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A Lil' Bit of Grease Never Hurt Anybody

Getting grease built up under their nails to having oil stains all over their clothes never stopped these young people from doing what they do! They do it all, from disassembling the transmission to rebuilding the engine; they call this, *Tractor Restoration*.

Ten tractor restoration teams from across the state use the State Fair of Texas as the jump-start for the upcoming year. Some of these teams use this competition as a “warm-up” to open their eyes to what they have in store for them in two weeks at the Chevron Delo National Tractor Restoration Competition in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Members of the Decatur FFA Chapter and the El Campo FFA Chapter both are finalists of the national competition- with two tractors each! All four of these tractors competed here at the State Fair this year.

Restoring a 1964 3020 John Deere Hi-crop Powershift Diesel, Will Gregg, Colton White, Brandon Myers and Philip Grundy anticipate the trip to Indy; however, anxious at the same time. They feel like the judges will expect more from them just by the school they represent. Also, never placing lower than third at the national level and having the champion teams from the 2003 competition with eight boys and the 2007 competition with four girls, puts a massive amount of pressure on these 17-year-old boys.

“I got interested in restoring tractors after I heard about the all-girls team which symbolizes our main motivation,” Myers said.

Cody Gangl and Will Chappell restored a 1964 830 Case Hi-crop. This tractor draws a lot of attention for being such a rare tractor. They have won every major show so far that they have competed, with this tractor. They won San Antonio Livestock Show & Rodeo, Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo and the San Angelo Show. These young men have restored numerous other tractors prior to this one.

“It’s our passion,” they said. “We are looking forward to competing at Nationals, but we aren’t ready for leaving town.”

Neither team has competed at the State Fair of Texas Tractor Restoration contest before, so they hope to be able to win and add this to their winning streaks.

Other tractor restoration projects that are competing at the 2009 SFT are as follows: 1943 Farmall H, Jacksboro FFA; 1959 Ford 641, Decatur FFA; 1947 Massey Harris Row-crop 30, Mabank FFA; 1953 Farmall Super AV, Groesbeck FFA; 1942 John Deere Model H, Garland FFA; 1941 John Deere Model A, El Campo FFA; 1953 Farmall Super C, Comal County 4-H.

“The quality of work that these 4-H and FFA members have done is going to make the level of competition much greater,” one of the superintendents’ of the Ag Mechanics and Tractor Restoration Show.

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