



Drivers passing through Janesville, Minn., receive a colorful welcoming from 10 grain bins on the edge of town. The once-silver bins, neatly spaced on the city's west end, are now home to a radiant yellow sun and multi-colored rainbow topped with neatly scripted letters spelling out "Janesville". Community representatives came up with the idea. Troy Domine, a Mankato State University senior, worked as an intern for the city's government and assisted in organizing workers. They used a power washer and boom truck to spray detergent on the bins to remove the graffiti. Next, the bins received

a primer coat, then an oil base coat. To paint each stripe workers ran a pair of strings from the north end of the bins to the south end, then used small spray guns to paint between the strings. After they finished painting one color they moved the strings. Last, the bold, black letters were added. A Mankato State University arts student drew the letters to scale on graph paper. Workers then used chalk to project the graph and letters on the bin.

Photo by Amy Jo Brandel, Agri News

## Town's Colorful Bins Say "Hello" To Passers-By



After an old-time threshing bee on his farm is finished, Krog invites old-time tractor operators to hitch up to one of his antique plows.



Krog and his family often use nearly a dozen of the "classic" tractors when harvesting and tilling corn ground in the fall. Note pair of 1954 Farmall Super M-TA tractors.

### BELIEVES IN REMEMBERING THE PAST

## He Farms 900 Acres With 23 "Classic" IH Tractors

By Frank Lessiter, Editor/Publisher, Farmer's Digest

Brian Krog is a farmer who simply doesn't believe in ever forgetting the way we used to farm.

The Lake Benton, Minn., farmer specializes in farming with old equipment, using 23 different tractors ranging in age from 33 to 50 years old. Together with his wife and four sons, he crops 900 acres and runs a dairy operation.

Only three of the tractors he uses were in running condition when he bought them, which gives you an idea of his mechanical abilities.

Krog started farming back in 1970 with a Super M Farmall, a tractor model which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1989 (the first Farmall M was built on August 8, 1939). "In the late '70's, people were not buying the Farmall MD's which were being offered at farm auctions, so I started buying them," says Krog. "We soon had a few of these diesel tractors and I got to where I hardly ever unhitched them from our implements and wagons."

Within a few years, more people started collecting tractors and it soon was not as easy to find a bargain. However, Krog had a big head start with the Farmall MD tractors he had already bought and put in working condition.

Krog often uses nearly a dozen of the tractors when harvesting and tilling his corn ground in the fall. Here's what he uses for horsepower in his corn fields:

- A pair of 55 hp. 1954 Farmall Super M-TA tractors, each pulling a 2-row 30-in. row corn picker.

- For hauling ear corn from the field to the crib, he relies on a 1953 Farmall Super M

and a 1954 Farmall M-TA.

- A 1954 40-hp. Farmall Super H is used to power the elevator which puts corn in the crib.

- A 1954 Farmall Super WD-9 is used to pull a stalk chopper and disc behind the two corn pickers.

- Another Farmall WD-9 is used to chop corn stalks and/or disk stalks.

- A 1957 International 650 diesel tractor also sees work pulling a stalk chopper.

- A 1956 International 600 diesel tractor is used to pull a 21-ft. tandem disk.

- A 1954 International Super 9 tractor is used for plowing. It has 70 hp.

- A 1940 Farmall H is used to pull the wagon that is used to feed corn and other feed ingredients to the cattle.

Krog's diesel collection also includes a 1948 WD-9, a 1954 Super WD-9, a 1956 600, and a 1957 650 tractor. "We use these four tractors quite heavily for plowing, disking, and operating a 2-row pto-powered corn chopper," he says, adding that the older IH diesels are very economical to operate, providing you take proper care of them. The cooling system, in particular, must be kept clean and the tractors should be properly cooled down before shutting them off. The four heavy-pulling tractors have combined total of 30,700 hrs. of hard work but Krog says he's never had a cracked head yet.

"Another thing we like about these old 'gas-starting' IH diesels is their ability to start easily and quickly in below zero weather."

Krog's favorite rolling stock is really the Farmall Super M-TA tractors that he owns.

"I've been studying these tractors all my life and have parts books and owners manuals for them as well," he says. "Whenever I see one at a farm sale, I write down the serial number. The lowest Super M-TA number I've seen is 62,115 and the highest is 82,288. They all had a torque and live pto."

Krog says Farmall Super M-TA's are not all that rare, although the diesel versions are getting a little harder to find.

Krog readily admits he could not fully utilize this many small horsepower tractors without plenty of drivers in the family. He also says his four boys have become enthused about the old tractors and, as a result, the family has just kept farming with them.

In addition to tractors and a few old threshing machines, Krog also collects antique plows. He has 40 plows, ranging from a 2-bottom plow up to a pair of antique 10-bottom prairie plows. The 10-bottom plows were pulled early in the century with huge steam-powered tractors. He found them sitting in a junkyard back in 1980 and paid only \$750 for them. He restored one of the

plows and it's now valued at \$5,000 apiece.

During an old-time threshing bee held on his farm each summer, Krog pulls all his plows out to the field and leaves them sitting there with clevises on them. "After threshing is finished, many old-time tractor operators pick out a plow, hitch up to it, and start plowing. I get quite a bit of my plowing done this way."

Krog admits that it's getting expensive to maintain his old tractors to the point where they'll do a full load of work all day long. And it's getting tougher to find needed parts. "Yet I'm proud of having old tractors that can still work at full power all day long out in the field. That means more to me than just how they look from the outside. And our fuel man says I farm the most land with the lowest amount of fuel purchased by any farmer in the area. I'm proud of that."

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