

Huge Tractor Show Attracts Hundreds

The pulsating throb of farming's golden "hay-day" thundered once again through the crisp winter air of Lebanon Valley last Saturday.

The largest two-cylinder vintage tractor sale ever held in the East echoed sounds of farming's mechanized past across the Lebanon Fairgrounds.

Sitting in the mobile auction booth and explaining the tractors was Lloyd J. Wenger, Myerstown.

"We spent years finding and amassing such a collection and due to their scarcity and growing popularity there may never again be such a large number in the same place at one time," he said.

His interest in antique tractors also extends to a collection of kids pedal tractors and other agricultural memorabilia of museum size and quality.

But on Saturday the spotlight centered on the large collection of farm tractors that dated as far back as nearly a half century.

The sale, attractive enough to keep almost 700 registered bidders and many more onlookers out all day in single-digit wind chills, displayed proof of the popularity of these machines with hearts and skeletons of pure iron rather than plastic and alloys.

Most of the 120-odd tractors wore the familiar green and yellow mantle over two-cylinder engines of the only major agriculture machinery manufacturer without a name change — John Deere.

Soon, there was a field full of machines hollering their twin

lungs out. Besides the Deeres was a scattering of other vintage models, such as red-bellied 8N Fords, deep green Olivers and Minneapolis Molines, with almost as much iron as a small battleship in their blocks.

The Johnny Pop-Ups which ranged from a massive tank-sized "R" to a garden vanity "L" were the center of attention.

Their chugging throbs, bobbing frontends and quivering fenders brought chills up and down the spines of both farmers who used them and collectors who wished they had.

The vibrant action of the tractors was reflected in the spirited bidding they generated.

Queen of the sale at \$9,700 was a little restored John Deere 330 utility whose owner can now be numbered among a select group of a few hundred. It went to Charlotte, NC.

The collecting value of the rare 330 was exemplified by the protective plastic shielding wrapped around the housing that contained the serial plate. Many an auction company has been hit in recent years by people who chisel off the plates for possible later counterfeit use.

Nearby a giant cousin — a John Deere 60 Hi-Crop, a conventional tractor on stilts — resembled a crouching grasshopper. It brought \$9,000 and headed for Iowa.

A more squat and stubby John Deere 80 stopped at \$7,000. It even sported a factory cab — a rarity back in the mid-'50s when farmers mostly drove tractors in



Antique tractors receive a thorough examination prior to the start of the big two-cylinder sale at Lebanon Fairgrounds last Saturday.

the open air year-round and not in climate-controlled cocoons where they can't feel, smell, or hear the results of their labor. The 80 also went to North Carolina.

There were tractors with original hour meters still in the hundreds — the farm equivalent of a

car driven by a little old grandmother only on Sunday afternoon.

A 2000 Ford with 105 hours went south and may spend the rest of its days in the Florida sunshine.

The Saturday sale was preceded Friday night by a reception and open house at the Wengers tractor

parts facility along Route 501 south of Myerstown.

The sale-goers were shown the staggering variety and number of tractor parts warehoused to a height of 18 feet across an area the size of a football field.

Bus Trip To Beef Expo

LEESPORT (Berks Co.) — A bus trip to the 1992 Beef Expo in State College will leave at 7 a.m. from Esther's Restaurant, near Fredericksburg, on March 26.

The cost of the bus trip is \$30, which includes bus fee plus registration, milk and donuts, lunch, and a copy of the proceedings.

The bus will leave the restaurant

at 7 a.m. and leave Penn State at 4 p.m. to arrive home at 6:30 p.m. For registration information, contact the sponsors, the Berks County/Southeast Pennsylvania Cattle-men's Association, attn: Clyde Myers, Berks Co. Cooperative Extension, P.O. Box 520, Leesport, PA 19533-0520, or call (215) 378-1327.

The Beef Expo will cover vari-

ous topics, including the economics of preventive health program for the cattle herd, the effect of environment on immune status and vaccine performance, various herd vaccination programs, quality assurance and injection site carcass damage, implications of off-label use of drugs in cattle, and other topics.

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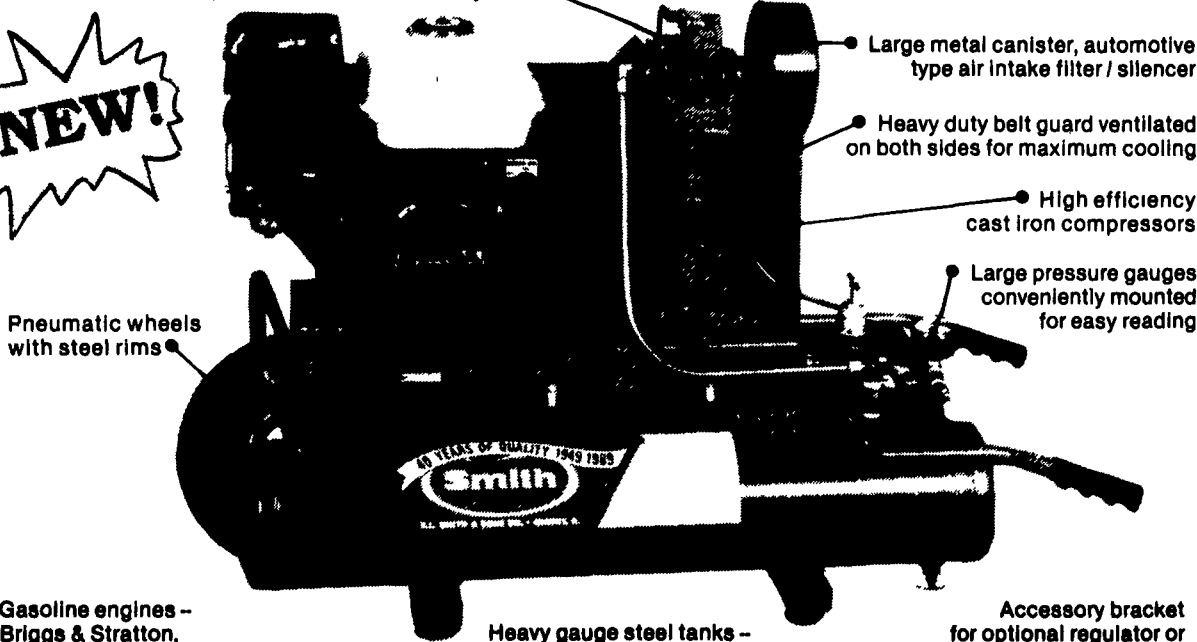
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