

*Micro-mini tractor pulls gain in popularity*

# Toy tractors aren't just for kids

By JOANNE SPAHR SCHOENECK -- The crowd waits in quiet anticipation, keeping their eyes on the track. In the pits, contestants mill around their tractors, adjusting the front and rear weights and checking tires as they prepare for the next class to begin.

Suddenly, the scream of an engine slices through the air and all eyes turn to the tractor approaching the starting line. Sending up a cloud of smoke, it struggles against the formidable sled opponent to its rear, with its tires clawing for the track ahead.

In a short time the event is over, and the official runs to check the distance. The pull measures 14 feet, and with a smile the driver picks up his tractor and heads for his work area to change weights for the next class.

This sport is called micro-mini tractor pulling, and instead of dealing with huge diesel engines, thousands of pounds of machinery, and the same amount of in-

vestment, it involves "toy" tractors, model airplane engines, and a little over \$100 initial investment.

"I have to admit it hooks you," said one contestant from Delaware who competed in a pull held recently in Lancaster County, "You can get a lot more than \$100 wrapped up in it once you get started."

But, getting started is the key. All it takes is a 1/16th scale farm tractor model which has been altered to mount a model airplane engine and a gear reduction mechanism between the miniature tractor's rear wheels.

The minipull, which is patterned after large scale tractor pulls, was born in Missouri with competitive pulling beginning there about three years ago. The sport has since caught on around the country.

Taking place on a 16 by 2 foot plywood track, the object of each sport is to pull the miniature weight transfer sled the furthest distance in the allotted time



Steering in a micro-mini tractor pull is done by touching only the front side of the tractor with a

pencil or a flat stick held in a vertical position.



Unlike full-size tractor pulls, weighing in during micro-mini competition is done with a baby scales.

period — about 18 seconds. The ultimate is a full pull, which is 15 feet.

To keep the sport competitive, engines can be no larger than .051 cubic inches with of these power plants winding out to 20,000 rpm. In the hot rod division, the motor may not exceed .20" total displacement.

By changing gears and adding wheel and front-end weights, a puller can use one

tractor to compete in the three, four, and five pound weight classes. The six pound class is optional.

Actually, while the large pulls are louder and visually more impressive, the minipulls are more powerful — pound for pound — than the real McCoy's.

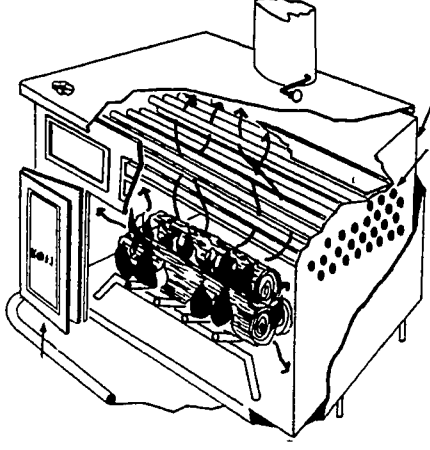
"These engines pull anywhere from eight to 10 times their weight," said a puller from the Blue Hen

Micro Mini Pullers club, recently. This is in comparison to full-size rigs which pull on about a one-to-one ratio.

To guide these miniatures, each contestant is allowed to use a pencil or a flat stick held in the vertical position. Any pushing, battering, or pulling of the tractor causes the puller to be disqualified. The purpose is to guide the

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