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NEWS RELEASE

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## Mature, mechanical muscle: Vintage tractors roar to life

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CALGARY – Richard Ross’s approach to collecting, restoring, and showing vintage tractors? Call it the Forrest Gump method.

“I’ve had a couple of basket cases. Sometimes, it’s like buying a pig in a poke, because you don’t really know what you’ve got,” said the retired mechanic from Olds, Alta., on Sunday evening. “But I tend to lean towards something that’s not going to cost me an arm and a leg to fix up.”

Ross, who estimates he’s collected close to 30 vintage tractors on his quarter-section spread near Olds, earned the biggest victory of his pulling career on Sunday evening during the Calgary Stampede’s 22<sup>nd</sup> annual Vintage Tractor Pull and Vintage Tractor Show & Shine. Ross and his 1950 Allis Chalmers WD, with its distinctive orange color scheme, won the Featherweight Division – for mechanical beasts tipping the scales at anywhere from 1,000 to 3,999 pounds – by pulling a weight sled a total of 232 feet, seven inches through a two-run total under the Big Top on Saturday and Sunday.

These days, Ross dusts off various specimens from his motor pool for about 10 tractor pulls a year throughout central Alberta.

“About six or seven years ago, I bought my uncle’s Farmall M, and things progressed from there. I just kind of got the bug,” he said. “And I don’t like having fancy paint jobs, either, because kids just love to climb these things, and I never want to say no.”

The Stampede’s Vintage Tractor Pull and Vintage Show & Shine, an invitational event, saw 36 enthusiasts from across Southern Alberta congregate under the Big Top during the Stampede’s Centennial year and show off the mechanical muscle of their vintage machines, built in 1960 or earlier, in six weight divisions.

The annual Vintage Tractor Show & Shine portion of the event, held in the Big Top infield on Saturday afternoon, gave owners a chance to brag about their pride and joy, with Oliver’s, McCormicks, International Harvesters, Minneapolis Molines, John Deeres, and more – ranging in horsepower from 20 all the way up to 80 – displayed in all their splendor.

The Vintage Tractor Show & Shine champion receives a Stampede buckle for all the spit, polish, and elbow grease applied for an appreciative Stampede crowd – and this year it was Cal Vance of Medicine Hat, Alta., and his 1947 John Deere AR.

Ross, by the way, authored a worst-to-first story on Sunday – although it was behind the wheel of different vintage tractors.

“Last summer, I was dead last. And the year before, I was close to the tail end of my class,” he said with a sportsmanlike chuckle. “But somebody’s got to be last, right?”

Calgary Exhibition and Stampede Limited

Box 1060, Station M, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2P 2K8 1.800.661.1260 T 403.261.0101 F 403.265.7197 [www.calgarystampede.com](http://www.calgarystampede.com)



Other Vintage Tractor Pull champions crowned Sunday night were as follows: Dan Verville of Dalemead, Alta., whose 1953 John Deere 50 pulled a total of 263 feet, three inches feet over two runs in Class 1 (4,000 to 4,999 pounds); Don Okell of Duchess, Alta., with a 1949 John Deere D that pulled a total of 196 feet, seven inches in Class 2 (5,000 to 5,999 pounds); Don Smith of Carstairs, Alta., whose 1955 Oliver 88 managed 248 feet, six inches in Class 3 (6,000 to 6,999 pounds); Keith Weigum of Three Hills, Alta., with an aggregate total of 363 feet, three inches in his 1949 John Deere R in Class 4 (7,000 to 8,499 pounds); and Jim Page of Didsbury, Alta., with 363 feet, one inch in total behind the wheel of his 1955 John Deere 80 in Class 5 (8,500 to 9,999 pounds).

The Stampede will be webcasting all events being held in the Scotiabank Saddledome and the Big Top this year. Visit <http://ag.calgarystampede.com/saddledome-ustream> for live streaming of Saddledome action, and <http://ag.calgarystampede.com/big-top-ustream> for events under the Big Top.

Following the 2012 Stampede, groundbreaking will begin on the Agrium Western Event Centre, the largest project in Stampede history. For details and artistic renderings of this magnificent 150,000-square-foot agriculture showcase and competition venue, scheduled for completion in 2014, visit <http://corporate.calgarystampede.com/about/park-development/agrium-western-event-centre/>

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**For more information, please contact:**

Megan Gauley  
Ag Media Committee Chair  
**C** 587.226.6766  
**T** 403.232.9087

Todd Kimberley  
Agriculture Media Writer  
**C** 403.815.2752  
**F** 403.262.3067

Navada Phipps  
Agriculture Program Coordinator  
**T** 403.261.0336  
**F** 403.262.3067

**E** [agmedia@calgarystampede.com](mailto:agmedia@calgarystampede.com)

**E** [tkimberley@calgarystampede.com](mailto:tkimberley@calgarystampede.com)

**E** [nphipps@calgarystampede.com](mailto:nphipps@calgarystampede.com)

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The Calgary Stampede is a volunteer-supported, not-for-profit community organization that preserves and promotes western heritage and values. The Stampede contributes to the quality of life in Calgary and southern Alberta through its world-renowned 10-day Stampede, year-round facilities, western events and several youth and agriculture programs. All revenue is reinvested into Calgary Stampede programs and facilities. For more about the Stampede, visit [www.calgarystampede.com](http://www.calgarystampede.com).