



Wayne Rabas's Oliver tractor collection includes more than 50 models. He also collects a wide variety of implements and memorabilia.

## Oliver Collector Keeps Adding To His Long Green Line

By Lorn Manthey, Contributing Editor

Retired Wisconsin dairyman Wayne Rabas has channeled the energy he previously used for tending 100 milk cows into growing his new "herd", a long green line of Oliver tractors. Since milking cows for the last time in 2016, Rabas has devoted hundreds of hours toward expanding his collection of Oliver tractors, implements and memorabilia. His lineup includes more than 50 models ranging from a cute little 440 up to a powerful 2255, and many others in between.

Rabas says he gravitated to the brand because his father owned a nice 77 diesel, and as a 9 or 10-year-old, it was the first tractor he learned to drive on the family farm. It was an all-around workhorse for tillage, planting, harvesting, baling hay and tending livestock. Today a 77, a slightly more powerful 'Super 77', a 550 and an 1800, all in original condition, are the favorites in his collection.

Also in his current lineup are 60, 70 and 80 models along with 660, 770, 880 and 990's. The 880, with just over 3,100 original hours, joined his collection this year. He uses his

550, 1755 and an 1800 around the farm where he and his wife Susie live. He also drives several of the tractors in nearby parades and enjoys attending auctions and sales where other Oliver models go to the highest bidder. These days he's looking hard for a model 1950 with a Detroit Diesel engine, a rare tractor that's usually not at auctions. He's hoping to locate one in the near future.

His collection also includes an Oliver planter, corn picker, manure spreader, dealership signage, advertising materials, and other memorabilia, including an Oliver gas pump. "I grew up with the brand and drove many Olivers like these at the equipment dealership our family had, so it's a nice trip down memory lane to collect them," Rabas says. "As a 13 or 14-year-old, I painted my first Oliver and used to paint them for nearly 35 years at our dealership."

Most of those he purchases these days are in good running condition, though he hopes to restore a few more.

"Even though the Oliver brand was purchased by White Equipment in 1960, they



This 440 tractor is the smallest one in his collection.

still built wonderful tractors and implements until 1974, when the name disappeared and everything was branded White," says Rabas. "The fact they're not made anymore makes them all the more valuable, not just to me, but many others who remember them working on farms across the country."

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Rabas created this "motorized" Oliver buggy for his front yard, painting it in authentic Oliver colors.

## They're Preserving Wild Horses From The Northern Plains

By Dee Goerge, Contributing Editor

If it weren't for dedicated horse breeders, the wild horses that once roamed Theodore Roosevelt National Park and across the Northern Plains would be a footnote in history. The Nokota® breed preserves the traits of the horses developed by Native Americans.

Despite attempts to eliminate the horses to keep Native Americans on reservations, horses were fenced into the park in the 1950's. Later, when another elimination program began, people purchased some of the original horses. Brothers Leo and Frank Kuntz of Linton, N. Dak., bought 54 of them at a 1980's roundup and named the breed, Nokota. Leo died in August, and his brother, Frank, is the current executive director and herd manager for the Nokota Horse Conservancy.

Frank Kuntz explains that initially Leo was interested in crossbreeding the Nokota with his Quarter Horses to use them for horse racing, something the whole Kuntz family has been involved with. But Leo soon recognized the significance of preserving the breed.

"One thing that amazed me and Leo is their brains. They are just smart. And they are hardy, sure-footed, sound and healthy," Kuntz says. "When our family got involved 38 years ago there were less than 200 of the horses. Even today there are less than 800."

Described as a little larger and rangier than Spanish colonial horses, Nokotas are

generally roan in color and heavily muscled with a square-set angular frame. They typically don't require any vaccinations and if they have room to roam, they don't need to have their hooves trimmed.

"They are smart about not hurting themselves - a little like a mule," Kuntz says.

The Kuntz brothers struggled for 15 years before the Nokota Horse Conservancy, a 501(c)3 organization, formed in 1999. Contributions help pay pasture rent and maintain the herd. Many members care for horses of their own throughout the country, and tribes in North Dakota are working with the conservancy as well. For example, Standing Rock Indian Reservation residents appreciate the breed because it descended from Sitting Bull's ponies. There are even some Nokota horses in France, Sweden and Belgium.

Nokota horses are used for everything from trail riding and ranch work to show jumping, endurance racing, and fox hunting.

"Once they are broke, people usually don't sell them," Kuntz says, noting prices for horses with papers range from \$1,500 to \$4,500. "We will soon post Leo's horses on the Conservancy Facebook page. We'd like to find homes for the older mares and studs."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Nokota Horse Conservancy, P.O. Box 761, Linton, N. Dak. 58552 (701 254-4205; www.nokotahorse.org).



Photos by Shawna Lichtenwalner

Brothers Leo and Frank Kuntz bought 54 wild horses at a 1980's roundup in North Dakota and named the breed, Nokota.



The brothers soon began an effort to preserve the breed.