

Proposed Garden Tractor Plowing Rules
(First draft – Jim Peternell)
(Amended March 2011)

Eligibility for Participation

1. All contestants must be a member of the USAPO and may also plow in any one of the other four large tractor plowing contests .
2. The top three competitors from the previous national contest may return to that contest to defend their title.
3. In a state that holds an elimination contest, three contestants may represent the state in that contest.
4. If no state contest is held, only one competitor may represent the state in that contest.
5. No state may have more than four contestants in any one contest; it is the responsibility of each state to determine its slate of competitors.

Garden Tractor Classes: Stock and Modified

Stock Class

1. All stock factory manufactured garden tractors equipped with 16” rims or smaller will be allowed.
2. No modifications to 3 point or sleeve type hitches are allowed.
3. Only factory-equipped coulters, and gauge wheels will be allowed on a factory built 8”, 10”, 12” or 14” single bottom plow. No coverboards or jointers are allowed.
4. Factory stock type tractor weights are allowed.
5. Competitors must be able to prove authenticity of plow and tractor by operators manual/parts manual.

Modified Class

Any other garden tractor with factory 16” rim size or smaller and any homemade plow or factory modified one or two bottom plow with a frame size of 8”, 10”, 12” or 14” is allowed. Coverboards and jointers are allowed.

Plot Size

1. 20 feet wide and 100 feet long.
2. Depth of 4 to 6 inches.
3. Depth may be changed by the USAPO or host organization.

Plot Preparation

The USAPO and host organization will assess field conditions prior to practice and the contest to determine if fields need to be mowed and raked off.

Sighting and Setting out

1. Three sighting poles only may be used and must be within your plot and turn strip (one sighting pole may be repositioned in the center of the plot); plot number markers, foot marks, stones or other guides are not allowed.

2. Competitors can have assistance in placing and removing sighting poles only, no other assistance is allowed during the match.

Method of Plowing

1. The crown will be created by plowing six rounds with a one bottom plow or three rounds with a two bottom plow.

2. The competitor will then throw out to the plot with the next higher number. The first pass will not be judged to allow for corrections of straightness and depth. However, all land must be plowed and the neighbors plot must not be run on or damaged except in extreme cases.

3. All land plowed between the crown and the neighbors plot will be considered the finish.

4. The final furrow slice must be turned towards the competitors own crown.

5. Only one tractor and one plow wheel tread will be allowed at the finish.

6. Idle runs to the opposite end are allowed but must be made on the headland and not across the plot.

7. Both classes are expected to plow a finishing furrow.

Time for plowing

Contestants will be allowed 75 minutes to complete a plot.

Garden Tractor Stock and Modified Scoring

Crown – 30 points

The crown should be straight and uniform from end to end. The furrow slices should be placed firmly together and all furrow slices should exhibit the same conformation. The center furrow slices should not be ridged unnecessarily high, there should be a slight depression between them, and stubble and weeds should not be showing through. The opening furrow should be centered on the plot stake.

Furrow Straightness – 40 points

All furrows should be straight from end to end and will be judged across the entire plot.

Furrow Conformation – 30 points

All furrow slices should be of uniform width and depth. No pairing of bottoms should be visible. The furrow bottom should be clean and the furrow wall should not be crumbled.

Quality of Tilled Surface – 30 points

The tilled surface should be uniform with prominent depressions between furrow slices to create a good seedbed. The furrow slices should be turned properly to prevent lumps, clods or holes that would disrupt good seed placement.

Trash Coverage – 20 points

Grass or stubble should be properly cut off and turned under to promote good organic matter breakdown and weed control.

Land Ends – 20 points

Land ends should be in a straight line with the front bottom entering and the rear bottom exiting at the scratch furrow. The plow should reach operating depth quickly.

Finish – 30 points

The closing furrow slices should be straight, uniform and parallel to the rest of the plot with the final furrow slice only slightly smaller than the rest of the furrow slices. The finish should be narrow, shallow and clean. All stubble and weeds should be cut free and turned under for good weed control.

Penalties and Deductions

1. Contestants will be penalized five points for every minute or part minute over on the general plowing.
2. Ten points will be deducted if the finish is laid the wrong way.
3. Contestants may be penalized up to ten points for plowing at the improper depth.
4. Contestants may be penalized up to ten points for leaving extra wheel marks in the prospective seedbed.
5. Penalties of 1 to 20 points will be assessed by the USAPO for any of the following:
 - a. Manipulation of the furrows by hand, foot or other instrument;
 - b. Rolling the plot, opening scratch, butts, and ins and outs with the tractor wheels except in the normal course of plowing;
 - c. Manipulation of the plowed ground by unauthorized equipment on the plow,
 - d. Removing a plow body;
 - e. Use of unauthorized technologies such as GPS, laser beams, or other electronic or computerized devices;
 - f. Improper use of sighting poles or more than three sighting poles;
 - g. Competitors must dismount from the tractor on to unplowed land when possible.
6. Other penalties may be assessed by the USAPO as needed.