



Fourteen different combines have found their final resting place at "Combine City".



He cut the rear tires off, dug a hole and slid this combine in with the header rearing up from the ground.

By Dee Goerge, Contributing Editor

Combine City Reminds Farmer Of Past Harvests

You might call Orville Ladehoff a "combine junkie," but burying combines on his Amarillo, Texas, farm started out as a somewhat practical solution to a problem.

In 2002, he had stripped the engine, hydraulics and fuel tank off his 1970 1500 New Holland combine. It didn't seem worth the work to cut it up and sell it for scrap.

His wife, Gracie, offered a suggestion: "Why don't you just bury it?"

Ladehoff liked the idea, but not the terminology. "I call it planting them," he says.

He cut the rear tires off, dug a hole with his backhoe and slid the combine in with the header rearing up from the ground. Located

next to a highway 10 miles southeast of Amarillo, it soon attracted attention, and neighbors brought over their worn out combines to add to the collection. Ladehoff even went out and bought some old combines, stripped them of their good parts, and buried those as well.

Fourteen combines have found their final resting place on Ladehoff's land. A Route 66 magazine writer did a piece about Combine City. A local high school girl had her senior photo taken with the combines in the background.

Combine City has become a tourist attraction and even has a website including items

for sale (managed by one of Ladehoff's friends). It's sometimes called a copycat of the famous Cadillac Ranch on the other side of Amarillo on Rt. 66, where a millionaire buried 10 Cadillacs more than 50 years ago to represent the Golden Age of automobiles.

Ladehoff says he isn't trying to make any kind of statement with his combines, though it brings fond memories to Gracie and him.

"It reminds me of the old times harvesting and Mom bringing food out to the fields," he says. The Ladehoffs also remember watching Gleaner Baldwin combines being hauled on too-small trucks by custom crews.

Combine City continues to attract visitors,

and people who don't get to Amarillo can see photos on the website. But don't expect the city to grow, Ladehoff says.

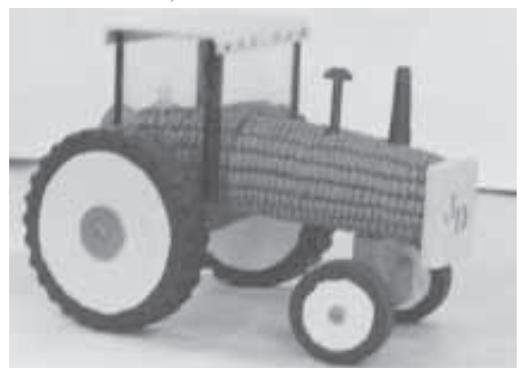
When combine No. 14 went in the ground in February, Ladehoff decided it should be the last one in the 2-acre plot. Combine City started out looking like art, but "my wife says now it's starting to look a little like a junkyard," Ladehoff laughs.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Orville Ladehoff, Combine City, 10240 S. Whitaker Rd., Amarillo, Texas 79118 (ph 806 622-1750; combineplanter@combinecity.com; www.combinecity.com).



"I'm impressed at how well it runs," says Bill Harris, who repowered a 1934 Farmall F-12 tractor with a Subaru car's fuel-injected engine.

Weger's toy tractors have an ear corn body and are painted Deere green and yellow. Old pens are used for exhaust pipes and air breathers, and Plexiglas for the cab.



Farmall F-12 Repowered By Subaru Engine

"I do my own mechanic work and over the years have become very impressed with the Subaru car engine. So my stepfather and I came up with the idea of repowering a 1934 Farmall F-12 tractor with a Subaru car's fuel-injected engine. We're impressed at how well it runs," says Bill Harris of Van Etten, New York.

The steel-wheeled F-12 tractor belonged to Harris's grandfather and was originally equipped with a 25 hp, 4 cyl. gas engine. Harris replaced it with the 4-cyl., 1.8-liter, 90 hp engine out of a 1989 Subaru wagon. The tractor still has its original 3-speed transmission, brakes, radiator, and gas tank. It uses the car's clutch and computer-controlled starting system. Harris even rides in style on the car's plush, reclining bucket seat.

"It runs beautifully. Some of my neighbors like to poke a little good natured fun at me whenever they see me driving it," says Harris. "I call it my Farm-A-Ru 100. I already had the car. My only cost was for a new battery and some electronics. My total expense was about \$200."

The engine has two opposed banks of cylinders so Harris needed two exhaust mufflers. So he installed a pair of vertical exhaust pipes and clamped a motorcycle muffler on top of each one. "It makes a rumbling sound like a Harley Davidson, which gets your attention right away," says Harris.

To rebuild the tractor, he lowered the frame so the engine sits level with the tractor's drivetrain, then made new motor mounts. He made an adapter to couple the Subaru's clutch and clutch linkage to the tractor's driveshaft. The belt-driven governor off an old combine is used to control the speed of the Subaru engine. "The governor regulates the tractor's speed so I don't have to keep my foot on the gas pedal all the time. Whenever the engine is under load, the throttle automatically opens up to keep the engine rpm's the same. I use the tractor's original hand throttle to set the engine speed and it'll stay that way.

The wide front end was made out of an old car differential that he cut down. He cut the axle in half and removed the ring gear, keeping only the axle and bearings, then mounted them vertically. He cut down the car axle to make the spindles for the wide front end.

The Subaru's computer and electronics are used to control the car engine's fuel injectors. "When I turn the key, the engine pops right off," says Harris.

He used the Subaru's bell housing and transmission. He made an adapter to connect a driveshaft coming out of the tractor's 3-speed transmission to the car's transmission.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Bill Harris, P.O. Box 242, Van Etten, New York 14889 (ph 607 589-6914; wrh5@yahoo.com).

Corn Cob Farm Tractors

John Weyers puts the "farm" in farm toys by making toy tractors out of ear corn.

"I'm partial to Deere because that's the most popular brand around here," Weyers says, adding he's made and sold other models, including Case and Oliver.

"I got the idea after seeing a patriotic corn flag in FARM SHOW," he says.

A farming neighbor lets him pick corn out of the field. He dries the corn in his garage until it is well cured, then adds tires, axles and wheels that he makes out of aspen, oak, dowels and other scrap wood that he has on hand. He uses old pens for exhaust pipes and air breathers, and Plexiglas for the cabs.

"Any place that I need a screw - axles, for example - I make sure I put Elmer's glue on the screw, and it holds the cob, kernels and everything together," Weyers says.

He primes his corn toys and then sprays them with two coats of Deere green and yellow paint. With careful handling the toys hold up well, Weyers notes, though they are meant only for display and not play.

"The most challenging thing about the whole deal is to get the Plexiglas cabs squared and fit on the round ears," Weyers says. His favorite toy to make is the 2010 John Deere with a cab, which he sells for \$75.

Though he makes the corn tractors mostly as a hobby, he often sells them to people looking for unique gifts. He recalls how pleased one couple was to receive a corn tractor on



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their 50th anniversary. Weyers makes other custom toys also, including corn planes after being inspired by seeing a plane at a museum.

"Since I started this hobby I've found out that I can make just about anything out of an ear of corn," Weyers says.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, John Weyers, 8300 Mill Rd., Lincoln, Neb. 68517 (ph 402 467-2104; sandy0801bud@msn.com).