

FARMING AT THE SPEED OF TECHNOLOGY

As one long-time Cheyenne County farmer puts it when the talk turns to the changes in farming, “we used to farm with horses - now we farm with Sputnik!”

And, at the speed of technology, even his reference to Sputnik 1, the first man-made satellite, still pales at the changes farmers have undergone in the last century or so.

A little more than a hundred years ago, just before the dawn of the 20th Century, farmers

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were using steam-powered tractors, sometimes called traction engines, to replace horses in some areas. In the early 1900s, the internal combustion engine gave birth to more modern, less cumbersome machines that increased farm productivity greatly. By the 1920s, the new

tractors began to take a solid hold on farms and continued to more efficiently take over the heavy work once performed by teams of horses.

Since then, farm technology has grown by leaps and bounds. Many tractors now routinely surpass 400 horsepower (hp), with one specimen, a 4-wheel drive giant made by Big Bud in Montana, able to top 1,000 hp.

Tractors and supporting equipment have

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Farming has changed greatly in the last 100 years or so, going from horse-drawn equipment to satellite-enabled systems.



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