

Custom-Made Pedal Tractors

Don Turner's tractors keep getting smaller and more popular. His kid-size pedal tractors sell for \$5,000 and more. One of his G Allis-style pedal tractors, with 8 implements, sold for just under \$10,000. Implements include a manure spreader, mower, harrow, turning plow, cultivator and planter.

"My average buyer is at least 70 years old," says Turner. "I sold one to a man in upstate New York who was 96 at the time. He told me that he had more than 1,200 pedal toys in his collection."

Turner started out building half-size tractors. His first was a G Allis because they were first manufactured in nearby Gadsden, Ala. He built 12 of them, 2 of them electric-powered. He also built 5 half-size 101 John Deere and some Doodlebugs (kit tractors from the 1940's that used car frames and motors).

All of them share the same C-channel frame, Cub Cadet transmission, rear end and steering. The gas versions are powered with modified 6.6 hp. Predator engines with rope starts. The electric versions use 5 hp. D-C Cushman motors.

Eventually, Turner built a pedal version of his favorite, the Allis G. He has built 25 pedal versions so far and is working on 26. He kept the first and No. 25, but the others quickly sold. One is on display at the Ertl museum in Dyersville, Iowa.

"I have one collector in Indiana who has a standing order for the first of anything I

build," says Turner. "When I decided to build a Roto-Baler, 2 were sold before I built the first."

He has also built 6 D21 Allis Chalmers tractors with 8-bottom turning plows that are longer than the tractors.

In addition, he built 20 John Deere 101s. They used treadle power instead of pedal power. Turner says the treadle style was the most common design for child-size cars.

"I thought they would sell faster than they did," he says. "I still have a few left."

His latest models are 220 Allis Chalmers. He built 2 with realistic front snow blades and rear scraper blades and is in the process of completing 8 more without implements.

"Most people don't want implements," explains Turner. "They take up too much room to display."

What sets Turner's work apart from commercial pedal tractors is the dedication to detail. They include wiring and tubing and working shifts, as well as steering. Recent models have 9-volt batteries powering LED lights, hand powered 3-pts., and lift mechanisms for the front blades. Both front and rear blades can also be adjusted to different angles. In the case of the Roto-Baler, belts move, as does the apron. Turn the pto shaft by hand and everything moves.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Don Turner, 7200 Valley View St., Hokes Bluff, Ala. 35903 (ph 256 492-4468; dmturmer36@gmail.com).



Don Turner's custom-made pedal tractors are incredibly detailed including wiring, tubing, working shifters, and more.



Allis Chalmers G pedal tractor is shown equipped with a cultivator. Other implements include a manure spreader, mower, harrow, turning plow, and planter.



Brad Gatzlaff and Jon Alness use an old pull-type fertilizer spreader to broadcast acorns and walnuts on land to be re-forested.

Old Fertilizer Spreader Used To Plant Acorns, Walnuts

Instead of letting once-used fields that are too wet, too hilly, or too rough for crops turn into invasive weed patches, Minnesotans Brad Gatzlaff and Jon Alness help nurture them back into healthy forest. They use an old pull-type fertilizer spreader to broadcast acorns and walnuts to re-forest especially tough parcels. They also restore grasslands and conservation acres by direct-seeding native grasses with a pull-type drill or by hand.

In 30 years of operation Gatzlaff and Alness say they've probably planted more than 8,000,000 trees and restored several thousand parcels of grasslands. Their customers are along the Mississippi River and its tributaries in southeast Minnesota, southwest Wisconsin, and northeast Iowa.

Gatzlaff says parcels they work with often have invasive and overgrown weeds and brush that needs to be cleared to make way for healthy and beneficial plants and trees. They treat rough vegetation with a herbicide or burn it off, then disc the area to turn up loose soil before it's replanted.

"We use a variety of acorns including red oak, white oak and bur oak, which are all native to the area," Gatzlaff says. "After planting it takes a lot of patience because there's plenty of environmental and animal competition."

For most applications, tree nuts are seeded at 8,000 to 10,000 plants per acre. They use a tractor to pull the fertilizer spreader across the field, then lightly till the nuts into the soil. Gatzlaff says this high population allows for poor germination and animal loss. After a year of growth, healthy seedlings may be 10 to 24 in. tall and surrounded by grasses and weeds. Gatzlaff and his crews return to spray or mow the weeds and continue to manage the young woodlands as needed.

Most of the acorns and walnuts they plant are from forests in southern Minnesota. Nuts can be picked from a tree or collected from the ground. Either way, it's time-consuming and time-sensitive work. They collect many nuts themselves and also have a network of collectors.

Customers are both private and public.

Goat Milk Caramels Generate Winter Income

By Klaire Howerton

After the purchase of one dairy goat led to several more, Klaire and Caleb Howerton in Springfield, Mo., found themselves with an abundance of raw goat milk leading into the 2017 holiday season.

Not ready to get into raw milk sales, they did some research and decided to make goat caramels out of their excess milk.

Finding the perfect recipe took some experimentation because the lower butterfat content of goat milk made it a challenge. But the test batches paid off and just after Thanksgiving, Klaire and Caleb cooked, rolled, chocolate-coated, sea salt-sprinkled and packaged 6 dozen goat milk caramels and put them up for sale for \$10 per dozen on their social media sites. They sold out within hours. Word quickly spread around Springfield, and the local paper even ran a story promoting the caramels as Christmas gifts.

One of the selling points of the caramels was the unique and practical packaging — each dozen of caramels were nestled into an egg carton, which not only looked nice, it also made the caramels easy to store or to give as pre-packaged gifts. Making a new batch of caramels became an almost every other day



Klaire and Caleb Howerton make caramel candy out of goat milk, selling them in egg cartons a dozen at a time.

routine at their Green Thicket Farm. By New Years, the Howertons' had made and sold just over a hundred dozen goat milk caramels. Using their secret recipe, they expect to at least double their sales for the next holiday season, and plan to add some flavored caramels to their repertoire, such as peppermint, orange and lavender.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Klaire & Caleb Howerton, 1008 E. Farm Rd. 54, Springfield, Mo. 65803.

"Some of our private landowner projects are covered by conservation programs through FSA, NRCS and SWCD offices," says Gatzlaff. "We do a lot of plantings with state agencies like DNR Forestry and Wildlife, federal agencies and conservation groups, too."

Alness and Gatzlaff plant nearly 100,000 seedlings per year using an attachment on the 3-pt. hitch of their tractor. "Some of the old timers say our tree planting machine looks

like a potato planter, but it sure works well," says Gatzlaff. Their company also does prairie restoration and management, prescribed burns, and helps landowners with timber sales and writing stewardship plans.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Brad Gatzlaff, Zumbro Valley Forestry, 4120 County Road 21 N.E. Elgin, Minn. 55932 (ph 507 838-6189; trees@northfieldwifw.com; www.zumbrovalleyforestry.com).