

A field full of foragers

Ireland's Dunmore & District Vintage Club set a world record for the most tractors and classic single-chop forage harvesters working simultaneously in the same field near Dunmore in Co. Galway on 31 July. John Kearney reports; pictures by Noel Murphy.

SINGLE-CHOP forage harvesters were once a common sight in Irish silage fields, but advances in harvesting techniques mean they've all but disappeared. The Irish August Bank Holiday weekend, however, saw the Dunmore & District Vintage Club turn back the clock as it brought 26 tractors and single-chop forager harvesters together for a record attempt with a difference.

After the huge success of the Co. Galway club's first show last year, the organisers were keen to put together an even bigger and more entertaining event this time. As well as putting on a show of static machines, the club also staged a world record attempt for the most single-chop forage harvesters working in one field at the same time.

This type of record had not been tried on this scale in Ireland before, but the attempt ran like clockwork on the day. Tractors, harvesters and trailers were all parked up in an adjacent field, and shortly before 3pm the drivers started their engines and checked that everything was working before making their way to the designated harvesting area.

James Keohane from Ballinhassig in Co. Cork led the way with his 1973 Ford 5000 and Taarup harvester, which proceeded to side-load a trailer pulled behind a 1974 Ford 4000 owned by P.J. Savage from Glounthane in Cork. This combination was the exception on the day as the remaining 25 tractors were all pulling silage trailers behind the harvesters.

One by one, every tractor and forager began harvesting until Adrian Boland from Co. Sligo finally

entered work with his 1977 MF 165 and a single-chop JF. With the final combination at work, the stopwatch was started.

The sight was truly spectacular, with the smell of freshly cut grass, diesel fumes and hot paint combined with the sound of 26 single-chop harvesters at work making this a truly unique experience for everyone in attendance.

Massey Ferguson tractors are very popular in the West of Ireland and were well represented on the day. Declan Carey from Co. Clare, in particular, stood out with his unusual four-wheel drive MF 185 with Four-Wheel Traction axle providing the power for a Taarup forage harvester.

The oldest tractor on the day had to be Colm Higgins' 1956 Fordson Major. Colm's tractor was in good original condition and looked very authentic hitched to his JF forager and trailer.

One Taarup forager that had no fear of being underpowered was the machine being pulled behind a 95hp two-wheel drive 1979 Fendt Favorit 610LS owned by Kieran Naughton from Co. Mayo. Kieran's classic Fendt had more than enough horses at the PTO to drive the single-chop harvester.

When the record attempt ended, the organisers were able to confirm that 26 tractors and single-chop foragers had been cutting silage simultaneously for 10 minutes and 12 seconds. As such, the Dunmore & District Vintage Club is now looking forward to receiving official confirmation of this record feat and a certificate from the Guinness World Records.

An event that took a year to organise was over in a matter of minutes, but the whole day was a credit to the entire club. Those who were lucky enough to witness and participate in this unusual record-breaking forage harvesting event will undoubtedly remember it for a very long time. 🚜

Tractors and single-chop forage harvesters, some 26 in all, followed one another around the field during the 10-minute duration of the record attempt at Dunmore in Co. Galway. With one exception, all trailers were rear-loaded.



1: Jimmy Cotter travelled all the way from Co. Waterford with his 1969 John Deere 2120 tractor and JF Universal JH145 single-chop harvester.

2: One of only 30 IH 966s sold in the UK and Ireland in the early 1970s, this very original example belongs to classic fan Martin O'Sullivan from Co. Cork.

3: Declan Carey's MF 185 with Four-Wheel Traction axle and Taarup Handy harvester made a well-matched combination. Declan travelled up from Co. Clare for the event.

4: With his 1979 Fendt 610LS pushing out around 85hp at the PTO, Kieran Naughton from Co. Mayo was never going to be short of power for his Taarup Handy harvester.

5: Deutz tractors are quite common in Co. Galway, but it was still great to see this classic D6806 model taking part in the record attempt. It dates from 1977 and belongs to local man Paul Meehan.

6: This unusual Gyro 54in single chop forage harvester and its power source, a 1979 Ford 7600, were entered by James Culliney from Co. Mayo.



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