

Avery Motor Cultivator

Minneapolis, MN 1916-24



Robert Avery came up with the design of a corn planter while in prison in Andersonville, Georgia during the Civil War. When he was released from prison he built a working model of this design, and in 1874 he founded the Avery Planter Company in Galesburg, Illinois with his brother Cyrus. In 1884 the company moved to Peoria, Illinois and by 1891 they had begun the manufacturing of steam engines and threshing machines. By 1910 the Avery brothers were attempting to produce their first tractor, and the following year the Avery 20-35 model was introduced to the market.

It soon became apparent that farmers were looking for more small lightweight tractors, rather than the large heavyweight tractors of the past. Around this same time in the Corn Belt the great question came up -- how could we use a tractor successfully when the farmer is compelled to keep his horses for the cultivation of corn? The Avery Company received numerous letters expressing this view from 1912 to 1914 and this instilled the idea for a motor cultivator.

In 1913 work was started along this line and the Avery Company, having been for many years large producers of horse drawn cultivators, was naturally inclined to simply take a horse drawn cultivator and put a motor on it to drive it. After some months of planning and making drawings and experimental machines, the conclusion was finally reached that

in order to make the motor cultivator an acceptable and profitable machine to the farmer, it ought to be able to handle two rows of corn at one time, and should sell at a very moderate price because of its limited occupation on the farm.

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The Avery motor Cultivator was first announced in the summer of 1916. The engine and drive train were essentially the same as the 5-10 tractor announced earlier in the year. This design was a one row cultivator, using the same individual beams and control handles that were used on horse-drawn cultivators.

Avery did not limit its motor cultivator to cultivating alone. Their options included a mounted planter, one of the first such units ever built. The Motor cultivator with its pioneering tricycle chassis design could certainly have been the basis for a row-crop tractor, but that would not come for about a decade after the 1916 Avery motor cultivator was announced.

Different ads at the time stated:

The Avery Motor Planter-Cultivator now makes it possible for you to complete the motorization of all your farm work. You can plant and cultivate a corn, bean, cotton or other crop planted in rows without horses or mules. With an Avery Kerosene Tractor and Avery Motor Planter-Cultivator you can make your farm horseless if you so desire.

The Avery Motor Planter and Cultivator attachments are quickly interchangeable. You can plant your row crop quickly and easily, and then put on the cultivator gangs and cultivate as often as you like to keep the ground thoroughly stirred up.

Besides planting and cultivating, you can also do many other kinds of work with this machine. You can use it for pulling a hay-rake, binder, harrow, drill and other machines. It is equipped with a belt pulley for feed grinding, sawing, pumping, grain elevating, etc.

This tractor was later replaced with the Avery Model c Six-Cylinder Motor Cultivator, which was in production until the company closed. In 1924 the company was declared bankrupt, and was subsequently reorganized as the Avery Power Machinery Company, although this new venture achieved little success.

Please refer to our website for a list of sources.