equipped with 15-in. wide, 38-in. long "half tracks" and a single 16-in. front wheel. The track was made by cutting up tractor tires. It's powered by a V-6 turbocharged engine off a Buick Regal car and also has the car's automatic transmission. The track is supported by 22-in. tires on back and 14-in. tires up front. The axle that connects the front tires pivots to keep the track tight. It has nine forward gears and three reverse. To make room for the tracks I had to raise the fenders up and inward. As a result, there isn't room to get on the tracks from the back. I solved the problem by mounting a combine ladder above the track on the left side of the tractor," says Melton.

Full Track - This 1946 Avery rides on a pair of 18-in. wide, 38-in. long rubber tracks made from two rear tractor tires off a Deere 4340 tractor. The tracks are supported by three sets of axles. The center and front axles are rear axles off Oldsmobile Cutlass front wheel drive cars. The rear axle is original and does the driving. The front axle slides inside a steel frame and is used to tighten the track via a pair of all-thread rods. All wheels sport 15-in. pickup rims. Power is supplied by a 305 cu. in. Chevy engine, with the car's 3-speed manual transmission connected to the tractor's rear end.

4-WD, Articulated Double Rear Tractor - This 1946 Avery has two rear axles supporting four big 14.9 by 26 combine tires, with fenders off a Cockshutt 30 tractor. There's a single tricycle wheel on front. Either set of wheels can be driven separately. The driver sits on a homemade, 4-ft. wide, cushioned "buddy" seat. The original engine has been replaced by a 350 cu. in. V-8 Chevy engine and transmission. The transmission shaft-drives a "twin screw-like" axle off a Mack semi truck. A long rod with two universal joints extends from the transmission back to to the input shaft on the rear axle. To engage the rear axle Melton reaches back and pulls on a lever.

The rear axle mounts on a ball socket and is detachable. Melton welded the female part of a mobile home frame hitch onto the rear axle frame and mounted the mobile home's ball socket on the drawbar of the front rear end. A safety chain keeps the rear axle from turning too short and jack knifing.

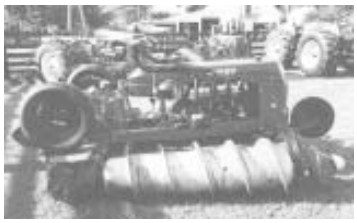
"The 350 cu. in. Chevy engine was 'tired' so I bored it out enough to provide 5 additional cu. in. It's now a 'fresh' 355," says Melton.

A pto shaft on the rear axle is used to power a grass seeder made out of a shoulder-carried, hand-cranked seeder. Melton replaced the seeder's original canvas bag with a 5-gal. metal bucket and mounted it on a bracket that mounts on a drawbar. The seeder's original crank mechanism is operated by a length of rubber hose attached to the pto shaft. "It's fun to spin out grass seed in parades. People get a kick out of it," says Melton.

A square metal toolbox mounts above the rear axle and has a set of bull horns mounted on top of it for handles to lift the toolbox lid.

4-WD "Big Foot" - "Everyone wants to see me drive this one," says Melton. It's a 1946 Avery equipped with a Jeep front axle and four huge combine tires - 30.5 by 32's on back and 14.9 by 26's on front. A 4-cyl. Hercules turbocharged engine supplies the power and is connected to the tractor's original transmission. The Jeep front axle is driven by an automobile 3-speed transmission that's chain-driven off the tractor's pto shaft. Melton drives the front axle by engaging the pto and then putting the car transmission in gear. A big chrome pipe muffler angles off to one side.

Cultivator Tractor - This 1946 Avery is equipped with a belly-mounted, 1938 row crop cultivator and has a dual wheeled tricycle front end, with big 12 by 26 tires on back. Power is supplied by a 1964 Corvair air-cooled transverse engine that has twin carburetors. The Corvair engine was originally mounted at the rear of the car and turned counterclockwise. Melton attached a 2-geared Dodge transmission to the engine in order to change engine direction. The driver sits on a double wide "buddy" seat.



Twin Auger Drive - "Everyone likes this one," says Melton. At first glance you would think this tractor would go sideways, because it's equipped with an auger on each side instead of wheels. However, one auger turns clockwise and the other one counterclockwise to cancel each other out, moving the tractor straight ahead. The augers were made by cutting apart propane tanks and then welding on 3-in. high steel spirals. Each auger is driven by a gearbox. Steel cones on front of the augers help the tractor climb over sidewalks and tree roots, etc. The tractor has a Chevrolet 3-speed transmission that's connected to an Avery transmission by a short driveshaft. A single tire in front, and a pair of spare donut car tires on back, can be lowered to the ground in order to raise the augers and keep them from gouging into the ground.