

Nelson Aumann (left), who launched Aumann Auctions 60 years ago, stands with his son Kurt, who now owns and operates the business. They're standing in front of the \$1.47 million Case 30-60 tractor company sold in April 2022.



First Case Gas Tractor Sells For \$1.47 Million!

"I never in all my life thought I'd see a single tractor sell for nearly one-and-a-half million dollars, but that's exactly what happened at Aumann's Pre-30 Auction on April 29, 2022," says Nelson Aumann, who founded the auction company that bears his family name. "The 1913 Case 30-60, the first of the original 500 gasoline engine tractors built by the J.I. Case company, and one of only

five known in existence now, was sold to an undisclosed collector in the Northeastern U.S."

The other four 30-60s are held by different collectors or in museums. The seller had his tractor completely restored in the early 2000's and had shown it at old iron events in several U.S. locations over the years.

"The previous record for the most

expensive antique tractor sold was a 1910 Marshall Colonial Class C that we sold for \$535,000 in 2019," says Nelson's son Kurt, who now owns Aumann Auctions. "The prices are driven by historical significance, scarcity, and willing collectors who want something extremely rare," Kurt says. "New collectors of all ages are starting to buy every year, and that just makes the market hotter."

The 6th annual Pre-30 Auction where the 30-60 sold was the largest and most diverse auction the Aumanns have ever held says the company's marketing director Tyson Reed. "We've had an amazing buildup in buyers of different ages and occupations and have sold collector tractors all over the globe," Reed says. "Many of the new buyers didn't grow up in agriculture, but they recognize quality and collectability when they see it."

Aumann Auctions began selling old iron about 25 years ago, about the time Kurt became interested in farm toys, memorabilia, old equipment literature, and old owner's manuals. It was also the dawn of the internet, and the company began selling those items online, which eventually led to online equipment auctions. Now the company has 30 employees, three divisions, and conducts more than 200 live and online auctions a year, selling antique equipment, memorabilia, toys, land, real estate and personal estates.

Reed says the company's business has grown because its reputation is grounded in friendly and professional service. "For the Pre-30 auctions we bring about 95 percent of all the tractors to our Nokomis facility, have our mechanical staff examine them, fill out disclosure statements and make those available for potential buyers to preview before the auction," says Reed. "We don't deal in secrets because both the buyer and the seller have to be happy."

Items for most of the other auctions they conduct stay with the seller where they're photographed, cataloged and prepped for sale. "Our team goes to those sites to inspect and get a hands-on look, evaluate, and answer questions from potential buyers."

The Case 30-60 sold for about \$2,500 when it was new in 1913. Kurt Aumann says today's prices are all about perceived value, which only goes up as more collectors are interested in rare items and estates or trusts of older collectors are being liquidated. "The demand is there, and the supply is low; a perfect situation," he says.

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First-Of-Its-Kind Electric Planter

The desire to reduce the cost of farm equipment and environmental concerns led Dave Krog of Ames, Iowa, to become involved in the design and production of an electric planter.

As co-founder and CEO of Salin 247, he's working to make this machine a reality for corn and soybean farmers.

"We've been testing our second prototype which recently finished planting on seven different farms in Iowa, Tennessee and Kansas," says Krog.

The autonomous battery-powered planter is a drive unit designed for carrying another company's proven planting, spraying and side dressing equipment.

This year, it used White brand planter row units. Individual units were attached to their own 5 by 7-in. toolbars and in turn, mounted to the planter's 7 by 7-in. bars. Drive tracks feature their own 4 by 4-in. bars fastened to the planter.

A 5-kW electric motor powers each of four gearbox-driven track systems. Motor power is supplied by a 350-lb. 10-kW hour lithium iron phosphate battery which holds about a 90-min. charge while continuously planting.

Krog explains in their first prototype they

swapped a second battery into position when the first lost power but without an automatic replacement system they decided to mount a gas-powered generator on the toolbar instead. The generator continuously charges the single battery, removing the need for stopping to replace it.

"We didn't necessarily want to do this but for now it makes sense," Krog says. "Ultimately our idea is to go with diesel if we must use a generator so we can use 100 percent biodiesel."

The unit is light, so airbags are used to apply downforce. In future versions, they're looking to switch this feature to hydraulic cylinders to provide individual row force.

Navigation is accomplished by real-time kinematics (RTK), GPS, precision planting software, sensors and a prototype Gen 3 2020 monitor.

"At this stage we're taking a simple approach, saying 'start on this side of the field and here's the route you're going to plant.' Ultimately, we want to use machine learning. We might still lay out the AB navigation lines but have the machine smart enough to figure out where to start, how to plant and where to turn."



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The electric planter is 10 ft. wide with 4-row, 30-in. rows but they're working on adapting it to 15-in. spacing for corn. A 20-ft. unit is also in the works.

Krog explains they would like to add an autonomous docking station for refilling seed, chemicals and fertilizer.

For the coming year, they plan to provide a custom farm model to allow farmers a view of how the unit works and evaluate the possibilities for their own operations.

"Of course, many farmers have large planters and don't want to trade down for smaller

equipment, so we pitch our units to add capacity to existing equipment. One or two of our electric planters can take care of the smaller, irregular-shaped fields while they use their larger equipment on the bigger areas. It's a way to help everything become more productive."

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Don Wiederhold created his version of a Gator using a Cub Cadet garden tractor and Gravelly tilt box trailer.



He Hauls Firewood With A Home-Built "CROK"

When Don Wiederhold wanted to build his own version of Deere's Gator, he began with what he already had on hand, an International Model 109 Cub Cadet garden tractor and an

old Gravelly tilt box trailer.

"I assumed Gator was for alligator, so I decided to call mine CROK for crocodile," he says.

To begin, he stripped the Cub Cadet down to only the motor and frame. Then, he measured to determine where to put the adapted parts. He knew he needed to stretch the frame so the box would be centered over the rear wheels. The brake pedal would have to remain where it was in relation to the frame but moved to the right side as this would make it more natural to drive the stick shift.

From there, he removed the rear end and sawed the frame in half directly behind the brake bushing. A 3/16-in. plate steel channel was welded in place to extend the frame.

Wiederhold repositioned the battery where the original wiring harness would reach but if he did the job again, he'd simply place it between the frame just over the hydro-stat.

His first attempt at extending the driveshaft ended dramatically when the aluminum pipe he chose was violently twisted, damaging itself and shift and brake rods.

"Who would believe a little 10-hp. engine could do that much damage," Wiederhold laughs. "I was lucky I didn't have to go to the emergency room to have the shaft extracted

from somewhere it shouldn't have been."

After assessing the damage, he decided on a steel pipe extension, two overhead carrier bearings, and love-joy couplings at both ends of the new shaft. The upgraded setup worked well.

He hinged the box off existing frame bushings and created a locking latch so a weighted load wouldn't accidentally release at an inopportune time.

"I found this out the hard way after dumping a load of firewood when driving up a hill," he says.

Wiederhold says for those attempting to build a similar machine, the cost is mostly dependent on the price of the garden tractor. Steel costs are high, but angle iron and sheet steel could be used to make the costly channel iron for the frame.

"Even with the setbacks I had, I'm really pleased with how the CROK project turned out. I use it to haul firewood to my shop."

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