

# Canadian Field Trip

From June 12 to June 25 I went up to Canada to meet up with members of Morris Industries and also go to the largest A and P type of field day I have ever seen.

After a very long series of flights from Christchurch to Australia to Honolulu to Vancouver to Regina (Saskatchewan – Canada). I finally arrived.

Regina is the capital city of Saskatchewan and has about 280,000 people. It is also right in the middle of the crop growing area of Canada. Regina (an Indian name for a pile of bones) because of the buffalo hunting that used to take place hundreds of years ago, is where the Western Canada Farm Progress show is, and boy what a show. The whole show would be about three times the size in area of our South Island field days, but with at least half of it under cover inside huge buildings. The rest outside on sealed car park type area. I was there for three days and had a great time, there were some huge implements like an 85 foot cultivator and air seeder, headers with two 20 foot fronts on at once, both able to flex independently to each other, 450 horse power x three wheel per axle auto steer tractors, massive harrows, rollers, endless silo manufacturers etc. There were big 4WD pick up trucks everywhere, but not all the agricultural gear was big, there was a very good amount of New Zealand sized equipment as well.

Their farming techniques are quite different to ours where the arable farmer never ploughs or burns off, and does mostly minimum tillage and or direct drill with point type hoe culter drills and single and double disc drills. All air seeders are around a minimum of 30 foot wide. In Canada they have a very short period to harvest and re drill before it gets too cold and snows again. Something like three months depending on the year, so the crop is back in the ground ready to sprout as soon as spring arrives.

Every farm has paddocks which are in what they call quarters, which is a quarter of a square mile in length and width (about 160 acres each).

While I was there we went out with the Morris Industries new product development team, who were testing out a new 65 foot air drill soon to go into production, and the farmer did one lap of the paddock in

about 15 minutes and by then had drilled 12.5 acres.

Their dirt is very soft and porous because of working in the stubble every year, and black in colour. The whole area where I went looked just like being in New Zealand. Same trees, same grasses, same colours only everything was bigger.

At the show I was very well looked after, because I was registered as an International guest, so we had a huge building to ourselves to come and go as we pleased, as well as we were given breakfast, lunch, drinks and meeting rooms to use whenever we wanted. Every night there was an event just for us, like a rodeo, all under cover inside another building on what is an ice hockey rink in winter. During the day there were all sorts of seminars going on in there which anyone could join in on at their leisure.

After the show we drove east over to Manitoba province, looking at agricultural gear and calling in on Morris dealers all the way, until we got to Minnedosa where the air carts are manufactured. At any one time Morris Industries would have at least 100 of the air carts in their yard or being built, some just little ones like what we in New Zealand use, about 5 cubic meters up to there biggest 20 cubic meters capacity. Once built and sold they are railed over to Yorkton, back in Saskatchewan province where we went next.

The railway trains were interesting because they carry shipping containers doubled up on each carriage, and man they were long trains.

Yorkton is where Morris Industries got started over 75 years ago, and the factory was a very interesting place to visit. This is where all the cultivators, disc drills, harrows, coil packers, hay hikers and air drills are made. Also where all the shipping freight leaves from for all around the world. These guys had big everything – like big jigs for manufacturing the cultivator frames, hay hikers, harrows etc that could rotate so no welding was done in an awkward position. The paint bay was huge as well, as was the paint drying tunnel. When Morris Industries order steel, they get it by the train load, and take a whole steel mill run at once (that's many hundreds of tonnes each time).

One of the most interesting places at Morris Industries was the development workshop. There are about 30 people working there, five in the drawing office alone. I wasn't allowed to take my camera in there, that's how serious they take things. After that we went over to Saskatoon which is where Morris Industries head office is. Here I got to meet all the heavyweights of the company.

Saskatoon is a beautiful town of about 100,000 people. It has some grand old buildings and a big river running through the middle of it (Saskatchewan river). This town is where I noticed the biggest difference between New Zealand and Canada, because with only 100,000 people, this town had better roading than Auckland. It had six four-lane bridges crossing the river, huge motorways all around the town, and very very good roads through the middle of the town, all of which makes it very easy to get from A to B, not only to live, but to do business with freight etc coming and going every day. I found any main road between any reasonable sized town had at least two lanes each way and sometimes the other two lanes were that far apart that you couldn't see them. After seeing things like that I struggled to understand what all the mucking around with our roading in New Zealand is about. When you see first hand what a difference it makes to people's lives and business with just that freedom and ease of movement. They don't have ridiculous laws on oversized loads either like here in New Zealand, just good commonsense laws and everybody seems to respect that the farmer has very wide things on the road from time to time.

After Saskatoon I flew over to Vancouver for one day to start my journey home. Vancouver is a really beautiful city, with beautiful big bridges over the river and a huge harbour surrounded by mountains covered in very large pine trees, and lots of old Canadian style hotels and buildings again a very easy city to get around in. I would go back there in a flash for a couple of weeks.

The whole time I was in Canada the people were great, they love Kiwis and were always keen to hear all about New Zealand and our lifestyle. I found we were very similar people in most ways.

Well I hope you enjoyed reading a wee bit about my trip and I highly recommend you go over for a look around some day, and make sure you squeeze in the Farm Show as well, you will love it.

Neil Pluck

## BLACKS

F A S T E N E R S

*Wholesalers of:*

- ★ Bolts
- ★ Nuts
- ★ Construction
- ★ Fasteners
- ★ Screws
- ★ Washers

## BLACKS

F A S T E N E R S

**39A GASSON STREET**  
**521C BLENHEIM ROAD**  
**PH: (03) 365-2460**