

# country portrait

PHOTO: BRETT DEERING

**THIS IS THE STORY OF A LONG-DISTANCE LOVE AFFAIR,** involving not one, not two, but three men infatuated with one “old girl.”

Longtime readers of this magazine may recall an article from the fall 2008 issue about two British brothers, Steven and Kevin Clarke, who became fascinated with the American wheat harvest after watching a 1976 BBC documentary on the topic. The 50-minute special featured a certain combine—the Massey Ferguson® 760, which, for the boys, became a focal point, an embodiment of much of the “wonder and curiosity” the documentary had instilled in them.

Raised on a farm, the Clarkes themselves grew up to farm and custom harvest with their own fleet of Massey Ferguson combines in North Norfolk, England, about a three-hour drive

northeast of London. One of their favorite things to do with their time off is visit their friend Delbert Joyner near Enid, Okla., and help with his wheat harvest.

For six years now, the Clarkes have kept their own MF760 at Joyner’s farm and recently added another very special model—the “old girl” referred to earlier, which just happened to be the first MF760 to come off the production line in 1971. Found several years ago in the corner of a Kansas wheat field, it had been parked there for 33 years before the Clarkes and Marvin Helland, another American friend and custom harvester from North Dakota, convinced the owner to sell it.

Thought to quite possibly be a terminal case because of how long it sat in the elements unused, the original MF760 is now running again, thanks to its hardy construction and the efforts of its three enthusiastic new owners.

Amazingly, “number one” helped complete the harvest at the Joyner farm this year, and all involved hope she’ll continue working for many years to come. —Richard Banks



Watch the video of this old girl getting her make over at [myFarmLife.com/clarke](http://myFarmLife.com/clarke), or scan the code with your phone.



## She's Number One

From left Kevin and Steven Clarke, Marvin Helland and host Delbert Joyner