

## Beautiful Massey Collection Still Missing One Model

We were impressed by the quality of a collection of Massey Ferguson garden tractors featured in a recent issue of LAGC magazine ([www.lawnandgardencollector.com](http://www.lawnandgardencollector.com)).

To say Bill Mickler's collection is well cared for is an understatement. Over the winter, 10 of them were wrapped in quilts and covered with tarps before they were locked in a 26-ft. enclosed trailer for the season. When he and his wife, Barbara, take them to shows this year, they will be displayed under a canopy and carefully wiped down before they're loaded back into the trailer.

As the LAGC magazine editor noted, they look like they just came off a dealer's show floor.

Mickler says that he didn't intend to become a collector when he bought his first Massey garden tractor in 1967. He bought it because he had 11 acres of lawn to mow. He selected the No. 10 model from a brochure his neighbor had and paid about \$1,400 for the tractor with a 42-in. mowing deck.

He didn't start collecting until 1995, when he retired. He had a collection of Ford farm tractors he had already restored, but he liked the idea of working on smaller tractors. He could fit 10 garden tractors in his trailer, versus just two farm tractors.

He also appreciated Massey's quality. His No. 10 gave him decades of work, before he took it to a shop to repair and overhaul the engine.

"Massey is one of the prettiest tractors," Mickler adds. "It had four colors - silver mist, flint metallic grey, rouge red and satin black." As he attended shows and farm auctions he focused on the "striped grill" models made over a 10-year span from 1966 to 1976. They came in models 10, 12, 14 and 16, which reflect the corresponding horsepower. Types of transmissions varied in the series and included 4-speed standard and hydrostatic. The 10 was the most unique with a variable-speed transmission - four standard gears and five speeds in each gear for a total of 20



Photos courtesy Kate Goelzhauser, LAGC

**Bill Mickler and his wife Barbara have a beautiful collection of Massey Ferguson garden tractors, which they enjoy taking to shows.**

speeds in both forward and reverse.

Mickler also collected models 5, 6, 7 and 8, which are riding mowers, to create a complete collection. But, he prefers the garden tractors with 3-pt. hitches and enough horsepower to use attachments he has also collected: plow, cultivator, disk, tandem disk and a rare one-row planter.

The tractors and implements came in varying conditions when Mickler purchased them in Indiana, Illinois and Ohio.

"I tore the garden tractors completely down," he says. "At times I'd have 1,700 parts on the garage floor. It takes me 7 to 9 months to rebuild one from the ground up."

He sandblasts, hand sands, works the sheet metal, fixes mechanical parts and puts in all new nuts and bolts for each restoration.

"The biggest challenge is finding parts," Mickler says. "When Massey got out (sold to Snapper), they didn't leave many parts." Mickler bought 7 old garden tractors just to tear down for parts.

His collection of 10 restored and four tractors to restore has just one hole.

"I'm having a hard time finding a 14," he says. After a couple of stories about his collection were published, he received about 100 calls. Tractors that sounded promising were too far away and too costly to transport. Mickler is hoping he will find one closer to his Indianapolis home.

"It has to have the original engine and parts. You can't buy the original cast iron block. I don't care if it smokes, but it has to be the original block," he says.

Meanwhile, Mickler has four others to restore, and he and his wife will attend shows with the showroom quality Massey garden tractors he already has.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Bill Mickler (ph 317 356-8332).

**The Micklers collect riding mowers but prefer garden tractors with 3-pt. hitches, which they use with attachments.**



**Bill's Model 10 did decades of work before he took it to a shop to repair and overhaul the engine.**



## "Tractor Dave" Travels Cross Country For Charity

By Dee Goerge, Contributing Editor

A couple of years ago, Dave Wolfson's 1937 Co-op No. 2 tractor was rusting away in the brush. This summer it's pulling a 20-ft. camper 9,300 miles through 48 states. "Tractor Dave" is on a mission to raise \$200,000 to split between two of his favorite causes: the Food Resource Bank (FRB) and Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC).

The tractor adventure started innocently when a friend mentioned it would be fun to haul their tractors from Fremont, Mich., to Iowa and Illinois for tractor rides. Wolfson thought it would be more fun to drive to the events, then considered driving around the Great Lakes and raising money for charity.

"After awhile I got this cross country thing in my head, and I wasn't sleeping at night thinking about it," Wolfson says.

Over the next year and a half, things fell into place. Friends and family encouraged Wolfson, and he partnered with his Christian Reformed Church to map out the route and contact groups and churches that would support him and hold events along the way. The charities provided the motivation.

FRB is partially funded by farmers who pledge the proceeds from crop acres and livestock. FRB is based in Chicago with members from 15 denominations.

Wolfson likes its focus.

"The motto is we don't give anything away other than the opportunity and knowledge so one can maintain dignity and

improve themselves," Wolfson says.

He saw some of the results firsthand when he traveled to Nicaragua and met farmers in one of the programs. FRB buys land, and new farmers receive 5-acre plots to farm. They are taught how to farm, and community centers are built to develop communities of people that work together. By the sixth year many have paid off their land, paid for their homes and are making a decent living. As money is paid back, it's used to buy more land for other farmers, and the cycle continues. It's just one of the organization's programs in 30 countries that address hunger.

The Christian Reformed World Relief Committee buys materials to rebuild homes after natural disasters in the U.S. Wolfson was among the volunteers who worked with agencies to build homes after Hurricane Katrina.

Wolfson hopes that his trip will bring attention - and money - to both causes. The evening before he left Fremont, Mich., the first of June, a community gathering kicked off his departure. Wolfson sees himself as an emissary going from "one community to another community to help a third community."

"I call the Co-op my unity tractor," Wolfson says, noting he made his living as an International Harvester implement dealer.

When restoring the tractor for the trip he put in a larger engine, upgraded some parts, and added a roll bar, roof and side curtains



**This summer Dave Wolfson, known as "Tractor Dave", is pulling a 20-ft. camper 9,300**

(shower curtains). It easily travels 30 mph with the camper, and he mapped the trip out to make about 150 miles a day traveling for 5 hrs.

His website includes his planned itinerary from June 1 through Aug. 15, as well as information on how to donate. He'll also write updates and post photos on his Tractor

Dave Facebook page.

"I had no thought of doing this," Wolfson admits. "It's the hand of the Lord at work."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Dave Wolfson, 6110 Lakeview Dr., Fremont, Mich. 49412 ([tractordave@rocketmail.com](mailto:tractordave@rocketmail.com); [www.tractorrideacrossus.org](http://www.tractorrideacrossus.org)).