

Fondness For Oliver Tractors Puts This Restoration Expert In Calendar

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HARBESON, Del. — Robert Tallman affectionately refers to the tractor as "Old Number 1." Tallman admits it was his "first true love." He'll never forget the day he won it over an Allis Chalmers WC.

To Tallman, Old Number 1 refers to an Oliver 70 tractor. It was a beauty when his dad bought it in 1939. It was fitted with an electric starter and lights, rubber tires, and was powered by what he calls an "industry first": a six-cylinder, valve-in-head, high compression engine rated at 28 horsepower.

The Oliver 70 is the tractor that Tallman believes "put Oliver on its feet to make them a full-line company."

Tallman collects the old Oliver tractors. He has 20 of them in a recently constructed 48-foot by 75-foot storage building, many waiting to be restored.

The Series 70 was chosen over his brother's preference, an Allis Chalmers WC. Robert was happy with his dad's decision — and still keeps Old Number 1 in storage.

Unhappily, Old Number 1 is worn out. It had its day and is ripe for restoration.

Now, only time will tell when Tallman can complete a painstaking, precise restoration. He prefers to take his time and, as he admitted, doing it right.

In the meantime, an Oliver Cletrac HG 68 tractor, of which Tallman has restored, is featured in the 1996 Classic Tractor Calendar from Classic Tractor Calendars, Wilmington, Del. It was selected from hundreds of entries to appear in the seventh edition of the calendar.

Tallman recently spoke about

his efforts to restore the old Oliver tractors which he has collected.

Tallman is secretary of the National Hart-Parr/Oliver Collectors Association, based at the old Oliver manufacturing site of Charles City, Iowa. He admitted that he's looking for an "Oliver pal" that could help him in the restoration process.

Tallman remains in close contact with the 3,000-member (and growing) organization that serves as an information source and clearinghouse for the Oliver tractors.

Popular before and after World War II, the Oliver tractor boasted the world's first continuous running power takeoff for tractors. The takeoffs were installed on the Oliver Fleet Line — Series 66, 77, and 88 — in 1948. The Fleet Line allowed Oliver to "lead the industry by a country mile," said Tallman.

However, after he purchased the tractor, he was frustrated with the lack of nearby dealer support and service centers for Oliver's. The tractor impressed him early on, because Nebraska engineering tests certified that the tractor could

pull 84 percent of its weight. It was a good, sturdy, long-lasting machine.

But Tallman couldn't resist. Together with his brother George, Robert went into business.

On Jan. 2, 1946, the brothers formed a partnership in Tower City, Pa. to sell Oliver tractors, new and used. The brothers operated the dealership together until 1969. The business continues as the Tallman Supply Company.

Robert then went into the industrial supply business and decided to continue to collect and restore the Oliver tractors on the side.

But as Oliver dealers, they were also farmers. As the Tallman Brothers, George and Robert farmed about 500 acres near Tower City, about 350 acres of which they owned. George still grows potatoes near Tower City and Robert lives in the Rehobeth Beach, Del. area.

But Tallman still affectionately recalls the Oliver 70.

During World War II, it was difficult to purchase a complete trac-

tor because of the war materials rationing. His father purchased Old Number 1 in 1939 at a cost of \$1,250, said Robert. His brother purchased another Oliver 70, which, because of the war, was tough to do. Robert said you had to "apply to the government agencies to get certification to apply for one, if you could find one." George purchased the tractor in 1943, without the rubber tires, the starter, or the generator. Cost was about \$900.

In 1950, they sold the Cletrac HG 68, featured in the calendar. The tractor was originally sold to a customer in 1950 and bought back in 1985, when Robert got serious about restoring farm tractors.

According to the calendar company, the tractor was "perfect for potato growers. The 68-inch track width was ideal for the 34-inch rows they planted. The model offered a choice of four different track widths: 31-, 42-, 60-, and 68 inches." The tractor had a four-cylinder flathead Hercules engine (1,700 rpm) that developed 22 horsepower on the drawbar and 27

horsepower on the belt. It had three forward speeds and an operating weight of 3,513 pounds.

The tractor will be featured in a video and on a 20- by 30-inch poster with 14 other restored tractors on the calendar.

With headquarters in Chicago, Ill., Oliver constructed the wheel tractors in Charles City, Iowa and the crawler tractors at the plant in Cleveland, Ohio (after purchasing the Cleveland Tractor Company in 1944).

Of the 20 tractors in storage, Tallman has restored only about a quarter of them. It's a matter of finding time and an "Oliver ally to work with me," he said.

The Oliver Company was eventually sold to the White Motor Company in November 1960. A succession of acquisitions followed until White was acquired by Agco a few years ago.

Tallman said the national Oliver association was founded in December 1989 and numbers 3,000 strong. He hopes to someday find a friend to help him bring Old Number 1 back to its original condition.

Correct Soil Testing Is Excellent Tool

NORCROSS, Ga. — Tools are made for specific purposes. Use them right and they are great aids. Use them wrong and who knows what the result may be. A screwdriver used as a pry-bar may only cost you the price of a new screwdriver, but misusing a soil test could cost you yield... and profit!

Soil testing is an important tool and should certainly be used to its full advantage. It is, none the less, only one of the many important management tools and considerations that are used in developing fertilizer plans for high yield pro-

grams. Other factors include:

- Total crop nutrient uptake at a given yield goal. This needs careful attention. Yield potential is difficult to accurately predict. It is subject to many variables, some controllable, some not. A good approach is to average yields over the past five years and add 5 or 10 percent in accordance with plans to achieve that additional yield.

- Crop quality. Are there specific market requirements that must be met to obtain a premium? Additional nutrients or in-season management strategies may be necessary to achieve a certain protein level, fruit size, or other market standard.

- Local climatic conditions. Are there special conditions limiting or enhancing yield potential that should be considered? Cold grow-

ing conditions in the spring could mean that starter fertilizer should be applied regardless of soil test levels. A short growing season requires that the crop get off to a quick start for maximum yield... another reason for using starter fertilizer. On the other hand, a particular field may benefit from a south facing exposure or from favorable air drainage that enhances its yield potential.

- Specific soil characteristics. Are there plow pans, shallow bed rock or other restrictions that limit yield potential in any part of the field? Or is the soil in excellent physical condition...deep, well-drained and capable of producing a bumper crop? Deep sandy soils require special care in managing nitrogen to prevent leaching below the root zone. A uniform field can be precisely managed in regards to its specific characteristics. A non-uniform field will require some adjustments, to prevent underfertilizing part of the field or overfertilizing another part. This problem is being

addressed with site-specific management and new variable rate technology.

- Grower level of management intensity. Are you committed to higher yields? Are you capable of producing higher yields? Let the track record do the talking. The importance of management cannot be overemphasized. It is the very foundation of yield potential. Every decision from planting through harvest can significantly impact final yield... positively or negatively.

Soil testing offers basic information about selected chemical and physical properties of a field. Used regularly it tracks nutrient trends, suggesting the adequacy of past fertilizer practices and indicating future direction. It is a useful management tool in developing fertilizer plans for high yield programs.

And remember, continued use of soil testing is a foundation to sound nutrient management decisions, higher yields, and higher profits.


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