



# THE NEBRASKA TRACTOR TEST



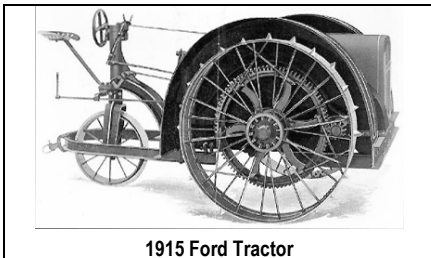
The following excerpt is from an article entitled *The History of the Nebraska Tractor Test Law* by Professor C. W. Smith. Additional information for this publication is from the book *The Agricultural Tractor 1855-1950* compiled by R.B. Gray.

## INSPIRATION BEHIND THE TRACTOR TEST

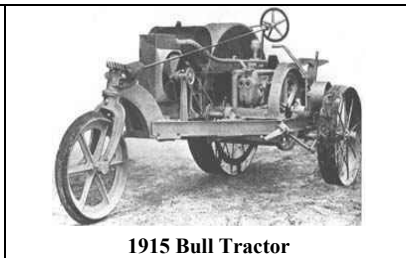
The conception of today's world renowned Nebraska Tractor Test occurred in the field of Wilmot Crozier, a progressive farmer and owner of yet another useless tractor far from being an adequate replacement for a horse.....It began as a law to protect others from irresponsible tractor companies failing to keep the best interest of the farmer in mind.

"The Nebraska Tractor Test Bill was introduced in 1919 to Nebraska's House of Representatives by the pioneering farmer, Wilmot Crozier, a farmer and a Nebraska State Representative from Polk County.

As an early pioneer, the first tractor Mr. Crozier invested in was called a "Ford" but actually had no connection with the success of Henry Ford from the automobile industry. He purchased this tractor from the Minneapolis, Minnesota Ford Tractor Company in 1916. While attempting to operate this machine, It gave him so much trouble that he demanded a replacement. The replacement he was able acquire in 1917 was no better than the original.



1915 Ford Tractor

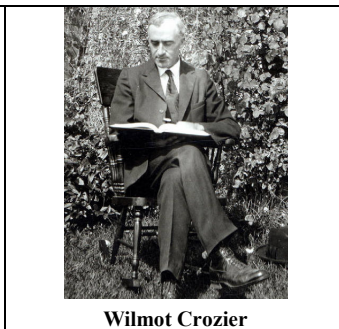


1915 Bull Tractor

This same year, Mr. Crozier then purchased a second-hand "Bull" Tractor. This like the "Ford" was also far from being an adequate replacement for his current team of mules. The following year, with continuing persistence, once again Mr. Crozier purchased yet another tractor. This machine being the three-plow Rumely Oil-Pull.



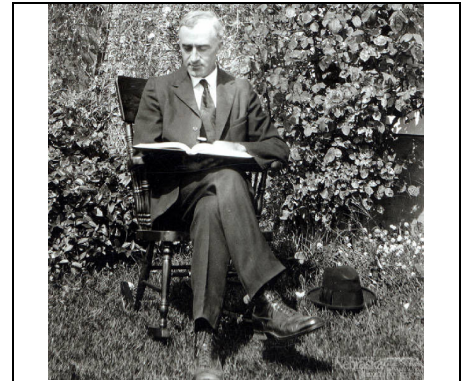
Rumely Oil Pull Tractor



Wilmot Crozier

At last, he was very much satisfied with his recent purchase. Mr. Crozier was able to pull not three but five plow bottoms with his Rumely tractor giving him no trouble. Overall, this experience caused Mr. Crozier to ask himself the question, "If one manufacturer can build a dependable tractor why can not all other tractors produced be dependable?"

## FATHER OF THE LAW



Wilmot F. Crozier, Nebraska State Representative

Mr. Crozier thought of the potential Nebraska Tractor Test Law that ultimately eliminated useless tractors and irresponsible tractor companies *after* he was elected to the Nebraska State Legislature in 1919.

He began a campaign to pass the Tractor Test Law after correspondence with an editor of a farm paper while he was already in office.

This editorial commented on the undependable character of many tractors, a truth Mr. Crozier found out first hand. Because of the number of impracticable tractors and the irresponsible tractor companies, it was determined to be necessary to have some sort of regulation on tractor sales in the state of Nebraska.

Mr. Crozier introduced a Legislative Bill in 1919. The provisions were that no new tractor model could be legally sold in the state of Nebraska without a permit. One tractor representing a company's new model must be tested by the University of Nebraska Agricultural Engineering Department. These results were then compared to the published claims of the manufacturer covering that particular tractor model. If the claims were not substantiated by the test, then no permit could be issued.

## STATE LAW WITH NATIONAL INFLUENCE



Senator Charles Warner



Nebraska State Capital

The idea and need of a National Tractor Testing Station was fully realized by 1915. This potential station would conduct tests under the observation of the U.S. Government. The process of establishing this station and the testing procedure at a national level stalled in a bureaucratic maze.

By 1919, a hand full of states were conducting their own tests. But it was Nebraska that created the mold and established the tractor testing program soon to be respected around the world.

Charles Warner was the Nebraska State Senator deserving of equal credit as the farmer and Nebraska State Representative Wilmot Crozier, for pushing the Nebraska Tractor Test Bill through the Nebraska State Senate.

Upon passage through both houses, the Nebraska Tractor Test Law established tests for tractors which have since become significant not only in Nebraska and the nation, but also in other countries around the world. They continue to be recognized today as unbiased standards for testing tractor performance.

## DEVELOPING THE TEST PROGRAM

The University of Nebraska's program of organizing and conducting the tractor testing procedure became the responsibility of the Agricultural Engineering Department of which L. W. Chase was the head. Chase soon encouraged Claude Shedd to come to Nebraska from Iowa State University and take over as chief engineer for developing the Nebraska Tractor Testing Program.



L.W. Chase



Waterloo Boy N, Nebraska Tractor Test #1

Shedd had to direct the setting up of the test procedure and also design the equipment necessary for conducting drawbar tests. All of this required about a year's time. In the spring of 1920 on March 31<sup>st</sup>, the first tractor test was run on the Waterloo Boy, Model N.

For the next 86 years, nearly 2,000 tractors representing new models have undergone testing at the University of Nebraska. These tractors were required to prove the claims of performance before they could legally be sold in Nebraska. This unbiased testing and their results were compiled to allow tractors to be compared by farmers across the nation and around the world

## AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERS HISTORIC LANDMARK



Once the Nebraska Tractor Test Law was established, the world's first Tractor Testing Laboratory was constructed on the University of Nebraska Farm in 1920.

The first official Nebraska Tractor Test started in this building on March 31, 1920. These pioneer tests became worldwide standards recognized by the American Society of Agricultural Engineers. Today, this building stands as The Tractor Test Museum.

## TRACTOR TEST MUSEUM

The museum, established in 1998, consists of historic tractor testing equipment such as the original dynamometer used to test tractors in 1920 along with nearly 40 key tractors that illustrate the developments in agricultural mechanization over the decades.



Museum Show Room



Museum Archives

Along with the testing equipment and the historic tractors, the museum archives contain nearly 2,000 folders of tractor test reports, tractor manuals, and advertising literature.

This Museum is open to the public Monday through Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm. Call ahead for weekend hours. For more information call 1-402-472-8389 or visit our website: <http://tractormuseum.unl.edu>