

Farm Repurchase Leads To Dairy Barn Restoration

Mark Rodenwald of Albany, Minn., repurchased and restored his family's dairy decades after it was sold, returning the century-old barn to milking condition.

"The previous owner, who purchased the farm from Mom and Dad, became a good friend of the family," says Rodenwald. "Dad intended to purchase it back, but it was unavailable. They ended up purchasing a farm across the road from this property."

Rodenwald knew from an early age that he wanted to farm after school, so he let the owner, Ed Baarts, know of his interest.

"I told him I would purchase the property at any point and offer a life estate for the next ten years," he says. "Ed passed away in 2006, and we moved onto the farm in 2009."

For Rodenwald, the property's barn was the main draw.

"The barn is a historic building. I couldn't see letting it fall down."

It originally had no pipeline or gutter system, and part of the wall had already fallen by the time of the 2003 purchase. He

began the restoration process before moving, using a local workforce.

"It happened one piece at a time. First, we jacked up each section, replaced the plates, and removed approximately 5 ft of rotten siding. Then we remortared the inside rock and replaced the roof with steel."

The original roof and foundation were restored, though the interior was gutted to dirt level to install a gutter system. This process required taking down the outer rock formation one section at a time to rebuild it.

"Before starting the dairy, all the concrete and stations were replaced on the interior," Rodenwald says. "The barn now holds 25 cows. Prior to us remodeling, the barn milked 36."

This level of farming is an excellent complement to Rodenwald's real estate day job. Most mornings, he's up early for farm chores and gets to the office by 7:30. There's hope of growing his herd to a hundred and eventually either putting in a free-stall barn or using the pasture space to house cows outside.

Despite the effort involved, Rodenwald



"Before starting the dairy, all the concrete and stations were replaced on the interior," Rodenwald says.

remains thrilled with the outcome.

"If I took this on again, there isn't anything I would change. You just have to be patient with restoration work. My 5-year plan is to



continue farming."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Mark Rodenwald (ph 320-290-6275).

40-in. bucket was made from an old hydraulic tank Heron cut down.



Homemade Front-End Loader Adds New Life To Garden Tractor

Michael Heron enjoys expanding his collection of older John Deere tractors. One such unit, a JD 140 garden tractor, had a bad engine that couldn't be rebuilt, so he replaced it with a Chinese-made Honda clone engine.

"These engines are a bit different and created a few problems," Heron says. "They don't have a charging system adequate to hold in the electric PTO, so I had to add an alternator to the rear of the tractor."

After considering what could be done with the tractor, he found that two discarded hydraulic cylinders might accommodate a different take on a double-cylinder front-end loader system.

"I didn't want to spend a lot on expensive new steel, so I designed it to make use of what I had, only two cylinders rather than the usual four," he says. "Most systems have one on each side, but if the stroke is long enough on a single cylinder, it'll do the same thing. The lifting cylinder is trickier as it must be fastened in the center, where the engine components are."

To address this issue, Heron moved the ex-

isting fuel tank to make room for the bracket and cylinder. Fortunately, the replacement engine had its own tank, so this wasn't a big problem.

The 40-in. bucket was made from an old hydraulic tank he cut down. The supporting arms are 1 1/2-in. square tubing, as he again used what he had available. He reinforced the outer arms in places and the crossbar on the lifting cylinder to add strength.

Heron tried to use AI to determine the optimal upper placement for the lift cylinder to maximize lift and ensure adequate bucket height, but found it unhelpful.

"I ended up using trial and error, as was my custom," he says.

The loader tractor works well for moving snow in the winter. It can still be used as a mower in the summer.

Heron was able to keep the cost to about \$350 by using materials from his junk pile.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Michael Heron, RR1, Site 1, Box 1, Main Station, Lloydminster, Sask., Canada S9V 0X6 (ph 306-307-8632; m.heron@sasktel.net).



Avatar 66.10 TD combines midrow banding and single-disc seeding in a single compact unit.

World's Largest Air Seeder Delivers A 'Double Shoot'

European agricultural equipment manufacturer Horsch recently introduced the Avatar 66.10 TD, designed to simplify seed and fertilizer application for large-scale farming operations throughout the Dakotas and Western Canada.

The Avatar 66.10 is recognized as the world's largest central-fill, single-disc air seeder. It features a massive 890-bushel tank that can apply seed and fertilizer simultaneously (hence the nickname Double Shoot). Its central-fill design dramatically improves efficiency, and its "zero grease zerks" engineering from the toolbar back minimizes maintenance.

Purpose-built for Precision Placement Fertilizer (PPF), the Avatar 66.10 TD integrates midrow banding and single-disc seeding into a single compact unit, maximizing productivity, minimizing field passes, saving time and reducing soil compaction.

The machine features a 66-ft toolbar with 10-in. row spacing and an 80-opener configuration. It can operate at speeds up to 9 mph, with opener pressure up to 550 lbs, ensuring precise placement even in challenging conditions. The substantial 4-tank system provides

separate compartments for seed and fertilizer.

As a natural evolution of Horsch's Avatar lineup, the 66.10 TD's integrated tank and toolbar design balances weight distribution and improves seed placement accuracy without sacrificing maneuverability. Updated weight transfer across the openers ensures consistent results, and a simple folding mechanism makes storage and transport easy.

"The Avatar 66.10 TD is more than just a drill — it's a complete seeding solution tailored for the specific agronomic needs of Western Canada and the Northern U.S.," says Jeremy Hughes, Product Manager at HORSCH LLC. "We're proud to offer a machine that simplifies operations while enhancing productivity and crop performance."

With the initial unit tested in spring 2025, limited production is set to begin over the next year. Interested growers are encouraged to contact their local dealer for information and availability.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Horsch LLC, 200 Knutson St., Mapleton, N.D. 58059 (ph 701-532-1000; info.us@horsch.com; www.horsch.com).

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