

Rare 1971 John Deere 2520 diesel tractor hits \$64,000 at July 8-9 auction in Le Mars, Ia.

By Ken Hall

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A rare and restored 1971 John Deere 2520 high crop diesel tractor with syncro-range transmission, one of fewer than 80 made, sold for \$64,000 at an auction held July 8-9 at the Plymouth County Fairgrounds in Le Mars, Iowa.

(LE MARS, Iowa) – An extremely rare 1971 John Deere 2520 high crop diesel tractor with syncro-range transmission – one of fewer than 80 ever made – sold for \$64,000 at a two-day sale of John Deere vintage tractors and related collectibles held July 8-9 by Matthews Auctions, LLC, of Nokomis, Ill., in conjunction with Girard Auction and Land Brokers, Inc. of Wakonda, S.D. It was the top lot of the auction.

The July 8 session was dedicated mainly to toys and memorabilia (550 lots), while July 9 was set aside for tractors, signs, saddles and parts (300 lots). The tractors, all of which were beautifully restored and in like-new condition, were mostly from the Robert Plendl collection and examples from the New Generation series, produced by John Deere from the early '60s to 1972. Some even older were also sold.

“Vintage tractors have really exploded in recent years among collectors,” observed Dan Matthews of Matthews Auctions, LLC, “but the John Deere’s bring the most money because they kept very strict serial numbers, so it’s easy for buyers and sellers to determine which tractors are truly original and intact. It’s similar to vintage cars, where it’s important for the serial numbers to match.”

Between 600 and 700 registered bidders attended the weekend event, held at the Plymouth County Fairgrounds in Le Mars, Iowa. Several phone bidders vied for the lots with folks in the room, while numerous absentee bids were also recorded (especially for the vintage tractors). Online bidding was facilitated by Bidspotter. Mr. Matthews estimated the sale overall grossed right around \$800,000.

Other tractors that realized high gavel prices included a 1958 John Deere 330 standard tractor in unbelievable original condition, one of less than 900 produced (\$23,000), and a 1971 John Deere 4620 diesel tractor with power-shift transmission (\$38,000). A top lot from the July 8 sale was a John Deere double-sided porcelain neon sign in excellent condition. It went to a determined bidder for \$8,000.

Following are additional highlights from the sale. All prices quoted are hammer prices, exclusive of a sale commission (there was no buyer’s premium). All references to John Deere will be made as JD.

Other top lots from the July 9 session included a JD Quality Farm Implements single-sided porcelain sign with four-legged deer logo in a rare size of 3 feet by 5 feet (\$5,500); an original JD plow share rack (\$1,800); a JD parts clock from the 1960s (\$2,100); a nice JD leather saddle presented to legendary cowgirl Lucille Mulhall (\$10,000); and a genuine Velie saddle once owned and ridden by legendary movie cowboy Tom Mix. It brought \$5,000.

Returning to tractors, a 1970 JD 2520 diesel power shift tractor brought \$31,000; a pair of 1972 JD 4020 diesel power shift tractors realized \$23,500 and \$23,000; a 1959 JD 730 diesel high crop tractor hammered for \$25,500; a 1970 JD 4020 FWA tractor topped out at \$29,500; a 1970 JD 2520 diesel power shift tractor hit \$26,000; and a 1972 JD 4020 diesel syncro tractor changed hands for \$19,500.

An outstanding 1969 JD 4520 diesel power shift tractor climbed to \$35,000; a 1972 JD 2520 syncro wide front tractor chalked up \$18,000; a 1972 JD 4000 diesel standard syncro tractor earned \$16,000; a 1972 JD

3020 diesel syncro tractor coasted to \$18,500; a 1965 JD diesel orchard tractor commanded \$17,000; and a 1959 JD 530 tractor with 36-inch non-adjust wide front brought \$12,500.

A 1958 JD 430 utility tractor chugged away for \$16,250; a 1959 JD 630 row crop tractor with 36-inch non-adjust wide front made \$11,750; a 1960 JD 630 standard tractor breezed to \$15,520; a 1959 JD 730 gas standard tractor soared to \$14,000; a 1959 JD 730 diesel electric start tractor rose to \$12,000; a 1959 JD 830 diesel electric start tractor reached \$17,250; and a 1937 JD G Serial #1080 hit \$16,000.

Back to results from the July 8 session: a pair of salesman's sample replicas of the JD #999 2-row Corn planter and the Moline High-wheel wood wagon fetched \$3,300 and \$3,000; a JD Plow Co. Safe Company match safe realized \$2,600; a rare Waterloo Boy large double-sided celluloid watch fob went for \$1,850; a rare JD sales manual for the 30-series tractor rose to \$1,850; and an extra rare Waterloo Boy Gasoline Engines watch fob sold for \$1,550.

A JD 8020 diesel 4wd tractor sales brochure attained \$1,600; a JD sales manual for 40-50-60 tractors sold for \$1,500; a 1928 JD general sales catalog found a new owner for \$1,400; a JD Model D watch fob with a celluloid center demanded \$1,300; a rare JD WA-14 and WA-17 4wd tractor sales brochure saw a top bid of \$1,250; and a Moline Wagon Co. metal watch fob with red wheel hit \$600.

More top lots from the July 9 session (not tractors): a rare Black Deere 6-foot JD double-sided sign achieved \$6,300; a JD single-seat buggy rolled away for \$2,800 to an Internet bidder from California; a rare "Deere Vehicles Are All Right" buggy print reached \$2,000; a JD 3-leg single-sided black and yellow sign earned \$1,950; two sets of JD 30-series 3-part hitches went for \$1,950; and four new BF Goodrich 18.9x30 tires hit \$1,800.

A pair of JD G factory round spoke rear rims, in primer, brought \$1,900; three sets of JD New Generation rear fenders soared to \$1,625; a JD 4-leg single-sided porcelain sign topped out at \$1,450; a JD yellow logo 4-leg SST sign with wooden back realized \$1,400; and a JD 3-part hitch for a 30-series high crop tractor changed hands for \$1,350.

Matthew Auctions, LLC's next big sale will be a Petroliana & Gas Station Collectibles Auction, mostly cans and signs, to be held Friday, Aug. 7, beginning at 9 a.m., at the Holiday Inn Airport in Des Moines, Iowa. The auction will be held concurrent with the Iowa Gas Show in the same venue. Then, on Oct. 16, Matthews will hold its annual Fall Peotone Petroliana & Advertising Auction, in Peotone, Ill.

That event, starting at 12 noon, will be held on the day prior to the start of the Fall Chicagoland Advertising Show (Oct. 17-18). Quality consignments are being accepted for the Aug. 7 and Oct. 16 auctions. To consign an item, an estate or an entire collection, you may call Matthews Auctions, LLC directly, at (217) 563-8880, or (217) 259-7059. Or, you can e-mail them at info@matthewsauctions.com.

To learn more about Matthews Auctions, LLC, and its calendar of upcoming sales, you may log on to www.MatthewsAuctions.com.

Girard Auction has several large toy auctions coming up, starting in the beginning of September and continuing all the way up through winter, including many more John Deere Toys and related memorabilia. Girard's is the country's leader in farm toy and memorabilia auctions. See more at www.GirardAuction.com or call toll free 1-866-531-6186.

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Ken Hall writes pre-sale and post-sale press releases for auction houses, for a fee. He writes, submits and tracks stories for clients. Submissions are published in trade magazines, posted on industry websites and appear in local newspapers.

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