

World's "First And Only" Chevrolet Tractor

FARM SHOW has featured quite a few tractors over the years powered by Chevy engines. But they have always been repowered machines, where the original engine had been replaced.

That's not the case with this one-of-a-kind "Chevrolet tractor" owned by Dale Hall of Mount Washington, Ky. It was originally equipped with a Chevrolet 216 cu. in. engine and a 4-speed transmission and manual shift, two-speed rear end.

The tractor is a one-of-a-kind prototype, without a pto, hydraulics, belt pulley, or power lift of any kind. "All those features would've been added if the tractor had ever gone into production," notes Hall.

He acquired the tractor in 1991 when he answered an ad in a local paper about a truck for sale. When he went to see the truck, he happened to see an old tractor in the barn. Right away he knew it was unusual, so he bought it and left the truck.

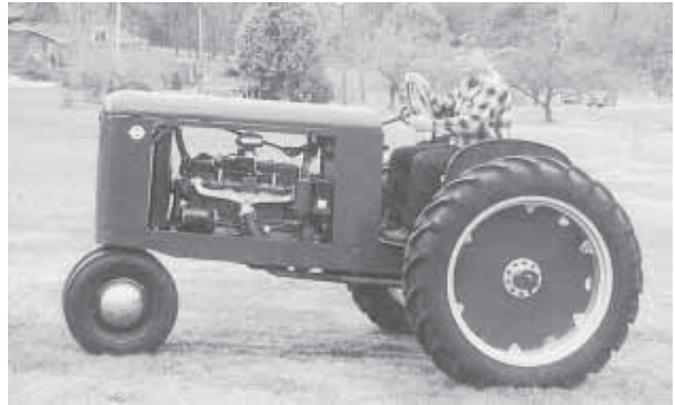
The previous owner remembered seeing the tractor sitting idle on his neighbor's farm when he was a kid. Upon asking about the tractor, the young man was told he could have it. He later did some research into the unusual tractor.

After World War II ended, a deaf and mute

man named Nutter built the tractor in his garage, hoping to interest General Motors in manufacturing it. It was well known that the company wanted to get into the tractor business. He used a 1 1/2-ton Chevy truck engine, transmission, and rear end - common parts that he thought would help keep the production cost down. When the prototype was finished, someone from Chevrolet in Detroit came to look at it. Unfortunately, the company's plants were all operating at full capacity in the post-war boom so no deal was ever worked out.

When he got it, the tractor's engine block was cracked so it sat in his garage for 10 years. Two years ago, his wife urged him to put the tractor back together so he started working on it.

"I've tried to restore the tractor to as near its original condition as I could," says Dale. "It runs now and I've taken it to a couple of shows. The tractor had sat out for so long that you couldn't even tell what color it had been. One day I discovered that it was painted dark blue when I took the tractor apart and saw the top part of the rear end housing. I got the paint code number so I was able to get the original color duplicated at a local auto paint shop.



Prototype doesn't have a pto, hydraulics, belt pulley or power lift. It does have a Chevy 216 cu. in. engine, 4-speed transmission, manual shift and two-speed rear end.

"The tractor is equipped with side covers that fold up like the ones on a Model A car. However, they were all beat up and rusted. I don't have them fixed yet. The hood is hinged at the rear, with a latch at the front so it can be raised for service."

Dale says that because the tractor has a

truck engine and transmission and 36-in. high tires, it's geared too high and needs another gear reduction between the rear end and the rear wheels.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Dale Hall, 1516 Bogard Lane, Mount Washington, Ky. 40047 (ph 502 538-7213).



Moving parts on miniature farm are powered by a variety of electric motors, transformers, and relays.

"Mini" Model Farm Draws A Crowd

"I keep improving it all the time," says 82-year-old Roy Schwebke, Juda, Wis., about his miniature 1/16-scale farmstead that he takes to farm shows and country fairs all over the Midwest.

It's been featured in FARM SHOW before (Vol. 18, No. 6) but it keeps growing so we thought we'd show it again.

The mini farm measures 8 by 24 ft. and is displayed atop six sawhorses. It folds in the middle for transport. Numerous working parts all operate electrically using transformers, relays, and time delay relays.

"This replica is set up the way I'd like to have a farm if I was still farming," says Schwebke. "As far as I know it's the biggest 1/16 scale farm display around. Quite a few people have much smaller 1/64 scale displays. I like 1/16 scale because it allows me to use electric motors to make machines run."

The farmstead features several machines such as a bale elevator, silo unloader, grain auger, and a grain dryer that actually blows hot air (thanks to a hair dryer under the floor). The silo doesn't have a roof on it so you can look inside and see the unloader slowly rotating.

The corn crib has a working bucket elevator and a wagon hoist that takes the wagon up to dump the load out. There's even a working grain elevator leg. There are yard lights and lights inside the buildings. The light poles are made from old pool cues. The windmill's pumpjack is fully operative, thanks to a motor out of a junked VCR. "I



Silo unloader, grain dryer and windmill all function normally on model farm.

get a lot of the motors out of old VCR's. I also get motors out of can openers, computers, typewriters, and blenders," says Schwebke.

The project started in 1988 with a single barn. "I still work on it every day in my spare time. The only parts of the display that aren't hand-made are the 31 toy tractors. The house was designed by my wife, Wauneta, and decorated by my daughter. My son-in-law, Paul Heimann, who is an electrician, helped with the numerous working parts.

"My family usually goes with me on the road. It takes about 4 1/2 hours to set up."

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Housed in Fountain, Minn., this modified 1969 Ford 1/2-ton pickup takes 10 minutes to cook enough wood gas in the combustion chamber to create enough methane gas to run.

Wood-Powered Pickup

By Jim Ruen, Contributing Editor

In the early 1980's, I was a staff writer with The Farmer magazine in St. Paul, Minn. Gas prices were sky-high at the time so my editor sent me out to interview a farmer who had converted his pickup to run on wood.

Albert Smith, now deceased, was a 66-year old farmer when he built the wood-powered pickup. He and a friend, Eldon Fetterly, had discussed building such a unit for several years. When another friend gave him a book on the subject published in Sweden during World War II, he got started.

"We didn't know where to start until we got the book," he told me at the time.

Even then it wasn't easy. Neither he nor anyone he knew read Swedish. With the help of a Swedish-English dictionary, he translated the entire book, one word at a time. Only then could he master the various graphs and diagrams that described units that had been built.

The job was made even more difficult by the absence of exact dimensions. Working only from diagrams of gasification units, Smith had to estimate how to size one specifically for the 360 cu. in. V-8 in his 1969 Ford 1/2-ton pickup.

"The size of the cone part of the combustion chamber must conform to the volume of the engine," he said. "It is important to build the size of the generator to match the engine

and type of driving to be done."

He built his 350-lb. gasifier out of 14 and 16-ga. steel and sized it for country road driving. Wood was dumped into a 15 1/2-in. sq. compartment above a combustion chamber. Small wood blocks for fuel slid through the combustion chamber emerging as charcoal at the bottom of a cone-shaped compartment ending in a grill. The entire set of compartments was enclosed in a steel shell. Methane gas given off by the burning charcoal gathered at the top of the shell to be pumped off to a series of cooling units before being piped to the pickup's carburetor.

Smith took me for a ride in the truck, travelling down country roads at a comfortable 40 to 50 mph. Building up enough wood gas took time (about 10 min.), however, since the combustion chamber needed to reach 800 to 1200 degrees.

"It has to get hot enough to break down the tars and acetic acid in the wood," he explained to me. "The hotter the fire, the better the quantity and quality of the gas."

Today Smith is gone, but his wood-powered pickup can still be seen at the Fillmore County History Center in Fountain, Minn.

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