



A new world record for the largest draft horse hitch was set recently when 46 Percheron draft horses were hitched together on Neil Dimmock's farm near Edmonton, Alberta.

Grandpa's Midway Keeps Grandkids Entertained

Entertaining 38 grandchildren takes some doing, but when they come to visit John Plett, he's ready for them. His on-farm Midway features a two-way cable ride, a merry-go-round, and a Ferris wheel.

He credits a past FARM SHOW article for the idea of building a cable-trolley ride, although he made some important changes in the original design.

"I wanted one that would go in both directions so I started looking for a way to do it," says Plett.

His solution was to build a 28-ft. tall pole from 3 1/2-in. pipe at one end of the trolley. A 1/2-in. dia. cable runs from there to the top of a second pole 225 ft. away that is 9 ft. lower. At the 28-ft. tower, the cable is fastened to a roller that Plett made out of bearings and 6-in. pipe with flat plates to hold it in place against the pole. A single bolt holds the roller together.

The rider gets on the trolley car at ground level at the 28-ft. pole. The car and cable are lifted to the top of the pole by a 1/4-in. cable powered by an electric winch. A brake on the trolley holds it in place until it reaches the top of the pole. At that point, the passenger releases the brake, and the trolley runs

down the cable to the 9-ft. pole.

When the trolley reaches the other end, the operator at the 28-ft. pole releases a brake on the winch, dropping the end of the cable down to about 9 ft. off the ground. Then the trolley runs "downhill" back to its starting point.

Aside from the roller, the toughest aspect to designing the trolley cable ride was getting the right speed on the winch lift mechanism. He had to try several combinations of pulleys and brakes to get the right speed.

"The winch motor was too slow by itself," explains Plett. His solution was to add a second shaft and a couple of pulleys.

The winch's 1 hp motor runs a 1 1/2-in. pulley with a belt to a 12-in. pulley on an intermediate shaft. A 3-in. pulley on the other end of the shaft drives a 12-in. pulley on the winch.

"A tightener on the second belt engages the winch and lifts the car and cable to the top of the pole," says Plett. "When the tightener is released, the roller comes down fast."

Plett's 2-seat Ferris wheel was built from parts off an Owatonna swather. His merry-go-round is a platform mounted on a truck wheel hub.

Safety comes first for this grandfather.



Plett's on-farm midway features this two-way cable ride, with a 28-ft. tall pole (right) at one end of trolley. Rider gets on trolley car at ground level.



Both the Ferris wheel and the trolley seats have a safety bar to keep kids of all ages from falling off.

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Old Tractor's "Roots" Lead To Restoration

In 1947, Sam Root and his son Sam Jr. decided they needed a tractor to mow hay on their small farm near Pleasant Hill, Missouri, so they bought a used 1939 John Deere H.

"I can't remember for sure, but I think we paid \$800 for it and a No. 5 mowing machine," Root says. "It had rubber tires, but no hydraulics or electric starter. It had to be hand cranked and it was always difficult to start."

Despite its faults, the old H was the only tractor Sam Jr. had for nearly two decades.

He and his son Sam III continued to use the H for raking hay and hauling logs until 1979 or 1980. Then, an untimely freeze and a radiator full of water teamed up against the old H, cracked the head, and forced it out of use.

"A couple of years later, I asked my son to take it apart to see if it could be fixed," the elder Root says. "He decided it couldn't, and never put it back together."

Now fast forward to 2002. Sam Root III's son Sam IV needed a project for his mechanics class in high school. He mentioned the old tractor to John Ferguson, the vo-ag instructor and FFA advisor, who said to bring it in.

"The tractor had never been reassembled, so they carried it in pieces, most of them in baskets," Ferguson says.

Sam Jr. says the local Deere dealer was able to locate many new parts for the restoration, and Sam III located an antique tractor parts

dealer near St. Joseph, Missouri, who had most of the rest.

When the school year ended and Sam IV graduated, progress had been made, but the H was still a basket case. While Sam IV joined his father and grandfather on the farm, a friend, Brent Barker, who was a year younger, took over the tractor restoration project, and several other students in the mechanics class pitched in, too. By the end of the 2002-2003 school year, the tractor was finished.

Ferguson has entered it in the Johnson County Fair and the Missouri State Fair FFA tractor restoration competitions where it'll go up against other similar projects.

Sam Root III says they're all glad to have the old tractor back together and running. They now consider it a family heirloom, having been used by four generations of Sam Roots. "We'll continue taking it to tractor shows and fairs," he says. "So it'll get used, even if we don't put it back to work on the farm."

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Many people helped to bring the core of this old tractor back to "like-new" condition.



Restored tractor is a family heirloom used by four generations of the Root family.

