

Brothers Kevin and Chuck Bos have demonstrated vintage farm equipment for the past 13 years on their farm in Erie, Ill.



## Vintage Equipment Works Hard At Show

“We’re not a working farm,” says Chuck Bos. “Instead, we’re a farm that demonstrates our vintage equipment, dating back to the early 1900s, doing the work it was built for. None of our equipment sits there roped off just to look pretty.”

Chuck and Kevin Bos have organized vintage equipment shows for 20 years and have hosted their own show for 10 years. Their annual events alternate between late July and late September to showcase different equipment.

“In the summer, we have 45 acres of wheat and 15 acres for parking and displays,” Chuck says. “We swath and bundle the grain or harvest it with old combines. We run a large threshing machine, clean the grain, and even mill it into flour. In our old cook shack, we have people using the flour to bake bread with an antique stove. The lady makes her own butter, too.”

Other demonstrations include a sawmill, shingle sawing, plowing, crushing rock and making lime.

When their show moves to late September,

the focus is on corn harvesting. Old tractors pull single-row ear corn pickers, and others have mounted pickers. Old straight-sided wagons haul cob corn and unload it into old elevators to fill wire and wooden corn cribs. Old-time shellers operate on the opposite side of the cribs, producing shelled corn that’s milled into corn flour. From there, the cook shack makes genuine corn bread.

Chuck says their “Old Fashioned Threshing Bee” is unique because they focus on giving visitors a solid glimpse into how crops were harvested and field work was done years ago.

“All the equipment works, nothing sits,” he says.

Other visitor-friendly features include no fences around the showgrounds, no entrance gates, and no fees for admission or parking.

Chuck says, “We don’t get thousands and thousands of people, which is just fine with us, but we do have people coming from several states. The people who work the show and the visitors who attend are genuinely interested in the nostalgia of how farm work

used to get done. For families who bring kids, it’s an education because they can actually see how grain gets from the field to their table.”

In addition to the machinery demonstrations, their showgrounds have a large building where local crafters sell a variety of goods. Chuck’s daughter weaves rugs, their cousin makes pottery and maple syrup, and several others provide different homemade items. Outside, a father and his son do blacksmithing. Other crafts include woodturning, grinding flour, crushing rock and producing field lime.

As youngsters, Chuck and Kevin grew up and worked on the Bos Brothers’ farms, which their dad and uncles operated. They both enjoyed working around tractors and machinery, which led Kevin into repairing farm equipment and excavating. Chuck owns a business that rebuilds industrial machine tools.

Though the brothers weren’t farmers, they started collecting old tractors and machinery in the mid-80s, enjoyed repairing them and making them operational. Soon they were using the equipment to pick ear corn, swath grain and plow fields. Their tractors and steam engines used drive belts to saw wood, run a threshing machine and crush rock.

“We started out small-scale, and more people and equipment have been involved



Show gives visitors a glimpse of how field work was done in years past.

every year,” says Chuck.

The brothers own most of the equipment and produce their show with about 50 volunteers and donations from business sponsors.

Recently, the show expanded with a tractor pulling contest, which drew more than 100 pullers in 2025. A mile away, a neighbor hosted a muscle tractor plowing contest on a harvested grain field, drawing 15 large tractors and plows.

“What separates us from other shows is that we don’t have a lot of rules, and we try to be very accommodating to the workers and the visitors,” adds Chuck. “We operate safely and really enjoy showing people how the old equipment works.”

The 2026 show featuring corn harvesting is scheduled for September 23-27, 2026.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Bos Bros. Historical Farm, 8105 Springhill Rd., Erie, Ill. 61250 (ph 309-781-6394; www.bosbroshistoricalfarm.com).



Two steel-wheeled tractors pulled a one-row corn picker and a steel-wheeled wagon at the 2024 show.

## Wooden Tracked John Deere Crawler

A unique 1955 John Deere 40C crawler on display at a Virginia museum is equipped with wooden tracks. It’s just one of nearly 200 tractors and close to 140 trucks at the Keystone Truck & Tractor Museum. However, it stands out with its white oak tracks.

“We acquired it from a local dairy farm where it had been used in wetland areas and around duck ponds along the river,” says Dylan Simmons, Keystone Truck & Tractor Museum. “The farmer installed the 2 by 4-in. wooden cleats for added traction and also to prevent damage to concrete pads at the dairy.”

The blocks extend out over the tracks to spread the crawler’s weight over a greater surface area. Multiple track options were available from Deere at the time. They varied in size as well as materials.

The museum completely restored the 40C. It’s displayed on a raised mount where it can be started, put in gear and braked. The stand sits on a trailer hooked to a 1963 Mack C607T.

“People love to see the tracks move,” says Simmons. “We’ve taken the crawler,

truck and trailer combination out to a local Christmas parade the past two years. It’s a big hit.”

Keystone’s model 40C is featured in a June 2025 issue of *Antique Power*. The article describes the development of crawler tractors and, in particular, John Deere crawlers leading up to the introduction of the 40C. Extensive pictures in the article provide close-ups of key features, such as the wooden tracks.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Keystone Truck & Tractor Museum, 880 W. Roslyn Rd., Colonial Heights, Va. 23834 (ph 804-524-0020; www.keystonetractorworks.com).



Blocks extend out over the tracks to spread the crawler’s weight over a greater surface area.



Crawler before restoration.

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