



J.I. Case built 50 "Spirit of '76" Agri-King 1570s, and some of the colorful tractors are still in use 50 years later.



In 1976, a \$1,250 "Spirit of '76" paint job could be ordered for Steiger tractors.

Tractors Celebrate America's 250th Birthday

It's a patriotic year across America, especially in July, when parades, music, civic and family events will celebrate America turning 250. Case IH has marked the occasion by producing a one-off version of its Magnum 265 tractor. The symbolic limited-production tractor blends patriotic red, white and blue design elements into the standard Magnum 265 platform. Debuted at the National Farm Machinery Show in Louisville in 2026, it will appear at other major farm shows throughout the rest of the year.

Fifty years ago, in 1976, the J.I. Case company produced 50 "Spirit of '76" model 1570 tractors. At least 200, possibly close to 300, of the 180-hp Agri-Kings, available by special order from January to June 1976, were built. Painted red, white and blue with stars-and-stripes decals, the 1570s were part of three special Case editions. Six 1370 Spirits were made, and eight Spirit 446 garden tractors were built specifically for the 1976 Racine, Wis., Bicentennial Parade. Six of those are known to exist in 2026. The 446 had a 16-hp Onan twin-cylinder engine, a hydraulic drive and a 2-speed transmission.

The '76 Special 1570 was priced at \$35,000. Collector models in 2026 range from \$15,000 to \$20,000. One exception was an ultra-pristine model sold by Mecum Auctions for \$52,500.



More than 3,500 Cub Cadet tractors, painted red, white and blue, were built in 1976 to commemorate America's 200th birthday.

Cub Cadet also celebrated America's 200th anniversary, building 3,504 "Spirit of '76" Cadet mowers. The colorful red, white and blue 7-hp lawn tractor was a hit at parades across the country.

Perhaps as a prelude to its eventual merger with Case-IH, Steiger offered its Panther II and III, Cougar II and III, and Tiger II tractors in bicentennial red, white and blue. The \$1,200 paint option was applied by a Fargo body shop near the main Steiger factory. The company hoped to sell one in each of the country's 50 states, though farmers in Kansas ordered the most.

Massey Ferguson also supported the Spirit

of America by displaying a specially painted 1135 at a July 4th parade in Des Moines, near Massey's headquarters. Twelve Massey 12 garden tractors, painted red, white and blue, were also part of the parade. The company offered decals of its paint configuration for \$15. Die-cast and plastic models of the 1135 were produced for Toy Farmer magazine.



A 1/16-scale Ertl toy version of the Case 1570.

A die-cast model of the Case Spirit was produced in 2005. After receiving permission to build its model, Ertl produced a 1/16th-scale replica using specifications from a full-size 1570 at Jay Gyger's farm near Dyersville, Iowa. A 1/8th-scale mockup, complete with Stars and Stripes graphics and many components of the full-size tractor, verified the design.

Included were the 3-pt. hitch, drawbar, wheel weights, diamond-tread front tires, and parts of the cab interior. Ertl produced the actual 1/16th-scale collector version, complete with a clear-window cab and components of the 504-cu in. engine, fender lights, railings, steps, weights and rubber tires. The 2005 toy version was priced at \$65. Twenty years later, its value is \$600 to \$700.



Case IH painted a Magnum 265 4-WD with colorful red, white and blue graphics to celebrate USA 250.



Case 446 "Spirit of '76" garden tractor.

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