



Barrel rolling requires contestants to push a barrel down a 75-ft. course – no loader bucket allowed.



Dave and Liz Capen host the special event on about 16 acres of their Vermont farm. One of the games is this tractor “Slow Race.”

Tractor Olympics Draws A Crowd

If your local tractor pulling competition needs an event or two to spice it up, you might want to check out the Tractor Olympics competition held for the past three years in Bennington, Vt.

Dave and Liz Capen host the event (to be held Sept. 22, 2012) on about 16 acres of their farm, with the help of volunteer friends and family.

“Our antique tractor club used to have games, but they went to just pulling,” says Liz Capen, noting that members said they missed the games.

The Capens decided to create their special event.

“Each event is based on replicating similar maneuvers a farmer has to do on the farm,” she says.

For example, “Crack-the-Egg” involves backing the tractor’s drawbar into a raw egg – just enough to crack it but not break the yolk.

Another dexterity skill involves rolling a barrel ahead of the tractor down a 75-ft. course – no bucket allowed. “Wagon Backin” is the most difficult – pushing a four-wheel wagon backward 30 ft.

“Chicken and Dunkin” is the only team event. Bungee cords with a rubber chicken in the middle are secured to the drawbar of side-by-side tractors. Drivers keep the cords taut until they get to a pot, then work together to loosen the cords enough to drop the chicken in the pot.

“That and the ‘Balloon Pop’ are the most

popular events,” Capen says. It’s not as easy as it sounds to pop balloons with tractor tires and is a definite test of knowing where your tires are.

Finally, a “Slow Race” and “Stone Boat Pull” round out the Olympic events.

Capen developed a point system that includes 10 points just for trying, plus points for time and accuracy depending on the event. Donated and handmade trophies are given to winners.

As many as 40 tractor drivers have competed in events. Competitors come from Vermont, Massachusetts and New York. Some are farmers while others are weekend hobby farmers wanting to test their skills. Though the Capens are partial to “green”, tractors come in all colors and all ages.

The 100 or so who come to watch range from kids to 90-plus year olds. Besides watching the games, they enjoy the fellowship of a noon potluck.

Capen says she will share information about the games and her point system with anyone interested in doing something similar.

“Get as much help as possible,” Dave suggests. “You need a good team with judges and scorekeepers. Keep the viewing area a safe distance away and think about safety.” The Capens stretch bright tape to keep the competitors in specific areas.

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A game called “Crack-the-Egg” involves backing the tractor’s drawbar into a raw egg without breaking the yolk.



“Balloon Pop” requires operators to pop balloons with tractor tires. It isn’t as easy as it sounds and is a definite test of knowing where your tires are.



As many as 40 tractor drivers competed in events such as the “Stone Boat Pull”.



“Wagon Backin” may be the most difficult event – pushing a 4-wheel wagon backward for 30 ft.