

Bosch's son, Adam, drives the Fordson in a parade.



His Passion Is Restoring Old Fordsons

Dick Bosch says he thought he'd have a fairly easy restoration ahead when he acquired a 1918 Fordson Model N from an estate sale in 1990.

"It looked in good shape, but looks aren't everything. When I got it home, I hooked up the ignition to a battery, put in some good coils, added some gas, and it fired right up," Bosch says. "I drove it down the driveway and, on the way back, the engine didn't sound very good, and the rear end was a little noisy. That was the start of a major overhaul."

Bosch wasn't deterred by the work ahead. A mechanic by trade, he'd restored several gas engines and at least one Fordson. After checking the compression and a few other

engine parts, he decided that the 1918 needed a complete overhaul.

"I disassembled the whole engine, including removing the old babbitt that was welded to the block. That was a big issue, so I made a jig for the new bearings, poured new babbitt, installed new pistons, rings and valves. The coil ring is bolted to the engine on that model, so I had to add and subtract shims between the coil ring and the block to get clearance of .020 to .040 between the magnets and the coil ring."

After success with the engine, Bosch turned to the transmission.

"When you remove the cast iron carrier on a Fordson housing, all the gears are supposed to come out together," Bosch says. "When

I pulled this one out, everything fell apart. What a surprise! The gears and bearings were obviously bad. With the aid of a parts tractor, I was able to replace everything I needed."

Bosch also discovered that a worn axle and bearings caused some of the rear-end noise. He welded the axle surface to increase its diameter, then used a metal lathe to turn the shaft so it would fit new bearings. Bosch also replaced the incorrect rear wheels with ones that matched factory specs. After a few other minor repairs, along with total cleaning and sandblasting, he painted it the original manufacturer's color.

After finishing the tractor, Bosch learned that it was probably one of the oldest Fordsons in the U.S. The National Fordson Collectors Club examined it and confirmed that it was a 1918 model.

"They couldn't declare it the oldest because when a new block was installed in 1922, the serial number wasn't transferred," Bosch says. "They did, however, give our tractor the honor of being the second oldest Fordson in the U.S., behind a similar tractor in New York."

He and his son, Adam, own the tractor together, drive it in parades, and take it to shows.

"It always attracts a lot of attention because it's old yet still sounds and drives so smoothly," Bosch says.

The 1918 joins nine other Fordsons that Bosch has restored over the past 40 years. These include 1918, 1919 and 1923 Model Fs; 1935, 1937 and 1938 Model Ns; a 1950 E27N Major; a 1953 E1A New Major; and a



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1960 E1A Super Major.

"Originally, I wanted to restore a WC Al-lis like we had on the farm, but I couldn't find one to my liking," Bosch says. "I came across information about Fordsons, which were inexpensive at the time. My first one was a 1923 model that nobody else seemed to want, and I've been a Fordson collector ever since."

Bosch and his family all enjoy the tractors. They're members of the Atwater Threshing Show, which Dick was president of for 25 years.

"We feature different tractor models every year, and in 2026, we'll be hosting the Minnesota Chapter of the Ford and Fordson Collector's Club. We'll have our tractors there and look forward to meeting other collectors."

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Larry Jacobson stands beside two of the largest and most powerful among the 100-plus Case tractors he owns and often uses on his Minnesota farm.



Case Collector Puts His Tractors To Work

Larry Jacobson says many of the Case tractors in his large collection have scuff marks, maybe a few dents or blemishes here and there, but he's fine with that because they're all runners and workers. He and his son use most of them at some point during the year on their Minnesota farm.

Jacobson began collecting Case tractors after visiting the Western Minnesota Steam Threshers Reunion in Rollag, Minn., in 1992, and he hasn't stopped since. He now owns over 100 tractors, with at least one dating back to 1921. That tractor is gray, the color Case used during production. He bought another gray tractor and discovered from the build card that it had originally been finished green, so he painted it the correct color. The other tractors in his collection are mostly Flambeau Red, white and tan.

Jacobson says he's like most other collectors because once it's in your blood, it mushrooms and doesn't stop. Over the years, he's sold only one tractor, and soon after, his son Erick bought that one back.

Jacobson has extensive knowledge of Case tractors, knowing where and when each one in his collection was built. He owns

an orchard tractor from Florida, a vineyard version from California, and the 1945 Case DC tractor his dad bought in 1964 for just \$150. It carries a cultivator that his dad bought new in 1945.

Having spent his entire life on a farm, Jacobson recalls driving open-station tractors as a boy and handling various equipment in all kinds of weather. He and his dad even drove their tractors 14 hrs. to work land his

dad owned 140 miles away in North Dakota. He describes it as a long trip, leaving at four in the morning and arriving at six in the evening, with a lunch stop along the way. In the late 1950s, he worked for other farmers who had different tractor brands, but he settled on collecting Case models because "they're just a good, tough and well-built tractor."

Of all the models he owns, his favorite and possibly the most valuable isn't even a tractor; it's a 1925 Case car. He bought it in 2021 after seeing it at the Rollag show. Case built about 24,000 cars from 1910 to 1927, and only around 100 are left in collections. Jacobson drives it in local parades, and along with his son, they trailer it to shows and events.

Jacobson's collection continues to grow because he comes across a few good deals every year. He and Erick share ownership of some models, so the Case tradition will continue.

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