



USA/Canada Home
Our Company

Worldwide Sites
[Our Company](#)
[Contact Us](#)
[Site Search](#)

[Home](#) [Our Company](#) [Products & Equipment](#) [Services & Support](#) [Attractions, Events & Gifts](#) [Investor Relations](#) [Worldwide Careers](#)

[Company Information](#) > [History](#) > [Company History](#)

Company Information

History

History

- **Company History**
- Historic People
- Historic Places

[1837](#) [1860](#) [1880](#) [1900](#) [1920](#) [1940](#) [1960](#) [1980](#) [2000](#)

1940-1959

[Investor Relations](#)
[Press Center](#)
[Global Citizenship](#)
[Student Center](#)
[Careers](#)

1940 Mechanization advances. American farms grow larger; the farm labor force shrinks. As the decade dawns, some 1.6 million farm tractors are in use, almost double the 1930 total.

1941 The US enters WWII. "Limitation orders" restrict civilian production of farm equipment, repair parts and exports. (By 1944, with the tide of war turning toward the Allies, limitations on civilian production end.)

1942 Charles Deere Wiman accepts a commission as an Army colonel. Burton Peek succeeds him as interim company president. Before returning to Deere in 1944, Wiman briefly directs the farm machinery and equipment division of the War Production Board.

1943 Deere makes military tractors, ammunition, aircraft parts, and cargo and mobile laundry units during the war. About 4,500 employees serve in the military, some in the "John Deere" Battalion, a specialized ordnance group that sees service in Europe.

1944 Price controls and food rationing affect families in the US between 1942 and 1946. Frozen foods are popularized.

1945 Traditional company paternalism ebbs as John Deere factory workers endorse unions. Collective bargaining over wages and working conditions replaces a 105-year-old pattern of dealing with workers individually.

1946 With wartime controls lifted, nationwide labor relations enter a tumultuous period. Frequent strikes ensue as management and labor test each other's strength.

1947 The new John Deere Dubuque Works builds the Model "M" Tractor. Two years later, equipped with a tracked undercarriage, the "M" becomes available as a crawler, called the "MC". This will herald the Worldwide Construction Equipment Division. When a front blade is added, it becomes a bulldozer.

1948 The Deere Des Moines Works beats swords into plowshares. A former ammunition plant acquired from the government, it turns out cotton pickers and cultivating tools. Eventually it will also build plows.

1949 Deere's first diesel-powered unit, the model "R" Tractor, enters production.

1950 Agreement with the United Auto Workers on a five-year contract ends a long period of postwar labor unrest.

1951 The board appropriates funds for a small factory in Scotland, but in the end, terminates the project. Once before, consideration was given to manufacturing outside North America. In 1909 the board declined to act on a proposal for a Russian plow factory.

1952 A Federal court dismisses an antitrust suit against Deere & Company. The government had charged Deere, IH, and JI Case with illegally selling farm machinery to dealers on condition that they refuse to handle competing makes.

1953 The Model 70 is launched as the largest row-crop tractor to date. Initially available with gasoline, all-fuel, or LP-gas engine, it will become the first diesel row-crop tractor.

1954 Engineers develop a highly successful 2-row corn head. Attached to a new Model 45 Combine, it enables a farmer to pick, shell, and clean up to 20 acres of corn a day in a single operation.

1955 William A. Hewitt is elected president and later CEO following the death of Charles Deere Wiman, his father-in-law. He will direct the company for the next 27 years, the last representative of the Deere family to do so.

1956 The firm steps toward becoming a multinational manufacturer. The company decides to build a small-tractor assembly plant in Mexico and buy a majority interest in a German tractor and harvester maker with a small presence in Spain. In the next few years, it will move into France, Argentina, and South Africa.

1957 Six-row planters and cultivators, John Deere innovations, reach the market. They provide 50 percent more planting and cultivating capacity for row-crop farmers in corn- and cotton-producing areas.

1958 The John Deere Credit Company, financier of domestic purchases of John Deere equipment, begins operations.

1959 The company brings out the 8010, a diesel-powered, 215-horsepower, 10-ton Goliath – the largest tractor it has ever built. Only a few are sold. Soviet Premier Krushchev visits the Des Moines Works.