



# REMEMBERING WHEN: ONTARIO'S AG HISTORY

Country Heritage Park showcases the industry's heritage and highlights its innovation.

by ANDREA M. GAL with JAMIE REAUME

For Jamie Reaume, CEO of Country Heritage Park (CHP), the facility is a “microcosm of farming in Ontario.”

Specifically, Country Heritage Park is “a connector of dots” that enables staff and volunteers to help Ontarians understand our agricultural past, how we got to our present situation, and what the future could look like.

That focus is why Reaume continues to highlight the farm and food sector's long and illustrious history of innovation.

“It is no cliché that history repeats itself and, in many ways, we have failed to learn the lessons that were laid out before us, particularly regarding innovation, which addresses the concerns of today's consumers about food production,” he adds.

And he certainly has quite the collection available to illustrate this narrative. Country Heritage Park, formerly the government-owned Ontario Agricultural Museum, features “an array of rural and farming artifacts.” The site spans more than 80 acres, housing a total of 39 buildings, 18 of which are historical.

But the importance of the “theme park to yesteryear,” as it is called on its website, extends beyond the material artifacts to its associated communities.

“Country Heritage Park owes its existence to the individuals who had a keen interest in machinery,” Reaume says. These individuals helped sustain the collection and grounds following the exit of government from its active pursuits on the property. A range of partners continue to support the organization, which was revamped as a non-profit agricultural society about a decade ago.

The members of the tractor clubs, for example, “live and breathe this stuff. ... They love being able to do that whole ‘remember when’ and that's something that most people don't ever get a chance to do – to have that second chance to be able to say ‘I was here’ or ‘I saw this.’”

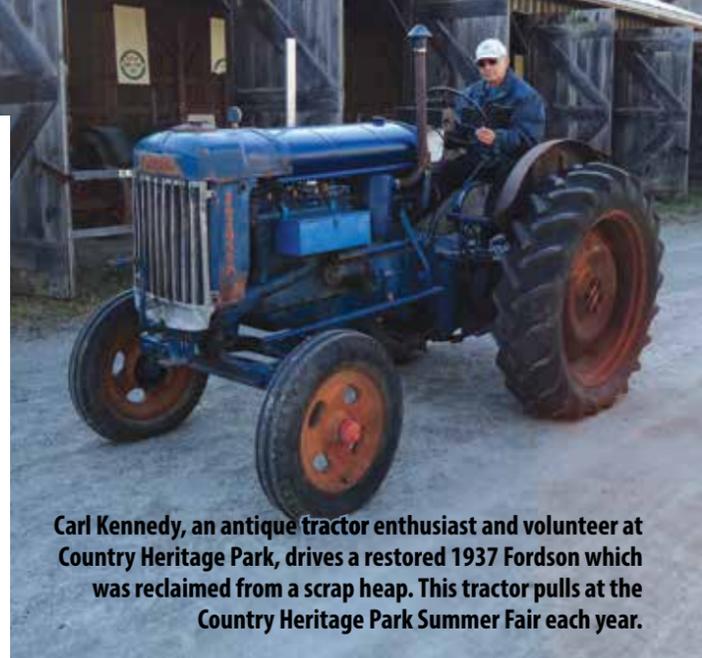
Country Heritage Park offers the Ontario ag community the opportunity to reflect on its roots – and serves as a venue to help educate our urban neighbours. **BF**



Country Heritage Park hosts the Summer Fair and Farm Expo on the third weekend in July. This aerial photo showcases the precursor to this event, the All Colours Antique Tractor Show.



Robert Meier, territory sales manager for central and eastern Ontario for Case IH, stands with his daughter Laura in front of a Case 530 tractor. The Gambrel Barn at Country Heritage Park is a popular wedding venue.



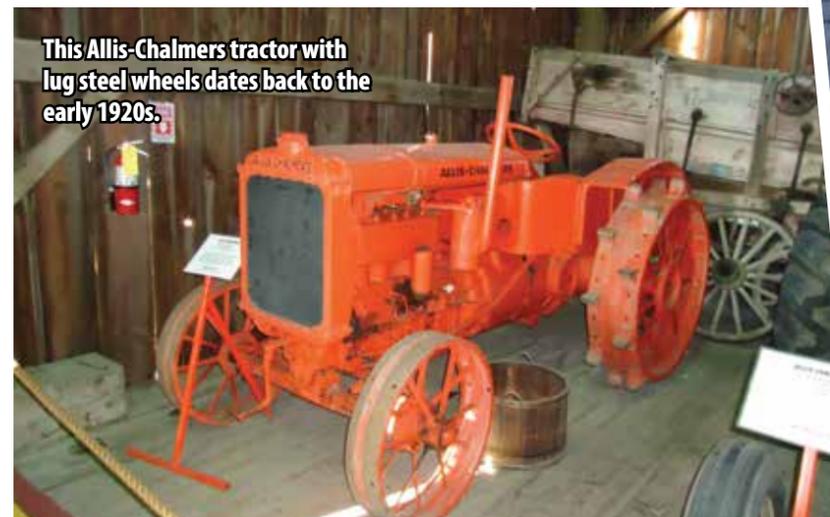
Carl Kennedy, an antique tractor enthusiast and volunteer at Country Heritage Park, drives a restored 1937 Fordson which was reclaimed from a scrap heap. This tractor pulls at the Country Heritage Park Summer Fair each year.



Country Heritage Park has a large collection of antique Case tractors. The tractor in the foreground, for example, features a crossmount engine and steel wheels.



Country Heritage Park also helps to educate children about modern agriculture. Volunteers brought an air seeder to show students today's farm machinery.



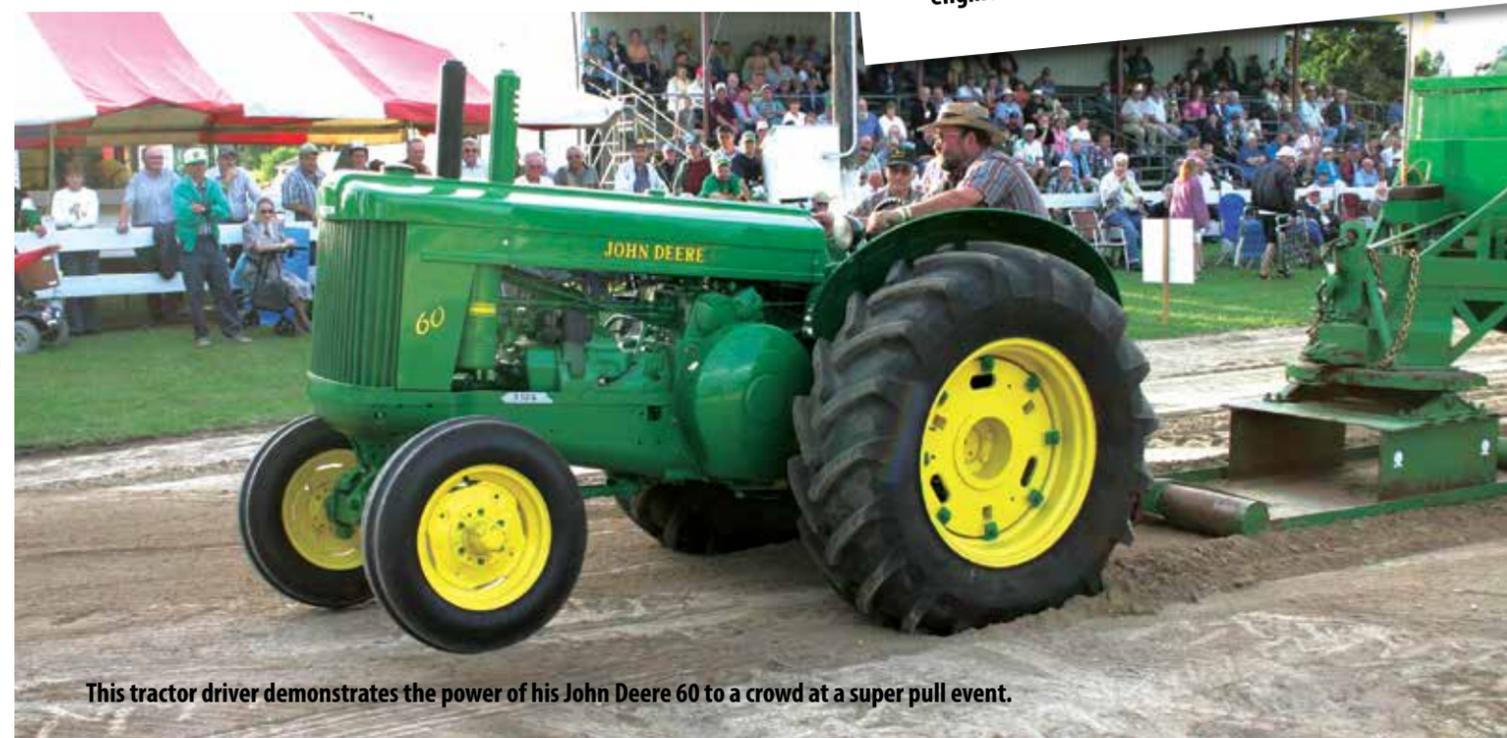
This Allis-Chalmers tractor with lug steel wheels dates back to the early 1920s.



This Canadian-built Chase tractor has a crossmount engine and an unusual three-wheeled design.

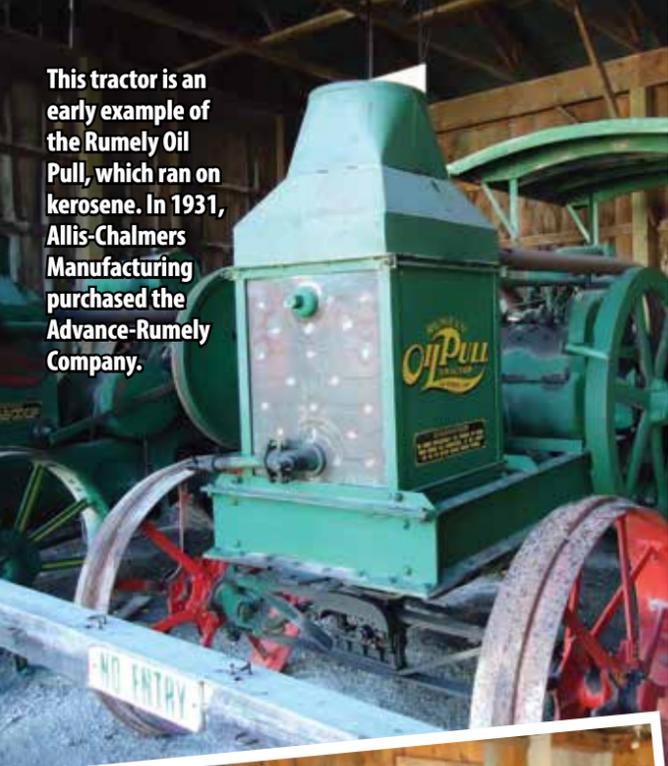


These machines are some early examples of the steam-driven equipment that replaced horses.



This tractor driver demonstrates the power of his John Deere 60 to a crowd at a super pull event.

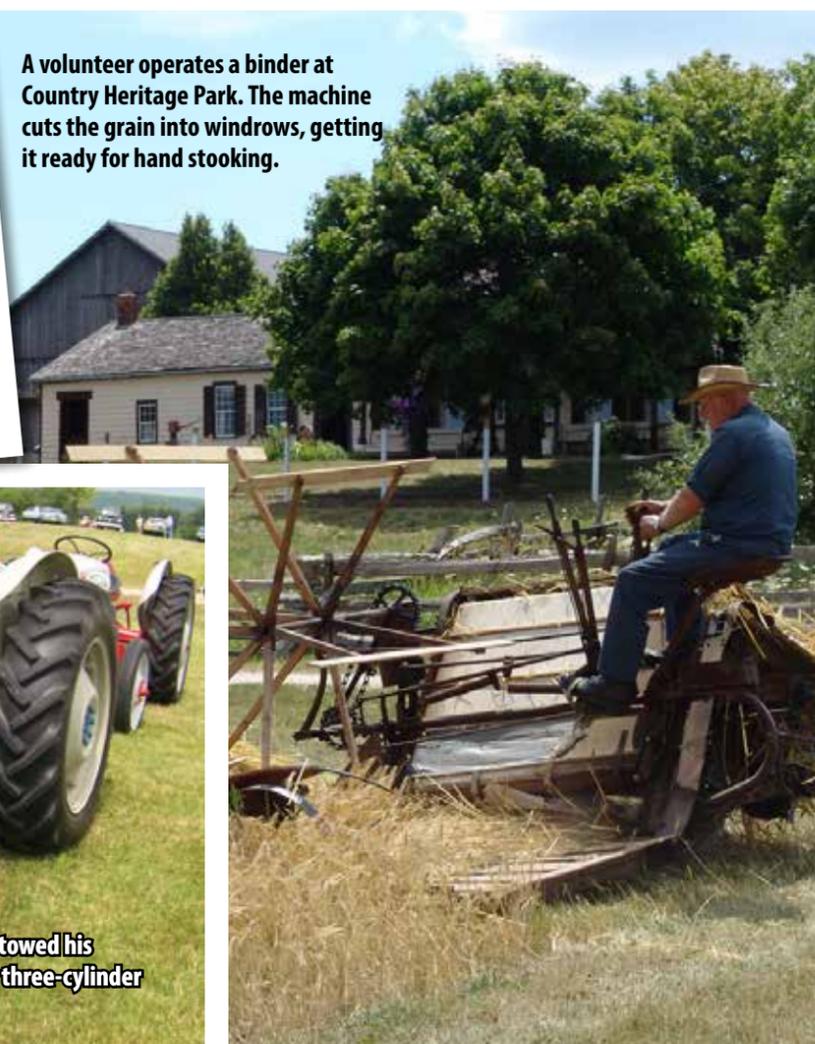
This tractor is an early example of the Rumely Oil Pull, which ran on kerosene. In 1931, Allis-Chalmers Manufacturing purchased the Advance-Rumely Company.



Commonly known as the "doodlebug," a farmer would have built this OTACO Autotrac tractor from a conversion kit, using the chassis of a 1930 Ford Model A car. This machine is an example of recycling before the movement became popular.



International Harvester built a kerosene-fueled tractor. This one dates back to the early 1900s.



A volunteer operates a binder at Country Heritage Park. The machine cuts the grain into windrows, getting it ready for hand stooking.



Burnett Dennis, a long-time Country Heritage Park volunteer, towed his 1949 Ford 8N tractor to a show with his 1963 Ford Super Dexta three-cylinder diesel tractor.