



A BRIEF HISTORY OF WEISS McNAIR

1966 - Gary Weiss starts full time production factory build of twenty-five (25) Weiss Orchard Sweepers, powered by a six (6) horsepower Briggs & Stratton engine, with the entire inaugural production run selling out at its first showing, the Colusa Farm Show. And a star is born.

1968 - The Weiss Orchard Sweeper is upgraded to include a more powerful 8 h.p. Kohler engine. Dan McNair staffs up for his first production harvesters, known as the "Getzumall", a name that was adopted after many conversations with the first users of the harvester prototypes, who would frequently remark, "Yep, it's a good dependable machine, it sure Gets 'um all!" The original harvester had just an 18" elevator chain, no suction, or vacuum fan, and only one small blower fan under the elevator.

1969 - The Weiss Orchard Sweeper was upgraded to include a blower unit and a 12 h.p. Kohler engine as standard.

1972 – Tractor Mounted Sweeper designs were added to the growing line, becoming extremely popular worldwide. The economic value to the farmer was exceptional. The farmer was able to leverage the assets already held (tractors) by adding/configuring them with Weiss Sweeper attachments, up to a full eleven (11') feet wide, without incurring the significant cost of an additional powertrain unit. Gould Paper Company acquires McNair Nut Harvesters from Dan McNair and Robert Pierce.

1973 – Weiss introduces the Tractor Mounted, Center Delivery, thirteen (13') foot wide Sweeper.

1974 – December, the Weiss Orchard Sweepers Company is acquired by Gould Paper Company.

1975 – Weiss designed and introduced a 3-point tractor powered blower. Used primarily in orchards, they have gained wide acceptance in a variety of applications including use in Poultry Production Houses; Cattle Field Yards; City, County & State Road Maintenance departments; Construction companies; Golf Courses across America; and several NASCAR race tracks.

1968 - 1982, both Gary Weiss and Dan McNair updated and enlarged their product offerings as orchards and production yields increased and larger horsepower tractors evolved. In 1968, most tractors were in the 30-40 h.p. range. Today, 70 h.p. is common in Almond orchards and 140 h.p. in Pecan orchards. Throughout the 1970's both companies gained worldwide recognition as their overseas markets expanded and export business significantly increased.

1983 – Gould merges Weiss and McNair into a single company, forming Weiss McNair, Inc, and providing worldwide customers the first combined harvester/sweeper manufacturer, significantly improving field service and replacement parts support, through an exceptional and expanded network of regional dealers. The merger was also significantly beneficial for the company, as the combined engineering resources coalesced into a truly formidable Research & Development team; and the operational efficiencies gained with much higher volumes, streamlined fabrication, welding, and assembly processes, and the opportunity to build on developing factory core competencies.

1984 – Weiss McNair (W/M) designs and introduces the Tractor Mounted, Heavy Duty, V-Rake, available in both Auger Reel and Tine Bar sweeper head models, in a wide variety of widths, and the One-Piece, High Tensile Tine Bar, allowing tine bar sweeper head widths to be increased up to eleven (11') feet. Constant improvements, typically coming via requests or recommendations from an increasingly loyal grower-customer base, were entertained and added to the Harvesters line, as R&D had a steady stream of released product modifications and new model “prototypes” for experimenting with each harvest season.

1986 – The 836 Hazelnut harvester, is a “straight thru 36” drum style harvester designed and introduced primarily for the Hazelnut industry in Oregon where harvesting often occurs during rainy and muddy adverse conditions. The optional elevator mud brush keeps the chain free of mud to allow for increased air flow; the front feed paddle wheels prevent leaf pile-up in front of the side plates; a new leaf hood has increased the air velocity, resulting in an increased cleaning efficiency; and the vacuum, which has an easy access hinged opening and a larger trash capacity, allows for faster ground speed. It is to this day the most popular shipping model in the industry.

1989 - The W/M 8900 model, one of the most significant industry innovations in “tow-behind” harvesters, was prototyped and released. All previous model tow-behind harvester manufacturers used right-angle gear boxes, jack shafts, and numerous chains and sprockets to transmit power from the tractor P.T.O to the various components of the harvester. This method required greater engine horsepower, was dangerous to those working around the equipment, and 90% of the frequent breakdowns during harvest involved this type of mechanical power train. W/M's R&D team solved this reliability problem by repositioning the large effective vacuum fan forward and wind tunneling back to the debris separation area for an even and equal suction of debris, eliminating vacuum from the area, and thus the vortex effect that would typically vacuum out the grower's nut crop with the debris. The right-angle gear box was replaced with an H.D. hydraulic pump, and oil motors with speed flow controls to power the elevator and middle dirt chains, as well as, the pick-up belt. The hydraulic drive system eliminated the majority of P.T.O problems because the start up resistance of a hydraulic drive is >50% that of the previously used mechanical drive system. The hydraulic drive system is an enclosed source with constant lubrication of high grade oil, as opposed to a sprocket and chain driven, “open to the elements”, mechanical system being used in an abrasive, dirt infused environment.

Mid-1990's – W/M introduces the 8900X, the industry's first “clean” machine, featuring an elongated intermediate chain which facilitated maximum dirt and debris removal. It was followed immediately by the 8900P, developed specifically to meet the stringent requirements of the Pecan industry, which immediately became the most popular market leading harvester. Requiring 100 h.p. to drive the huge effective vacuum system, the 8900P was designed to hold up under the most severe terrain and debris conditions, and the abuse of an occasional 150 h.p. tractor.

1996 – Gould Paper Company acquires the Ramacher Co., from the FMC Corporation, located in Linden, CA, and shortly thereafter relocated operations to Chico where it was subsequently merged with W/M operations, so that continuing support and replacement parts production for the many Ramacher product owners could continue. We take great pride in continuing to provide Ramacher product owners with a large and available inventory of spare parts, and well trained, highly experienced service personnel. The JD40 Self-Propelled Sweeper's streamlined low profile provides exceptional visibility for an easy, clean sweeping operation under low hanging limbs, and comes with your choice of either auger reel or tine bar sweeper head for positive sweeping action under all types of ground conditions. The JD40's versatile front mounted 3-point hitch supports use of many other tools making it a dependable year-round work horse.

1997 – The spacious JD80 Self-Propelled Sweeper, with Air Cab, is six inches wider than previous models for greater operator comfort, while the wide angle, tinted safety glass provides a panoramic 360 degree clear view. The air conditioned, positive pressure, air filtered re-circulating system, coupled with a sound absorbing insulated interior upholstery, significantly reduces operator stress from all of the most fatiguing conditions... heat, dust, and noise...for prolonged hours of comfortable, efficient, easy operation.

1998 - The Weiss McNair 9800 California Special nut harvester is designed to help California meet all government clean air and water regulations. The long intermediate dirt chain allows dirt to sift through the chain before the suction fan vacuums debris from the crop for less dust and a cleaner harvest. The vacuum system provides for faster, cleaner loads. The 9800 has fewer parts, while gear boxes, drive sprockets, extension shafts, and roller chains have been eliminated to assure minimal downtime. Extra large rear balloon tires provide maximum floatation for reduced compaction.

1999 - W/M introduces the “Magnum” self-propelled harvester, to industry acclaim. Marrying the best features of the Ramacher and Weiss McNair product lines, we significantly increased the speed of pick up and the separation of debris, resulting in an extremely “clean” load of nut product being conveyed to the cart. Optioned to include choice of an all new Air Conditioned Cab, while maintaining exceptional 360 degree visibility, made it a market favorite.

2000 - The 9800P pecan harvester has been improved to more effectively separate the trash from the lighter weight pecans. The higher lift design, along with the longer bar-type intermediate dirt, now allow more time for the trash to settle out and separate from the crop. The double outlet chute option provides dual openings for faster operation during heavy, wet trash conditions for a faster, cleaner, more profitable harvest. With constantly changing cultural practices and orchard contours, around the world, we are challenged daily to move our harvest technologies forward. In the last 15 years, crop yields have risen dramatically; the number of trees per acre has doubled in many areas, row spacing has considerably narrowed; variable berm heights are prevalent; conversion to water saving, drip irrigation systems has occurred; tree limbs are significantly lower; and almond orchards are now planted with every other row bearing a different brand crop that cannot be mixed during harvest. All of these changes require considerable product development flexibility and market adaptability to continue providing our customer partners with “what works”.

2004 – W/M introduces the JD80LP Sweeper, the first Low Profile Cab model in the industry, designed to crouch under even the lowest hanging nut bearing limbs it is the perfect height for high density planted orchards with very low canopies. With a Cab height of only 53 inches, this powerful unit is 13 inches lower than the standard height air cab sweeper. Powered by a John Deere 4045-D 80hp engine and heavy duty Torque hub drive system, it is available with either a low profile tine bar or auger type sweeper head. Standard air conditioning provides driver comfort while the dust free, pressurized cab allows for more efficient operations.

2009 – The Magnum X being introduced in 2009 is powered by a Tier 3 Cummins QSB 130 H.P. turbo charged after cooled diesel engine, meeting all Federal Emissions standards. Incorporating a 4 foot straight thru cleaning chamber with a three step cleaning system, bankout hydraulics, an oversized oil cooler and radiator are all standard. The Magnum X features the Sauer-Danfoss Plus One system monitoring all vital engine functions, as well as, harvester settings. With a rear mounted engine you get better traction on the drive tires and a much lighter picking head that won't sink in soft dirt, the Magnum X builds on a tradition of excellence while improving both functionality and profitability for the grower.

What a change since 1966! New generations of growers and designers, creating new ideas to deal with new more restrictive environmental regulations, new more productive and economical orchard production techniques, and new challenging problems to solve. Our goal at Weiss McNair is to be there with you, where it happens, when it's happening, leading the way. We have been there first with most of the harvest innovations of the last 40 years and we intend to be there for generations to come.