

When Don Laing decided to retire from the farm machinery business, he wanted the dispersal conducted quickly and fairly.

The easiest decision Don made: to sell his property and equipment at an unreserved Ritchie Bros. auction.

The name Don Laing is as familiar to western Canadian farmers as it is to travelers between Edmonton and Calgary. The former farmer started Don Laing Tractor & Used Parts Ranch in Ponoka – on Alberta’s busiest highway – with his wife Inger and two sons in the late 1970s. “I always had a love of machinery,” he says. Over the years their business grew, attracting customers from across the western provinces and employing 28 people at one time.

“We worked hard,” says Don. “Our whole family put in long hours for years. We enjoyed a good run, but we were tired. After 30 years, we decided it was time to retire.”

Decades of success had enabled Don Laing Tractor to accumulate millions of dollars in assets: not only farming equipment and shop inventory, but also the company’s high-profile 45-acre commercial/industrial property.

“We never even entertained trying to sell the property through a real estate agent, or to sell down the inventory piecemeal,” says Don. “The first thing we decided was to sell by unreserved auction. We wanted everything cleaned up and done with in two or three days.”

Don contacted Ritchie Bros. “When it comes to selling by auction, I would only go unreserved, and the king of the unreserved auction is Ritchie Bros.,” he says. “They have the greatest access to the buying public, so you’re going to get more money for your equipment or property than you possibly could anywhere else. With an unreserved auction, you get the confidence of potential buyers. They know that everything will be sold, no matter what the price is.”

Ritchie Bros. conducted the retirement dispersal in two phases. Thousands of farming equipment items, forklifts, trucks, trailers and inventoried equipment parts were sold during a two-day unreserved auction at the Don Laing Tractor property in Ponoka, attracting more than 2,000 bidders from all over North America. The property itself was sold during an unreserved auction at the Ritchie Bros. Edmonton site.



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“We were very happy with the results of both auctions,” Don says. But there were other benefits, including the speed and ease of the dispersal. “It was very emotional after I’d decided to sell, because that was the end,” says Don. “But after we signed with Ritchie Bros. and everything was taken care of, a ton of weight was lifted off my shoulders. It was a relief.”

Retired life turned out to be a little too quiet for the Laings, so they soon embarked on a new business venture: Don Laing Trailers. “We’re thoroughly enjoying ourselves,” laughs Don.