

## **A Brief Background History of International Harvester's Cub Tractor**

In 1932 with the introduction of the F-12 Farmall tractor and its successor in 1938, the F-14, International Harvester Corporation sought to replace the remaining two horse/mule motive power of the small farm. The introduction of the Farmall A and B series tractors in 1939 solidified IH's position as the leader in small tractors for the former two horse farm, but for the smaller one horse farm, the part-time small farm farmer and the small truck farm, an even smaller and cheaper tractor was needed. Allis-Chalmers with its Model "G", John Deere with its "L" series and Massey-Harris with its "Pony" attempted with only limited success to exploit this niche. The more versatile Farmall Cub with its numerous well designed attachments for a wide variety of uses quickly dominated the field with over 100,000 Farmall Cubs manufactured in the first three years of production. Faced with this formidable adversary, the competition essentially abandoned the field to the Cub.

International Harvester began initial design of the Farmall Cub (designated Farmall X during early development) in 1940, but with the onset of WWII in 1941, production and marketing were delayed into the post-war period. Wartime production by IH of additional lines of military equipment, tools and machinery, while maintaining limited production of agricultural and industrial equipment for the war effort, meant no production facilities could be made available for a new tractor – besides, rubber for tires, metals and other basic components necessary for production of civilian goods were allocated to war materials production. Nonetheless, before the end of WWII in 1944, to its management, and to the public in 1945, IH's engineering department released pictures and provisional data of pre-production models of the Farmall Cub. Production was reassigned to the newly acquired Farmall works (formerly the Curtis Aircraft Co. factory) being expanded, remodeled and reequipped at Louisville, Kentucky. The first production Farmall Cub rolled off the assembly line (Serial # FCUB 501) at 3:05 PM on Tuesday, May 13<sup>th</sup>, 1947.

This mini-tractor initially had an 8 hp rating at the drawbar and 9.25 hp at the belt, but by the end of its production in 1979, would see its horsepower soar to twice that with aluminum domed pistons, higher engine compression ratios and increased engine rpm's. The amazing versatility of this mini-tractor, eventually coupled with more than a dozen and a half specifically designed or adapted equipment attachments for the Cub, resulted in sales of almost a quarter million tractors over its nearly one third century of production. In 1955, the Cub begat a 7" lower profile sibling known as the Cub Lo-Boy to supplement its line. The lower profile Cub Lo-Boy offered low clearance with enhanced stability on slopes and quickly became a favorite light industrial "chore" tractor for mowing, towing and lifting in tight spaces as well as for general use around the farm for orchards, vineyards, truck crops, gardens, barn and yard work. While the Farmall Cub's chassis externally changed only minimally over its years of production, the sheet metal styling of its hood, grille housing and grille reflected styling changes in IH's line of larger tractors. The major sheet metal styling periods were: 1947 to 1954, late 1954 to mid 1958, mid 1958 to early 1963, and early 1963 to 1979. In addition, paint, decal and trim changes were instituted at various times during each sheet metal period in keeping with the styling changes of IH's larger tractors. The red Farmall Cub became the International Cub in late 1964 with a new yellow and white color scheme which it would carry almost to the end of production in 1979. Ironically, the last Cubs produced, including the last Cub (serial # 253,685), were painted IH Farmall red to honor their past heritage although they carried an International decal.

Today the Cub and Cub Lo-Boy are favorites for renovation and restoration, not only because of their versatility around the farm and home, but also because they're just plain neat examples of small yet "real" vintage tractors - and - you can tuck a couple in your garage in the space required for one full size car with enough space left over to comfortably work on them.