

it's all about the orange

AGCO® DEVOTEE COLLECTS AND RESTORES HERITAGE EQUIPMENT

BY SARAH LUDWIG RAUSCH
AGCO Advantage, Summer 2007

In a small community where green is more common than orange, Tom Wolf's enthusiastic loyalty to Allis-Chalmers and AGCO tractors gets him a lot of teasing. "They say that if I ever cut my finger, it'd bleed orange," he laughs. Raised on a farm that used only Allis-Chalmers equipment, Wolf began driving the tractors when he was around ten and has been a fervent fan ever since. A dairy farmer from Shreve, Ohio, Wolf owns at least one of every pedal tractor ever made by Allis-Chalmers, as well as a few other brands. "Right now I think I have a total of 110 pedal tractors," Wolf says. He displays them on shelves in a shed where space is "starting to be a problem. But it's a good problem," he adds.

Along with pedal tractors, Wolf collects antique Allis-Chalmers tractors. His oldest and favorite is a green 1929 Allis-Chalmers 2035 that he and his son-in-law have completely restored. "We used the best paint we could. It took about four gallons, but it's smooth and shiny," he says. It also has a yellow pinstripe just like the

original. Wolf says that 1929 was the last year Allis-Chalmers produced green tractors, so it's the only green one he owns.

Wolf has eighteen antique tractors, including an un-restored 2540, an Industrial B, a CA, a G, and two WFs, one styled, the other unstyled. The first tractor he restored was a 1940 RC, one of the rarer models, Wolf says. Around ten of his tractors are restored, and he plans to keep on going. "Some years we might get two or three done, some years none. It just depends on what's going on that year," he says. Wolf's son-in-law does the paint restoration and helps Wolf with the mechanical restoration. "We do it in our spare time," Wolf says.

Spare time is a precious thing around his place, however. This is the farm Wolf grew up on: he and his wife bought it from his parents in 1967. The farm is truly a family affair, run by Wolf and his son, with help from the elder of his nine grandchildren. Wolf's son and daughter and their families each live on one of the other parcels of land he owns. His son usually does

the daily milking of 85 to 90 head of Ayrshire cattle, which takes around eight hours per day. With an additional 80-90 heifers to care for, plus farming over 500 acres of corn, wheat, oats and hay, finding time to work on restoring his tractors is something Wolf has to do consciously. "If you like something, you can wiggle it in," he says.

The restored tractors don't just sit in buildings; Wolf gets them out for community parades and nearby antique shows. He tries to go to two or three shows a year where Allis-Chalmers tractors are featured. "Living in a small community, every now and then, someone will just come out and look at them too," Wolf says. Around the farm, Wolf relies heavily on his AGCO DT160 front wheel assist tractor, as well as an assortment of Allis-Chalmers tractors. "We still farm with WD45s, which were made in the 1950s. I have two 5670 AGCO Allis tractors for handling round bales and mowing hay. I still use WDs and WD45s to rake hay and

pull wagons too. We're strictly Allis-Chalmers around here, really," he says.

At the end of 2006, Wolf bought an AGCO RT100. Though he hasn't had a chance to use it much yet, he has been very happy with its performance so far. "It runs well and starts well in cold weather," he says. "We used it earlier in the year to round bale some corn stalks on frozen ground. I think we're going to like it really well."

Wolf's dealership is located in Ashland, Ohio, about 30 miles from his operation. "When I was growing up, there was an Allis-Chalmers dealership in every little town, including Shreve. It has really changed," Wolf notes. The folks at Ashland Town & Country know Wolf well; he buys all his tractors there, as well as parts and the occasional maintenance. Ron Ackerman, the farm equipment sales manager at Town & Country, has known Wolf since the mid-70s. "He's a die-hard Allis-Chalmers fan, that's for sure," he says. "He knows a lot of Allis-Chalmers history, more than I do." Ackerman calls Wolf "a good old boy. He'd do anything for anybody."