!--IMAGE images/08.30.12/tractor078crop.jpg IMAGE-->

By Russ Pankonin
The Imperial Republican

Dan Rowley of Imperial made his way into the Guiness Book of World Records Saturday. He joined more than 1,100 classic tractor owners who set a record for the world's largest parade of classic tractors.

The event was held as part of the opening weekend activities of the Nebraska State Fair in Grand Island.

A total of 1,139 tractors, representing 36 different states, took part in the parade, eclipsing the old record of 966 tractors.

Rowley drove his 1960 Oliver 770 in the parade. He just bought the tractor two months ago from Kurt and Kerry Bernhart.

The parade was held on the Fonner Park horse racing track. For the record to be official, each tractor had to make two and a half laps, Rowley said.

The track was filled with tractors in two rows of three, on each side of the track. After making a loop around the track, tractors drove out of the track while other tractors were coming on.

A large staging area held rows of tractors east of the track until it was their turn to come back on to the track.

The first lap was made at one mph while the second lap was made at two mph.

The event was delayed after a downpour of rain. The mud was six inches deep when the parade began, Rowley said.

It took more than two hours to complete the record-setting parade. Rowley added it took another two hours to get back to his trailer so he could load his tractor.

He said his ears were ringing from all the tractor noise and the fumes from the tractors filled the air.

Two other area tractor owners joined Rowley including Jim Russell of Benkelman with his 1951 John Deere G, and Robert Brown of Trenton with his 1941 John Deere B.

Rowley said he plans to make his tractor a parade tractor after giving it a new coat of paint.

He also plans to take part in the Tractor Express next summer, where classic tractors drive from Ogallala to Grand Island.