

## Nationals in Other States

Because of the confusion resulting from the several Iowa and other contests using the name "National," sponsors of the original National Soil Conservation Field Days and Plowing Matches sought clarification of the issue. At a meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, early in 1948, several Iowans met with officials of the National Association of Soil Conservation Districts. It was agreed the NASCD would assume responsibility of recognizing the National Conservation Field Days as *the* official national event, with the understanding that the National Plowing Match be a part of that event. NASCD also agreed to designate the demonstration and contest site in the various interested states each year.

The first National to be held outside Iowa met in 1950 near Urbana, Ohio. Sponsored by NASCD and other farm groups, and with fourteen Buck Creek Valley farmers as hosts, the 1950 event was a huge success, even though rain necessitated expanding it to a three-day event. Some 75,000 persons attended. The Ohioans inaugurated the "wagon trains," thus saving visitors thousands of miles of walking. Hundreds of fertilizer and crop experiments were undertaken,

along with conservation work. An hour-long parade was an added feature.

Harrison County, Missouri, where the nation's first contour matches were held in the early 1940's, entertained the 1951 National Soil Conservation Field Days. George Montgomery and six of his neighbors were hosts. Waters Davis of Texas, NASCD president, and Dr. Hugh Bennett were speakers. Visitors saw a vast array of farm and home equipment on display as well as the results of the previous year's conservation work on the Salmon and Crabtree farms. They also studied conservation practices featured on contest day. Fifty-three champion plowmen from seven states and from Ontario, Canada, performed before an estimated 50,000 spectators. A plowmen's barbecue was a highlight of 1951.

Minnesota was host in 1952. The name "Plowville" was given to the 12-farm area near Kasson, where political as well as agricultural history was again written when both major party presidential candidates spoke to 100,000 from the same platform on the same farm the same day. Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Republican nominee, and Adlai Stevenson, the Democratic standard bearer, each presented his respective farm views at the historic event. Most of the fifty-two plowmen from nine states met both "Ike" and Adlai. Both candidates toured the conservation area and had a chicken dinner at the Henry Snow farm.

The 1953 National was near Augusta, Wisconsin, and was called "Operation Watershed," with demonstrations and displays on eight farms in the Thompson Valley Watershed. Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson was the featured speaker. Farm Safety was included in the plowmen's scoring points this year, resulting in some very close final scores. Some 70,000 watched plowmen from nine states compete. Television entered into the national match promotion in 1953.

The "Onion Hill" community near Olney, Illinois, within a few miles of the nation's population center, was the site for the 1954 National. A devastating drouth in the area had drastically cut crop yields, necessitating the abandonment of some of the outstanding field tests arranged by the committee. A Youth Day and the International Sheep Dog trials were added features in 1954. An estimated 60,000 attended. About fifty champion plowmen competed and Secretary Benson was the principal speaker.

The 1955 National was held "On the Banks of the Wabash" near Wabash, Indiana, and was expanded to four days. A Flying Farmers day was added to the schedule, with hundreds of farmers flying their own planes to view the conservation demonstrations and plowing matches. Vice-President Richard Nixon and Louis Bromfield were major speakers. The Purdue Glee Club furnished banquet entertainment. Fifty plowmen came from

twelve states to establish a new high in national plowing participation. Attendance was estimated at around 75,000 for the four days.

It is obvious that plowing matches have definitely succeeded National Corn Husking meets in providing interest and excitement. Contestants and visitors alike are in suspense from the opening aerial bomb to the closing signal. Great interest centers around the types of plows and power units. Young farmers and old-timers can vie on fairly equal ground. Cheering is heard at the land ends when the plowmen have just finished turning a particularly good closing furrow.

Each individual plowman has his own "tricks of the trade" that serve to delight the throng. Spectators often crowd six or eight deep behind plowland fences. Planes overhead give this ancient sport a modern motif. In display areas, colorful banners fly and the latest equipment and home appliances are to be seen. Loud-speakers blare announcements. Pretty "Queens of the Furrow" are presented with all the pageantry of royalty. Children with their hot dogs and other treats have a barrel of fun, and everyone else can count on a good time at the National Plowing Match.

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