



With a personal collection of more than 8,000 1/64 scale farm toys and accessories (not including customized pieces), Jason Dalton, owner of Dalton's Farm Toys, may have one of the largest farm toy collections.

"When I was 11, I won an award from Ertl for having the largest 1/64 scale

collection in the world. A magazine Ertl used to publish sponsored this competition. My collection at that time was larger than any known adult's collection. To this day, I believe my collection is still the largest collection in the world," he shared.

Today, Jason's collection consists of almost all of the 1/64 scale farm toys ever made by all manufacturers, he said.

"I also have several thousand other farm toys in various scales, such as 1/16 IH toys as well as 1/32 four-

wheel-drive toy tractors," he said.

He has more than 50 brand-specific display cases, including a showcase full of early John Deere tractor sets manufactured by Ertl. These represent some of the first 1/64 toys ever produced.

Jason's farm toy hobby has also expanded into an expansive business.

According to Jason, Dalton's

Farm Toys "has the largest selection of 1/64 farm toys and models on the internet."

"We have over 3,500 farm toys in our online catalog with pictures of every one. We specialize in older and out-of-production items, but also carry a full line of new releases as well," he said.

Jason began collecting 30 years ago. Now, Jason proudly said, "I have all brands, from the common pieces to super rare. I also have everything new in the box/package if it came in one.

Part of Jason Dalton's John Deere section. A lot of hard-to-find gold sets are pictured here.

Even at age 9, I never played with my models. I kept them in their packages or displayed them in showcases.

Jason and Melissa Dalton stand in front of showcases full of 1/64 scale farm toys from Jason's private collection.

By Larry LeMasters

Jason Dalton's *Colossal* COLLECTION AND EVEN BIGGER BUSINESS





Jason Dalton's wall which has close to 3,000 new-in-the-box pieces on it. Jason has several other display walls like this in his collection, although not all of them are quite this large.

I have a lot of one-of-a-kind pieces as well as prototypes that were never actually produced. I even have a lot of misprints and incorrectly packaged items. I have every gold Toy Farmer 1/64 scale tractor ever made. Only a few people have that set. I also have every 1/64 Big Bud tractor made, including a prototype, samples and one-of-a-kind model."

While he does not have any certain model that he calls his favorite (he loves all prototypes and one-of-a-kind models), what brings him indescribable joy is meeting interesting new collectors in farm toys through his company and website (www.daltonsfarmtoys.com).

"We just reinvented our website,"

Jason said. "Since we continue to add more and more products, our goal is to interest more and more collectors. We really want to increase our customer base, since we'd like to be one of the largest farm toy dealers in the world."

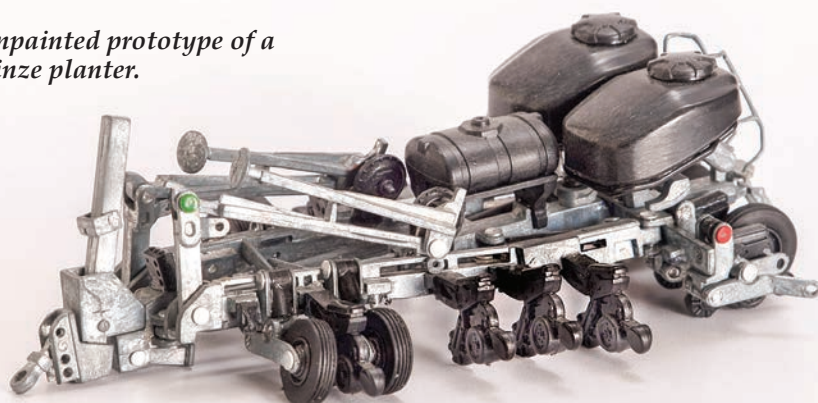
One way to judge an internet company's customer base is by how many followers the company has on Facebook. Jason said with assurance, "With 58,000-plus followers on Facebook, we have the largest Facebook following of any farm toy group and/or dealer."

Jason's love for model farm toys has led many people to believe that he grew up on a farm, but that is not true. "I grew up in town," he said. "My parents did not farm, but both sets



Pre-production sample of the new, gold Holland "Harvest" set. This is in a sample box and the whole set should be gold, not with part of the toys blue and part gold. This one-of-a-kind set is one of Jason Dalton's favorite pieces.

Unpainted prototype of a Kinze planter.



A Big Bud prototype with the wrong color of paint and a plain white box. This was one of the samples sent from overseas to be approved for production.



A set of IH gold-plated tractors.



A gold-plated Rite 750 "Earthquake" tractor. Very few of these were produced and this one took Jason Dalton a long time to track down.



New Holland four-wheel-drive painted red (it should have been painted blue).

of my grandparents farmed, mostly raising corn, soybeans, cattle and pigs. I spent most summers on their farms, and when college called, I sought a degree in agricultural business."

Long before college though, Jason fell in love with toy tractors. In fact, when he could barely walk, he received a pedal tractor and several farm toys for his first birthday. "I always received lots of farm toys for Christmas and birthdays," he added. "I played with them, but was not hard on them, and I still have all of them in my collection today! And most of them still have their original boxes."

By age 9, Jason knew he wanted to be a serious farm toy collector. "My mom and I attended toy shows together," he said. "I often acquired new models, when I was 'lucky' enough. Even at age 9, I never played with my models. I kept them in their packages or displayed them in showcases. When I did occasionally play with one (I was still a kid, after all), I made certain I had two of them so one could go into my collection in mint condition."

Jason also started selling farm toys at a young age. In 1995, as a high school freshman, he needed an FFA project for an agricultural class. "I decided to take 20 extra toys I had from my collection and start selling," he said. "I ran my first classified ad in Toy Farmer magazine when I was about 14 years old, and my very first customer bought half of what I had for sale. In high school, I started buying and selling. By my senior year, I was setting up at a handful of toy shows and advertising in Toy Farmer every month."



Two Allis-Chalmers 7045 tractors—the one in the package is one of the hardest-to-find 1/64 tractors and most sought-after because of the white border around the decal. The model in front is a prototype Allis-Chalmers 7045 with a clear plastic cab top that should have been painted white and with no Ertl markings on the casting.

Jason has become such an expert on 1/64 scale farm toys that when the National Farm Toy Museum wanted to publish a 1/64 scale price guide and checklist a few years ago, it asked Jason for help in writing it and pricing the models.

Jason shares sheer joy and exuberance for what he does. And what he does best is talk about, collect and sell 1/64 scale farm toys.

"In the world of farm toys," he said, "I'm known for the hard-to-find 1/64 toys and as the go-to person for information on 1/64 scale models. In recent years, I have branched into other scales as well, just because I have a great customer base and some of them collect other scales as well. My goal is to truly have models for everyone."

Achieving the largest internet farm toy store has been a challenge. "Over the years," Jason confessed, "I've tried everything, selling farm toys any way I could."

"I published a small, mail-order magazine for awhile and sold reasonably well through the mail. Then I started selling on eBay, and my sales started climbing. But it was our website that put us over the top. In 2017, Melissa and I built a new storefront that has more than 5,000 different items in stock and displayed for sale. Now, with our storefront,

eBay and our website, we are finally achieving the volume in sales we dreamed of having, pushing us to be one of the biggest and best farm toy stores in the world.”

Jason and his wife, Melissa, both handle the day-to-day operations of Dalton’s Farm Toys. It takes two of them, since they have a second, full-time business as well. “We own and operate a retail lawn mower and small engine shop, where we sell new mowers,” Jason said.

Owning a lawn mower shop has expanded Jason’s collection, since he tries collecting all the toy lawn mowers he sees.

Most of Dalton’s Farm Toys is a family-operated business, although Jason does hire several part-time employees during busy times of the year, such as Christmas.

“My mom does most of the shipping,” he said, “so she is someone I have come to trust—she gets the job done. Melissa and I have seven children between us, and our younger ones love to help grandma ship packages.”

Nearly 95 percent of what Dalton’s Farm Toys sells is new, stock models. The other 5 percent represents scratch

and custom-built sales.

“Our biggest or quickest selling items,” Jason said, “are old, unique and hard-to-find toys and models.”

Jason has had a few models produced exclusively for Dalton’s Farm Toys, and he plans on doing more such sales in the future, but his everyday bread-and-butter is selling stock models from all major farm toy manufacturers.

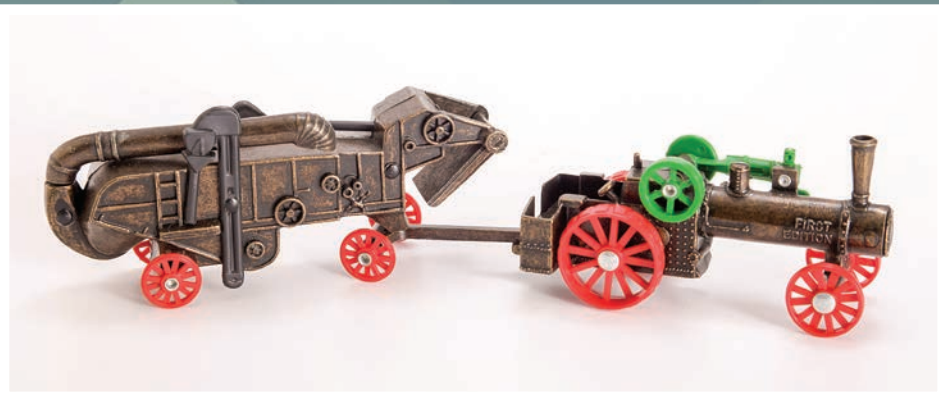
“I began with Ertl,” he said, “just like many dealers have done, but I have branched out and now carry every major manufacturer, including

SpecCast, GreenLight, First Gear, Standi, DCP and Bruder. I have remained a SpecCast and Ertl dealer for over 20 years, which is something I am proud of.”

Keeping his storefront and website interesting and tempting to collectors is a constant struggle. Jason always looks for ways to increase his product line, including buying collections or stores from older collectors and dealers who are selling out. He enjoys offering older models for sale and gleaning a few, every now and then, for his own collection.

Two items he gleaned and kept from collections he has bought are a Toy Farmer gold-plated Big Bud dealer award on a plaque (Jason purchased this plaque from a toy dealer that sold out years ago) and one of Jason’s favorites—a John Deere miniature tractor set. Only a few are known to exist. It is a 1970s dealership countertop display. Jason is always looking for unusual items like this for his personal collection and to pass along to hungry collectors.

Kinze models displayed by brand. Jason Dalton has nearly 50 brand-specific shelves in his collection.



Bronze-plated steam engine and threshing machine.



Jason Dalton holds one of his first 1/16 scale tractors that he received as a child. In the background is part of his lawn mower toy collection.

His store and website may soon be supporting his belief that the future of farm modeling is high-detail toys and lots of focus on making displays.

"We offer lots of choices for farm displays," he said. "We have hundreds of scaled grain equipment for farm displays with tractors and accessories to match."

At a time that many "mom-and-pop" hobby stores are closing their doors, Dalton's Farm Toys has figured out what the toy farm collector wants, and Jason and Melissa Dalton are making those "bucket list" desires realities for toy farm collectors all over the world.

If you are interested in contacting Jason, you are always invited to stop by his store in Newton, Iowa, or to email him at mail@Daltonsfarmtoys.com.

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DALTON'S

FARM TOYS



Some of Dalton's Farm Toys selection at his store.