

AGELESS IRON

ALMANAC®

VOL. 4 NO. 2

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Photograph: Ron Van Zee

Greatest tractors of all time Father of all Deeres

By Dave Mowitz

John Deere's Model D was anything but a technological marvel. Nor was it an immensely popular tractor.

True, the D was in production longer than any tractor in history. During its 30-year run some 160,000 Model D's were sold. That figure, however, is a fifth the number of the

Fordsons that went to work on farms in just a 10-year period.

Instead, the D achieved greatness by serving as the archetype by which all other John Deere tractors would be fashioned until 1959. The D's devotion to simplicity of design, economy in operation, and long

life gained Deere a reputation as a manufacturer of reliable tractors – a notoriety that still favors the company today.

More significant, however, is the fact that during the time when the D was built, John Deere metamorphosed from a manufacturer of mostly farm imple-

ments to a world leader in horsepower. This then is the tractor's greatest claim to fame.

In the beginning

The D was not the first tractor designed entirely by John Deere engineers. That honor goes to the ill-fated All-Wheel-Drive. In fact, historical documents reveal the D was already in development by Waterloo Gas Engine Company.

Continued on page 3

NOMINATE A GREATEST TRACTOR

This is the second in a series of articles honoring the greatest tractors ever built. To nominate a tractor for this honor, e-mail me:

*dave.mowitz
@meredith.com.*

Please provide examples and accomplishments that qualify your nomination for consideration.

Rustoration 101

Reviving faded paint

By Dave Mowitz

If that old paint job on your favorite parade tractor has faded, or if you'd prefer to keep the paint on your antique as it was found, Jim Deardorff has an alternative to paint for you. The professional painter has been working with a microemulsion cleaner that works wonders on old paint.

Besides giving faded and oxidized paint new luster and shine, Kleen Kote also seeps into the tiny cracks and pores that exist on any paint job and fills them. "These openings, which can exist even on new paint jobs, create one of the most common ways the moisture and contaminants get under paint," Deardorff says.

Saturates paints

When sprayed on a paint surface, the cleaner displaces dirt and grime from cracks and pores. "It literally moves, or migrates, through dust to saturate the paint when applied," Deardorff says. "It dries to a virtually nonstick surface."

Kleen Kote is not a permanent coating though, and it can be removed if washed with a detergent. "You're OK if you wash the surface with clear water, however," Deardorff adds. "Any dust, dirt,

or grime will rinse off immediately, and the paint will dry shiny."

For this type of use, dilute Kleen Kote at a mixing rate of 12 to 15 parts water per one part of the emulsion. The dilution is sprayed and left to dry.

"I prefer to spray rather than brush it on, so it lays on in an even coat," Deardorff explains. "If left to dry as applied, the coating will have a smoky or foggy look. If a glossy surface is desired, you'll need to wipe it off with a damp rag."

Cost \$3 or less a gallon

A 1-gallon bottle of Kleen Kote sells for \$36 (a case of six 1-gallon bottles sells for \$205). When diluted with water as instructed, the applied cost drops to \$3 or less per gallon, which makes it very economical, Deardorff points out.

You can order Kleen Kote from Superior Coatings at P.O. Box 317, Chillicothe, MO 64601 or call 660/646-6355. The manufacturer's Web site is www.4progressive.com.

You can contact Deardorff with questions about painting and sandblasting by e-mailing him at jdeardorffsupct@yahoo.com. *



Deardorff chose a "farm condition" John Deere A for his Kleen Kote evaluation. The condition of the tractor prior to application can be seen in the center photo. Besides putting down a shiny coating, Kleen Kote also deepens the color of the oxidized paint as seen in the top picture.

For test purposes, Deardorff uses a hand sprayer. He would prefer, however, that it be applied with a high-volume, low-pressure (HVLP) spray gun. Kleen Kote applies white and becomes translucent as it dries.



Photographs: Doug Hetherington