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## Tractor "Races" Fun Way To Raise Funds

If you're looking for a fun way to raise funds for a charity or local organization, take a look at these antique tractor races organized by Jim Phelps, Preston, Md.

"They help draw and hold a crowd," says Phelps, who has set up events for different local groups.

At the events, old tractor owners can compete in four different races. All are held on the same track, usually a straight raceway about 60 ft. long and 20 ft. wide.

The first event is the barrel roll. "Drivers must roll an empty 50-gal. plastic drum from start to finish, touching the barrel with only their front tires. If any metal part of the tractor touches the barrel, they're out of the race," Phelps says. Contestants must also keep their barrels within the bounds of the track or be disqualified.

"It's not as easy to do as it sounds. The plastic drums are light, so they bounce and roll if they're hit too hard and they're hard to keep rolling straight. It's easier to do with a narrow front end. The winner is the driver with the best time," Phelps says.

The second race requires an entirely different set of senses. "In this one, the drivers cross the same course blindfolded. The one who stops his tractor closest to the finish line without going over it wins," he explains. While this may sound dangerous, time is not counted, so it's not done at full throttle. This allows someone to walk along

side each driver to tell them if they're about to stray out of bounds. Phelps says they're not allowed to give contestants hints about the proximity of the finish line, though. Drivers must rely on their own sense of speed and elapsed time.

"Some stop after going only a few feet. Others go over the line. At the Preston Volunteer Fire Company event in April, the winner stopped just 6 ft. short of the line," Phelps says.

Time is important in the next event - and the more of it, the better. Called the slow race, two tractors at a time cross the course, with the winner being the slower of the two to cross the 60-ft. course. Once the driver begins, he's not allowed to touch either the clutch or the brake. "If your tractor engine stalls, you're out," Phelps says. "Some people try to slow down by using their chokes, but that's risky because too much choke can kill the engine."

In the slow race, the winner of each two-tractor heat pulls around to race again until all others have been eliminated.

The final event, and perhaps the most difficult, is the egg race. In this one, contestants cover the course carrying an egg on a plastic spoon clenched in their teeth. "We run this one two tractors at a time. If both drivers drop their eggs, they're allowed to do it over," Phelps says. "If they both cross the finish line carrying their eggs, the one



In another event, drivers cross the same course blindfolded. The one who stops his tractor closest to the finish line without going over it wins.

with the fastest time wins."

He says this race requires a strong jaw and slow, deliberate movements in addition to a smooth riding tractor. Hitting a bump can turn the flexible plastic spoon into a catapult.

"We've always used raw eggs for this one, but boiled eggs would work, too. We've had some complaints from people who don't like having to clean the egg off their tractors."

The egg race winner is the one who crosses the line in the shortest time without losing his egg.

"We give out trophies to the winners, with local businesses usually sponsoring them.

There are no cash prizes, though. It's all for fun and entertainment and to help draw a crowd."

Phelps has been participating and helping organize old tractor races for several years and would be happy to advise anyone looking to do the same. "They're great family fun. We often have two or three generations of the same family competing with each other in these events," he says.

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## Tractor Gathering Celebrates 100-Year IH Anniversary

It has been 100 years since competitors Cyrus McCormick, Charles Deering, and three smaller reaper manufacturers joined forces to create the International Harvester Company.

A group of Nebraska IH collectors decided to celebrate the anniversary by getting 100 Farmall M's together at their annual spring plowing day in early April.

Despite a valiant effort and publicity in some national farm tractor collectors magazines, Howard Raymond of the Heart of the Platte Collectors Association says they came up several tractors short of the mark. There were more than 100 IH tractors but only 40 to 50 were M's. "We had M's from central Kansas and Colorado, and one man

brought his tractor more than 500 miles from Missouri in order to have it here," he says. And while they didn't make the goal, Raymond says no one was too disappointed. "There were plenty of Farmalls around that day."

Another group of Nebraska collectors plans to try again later this year. Their goal, says organizer Larry Miller, is to have 100 Farmalls - not just M's - all plowing at once.

The date and place for the plow day has yet to be set. It's usually in July following wheat harvest but due to moisture problems with the wheat crop, they may end up rescheduling for after row crop harvest later in the year.

Says Miller, "We'd like to be able to have



Last year a group of Nebraska IH collectors decided to celebrate the 100-year anniversary of IH by getting 100 Farmall M's together at their annual spring plowing day. They fell short of their goal, but still had a great time.

100 Farmalls all together and get an aerial photo of them. We think it's a great way to pay tribute to the founders of the International Harvester Company."

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