



Puller Spotlight



Dixie Deere

Pettus & Counce

Pulling Team





The Mid-South Super Farm class has always been a mainstay in the associations pulling lineup. At any given event the average number of hooks is around thirteen. Competition is tight, whether it's a Grand National Competitor or one of the local pulling members. The class has lots of color with John Deere's, Internationals, Massey Fergusons and one Oliver. Often the margin of victory is measured in inches like at Springfield during the Fair Pull where Russell Counce pulled 325.937 feet and Dennie Brown made 325.385 feet. Then again at Hazel Green Alabama, the Dixie Deere makes a Full Pull along with Darrin Hunt, another Grand National caliber tractor that campaigns with Mid-South and the Points Champion in 2009. In the Pull Off, Russell once again makes a great effort and stops at 317.533, edging out Darrin, who made 317.332!

After Videoing a couple years with Mid-South, it is apparent that the Super Farm class is the most competitive class going. On any given weekend, anyone can be a winner. Memories of Bad Bodacious besting the entire field by 16 feet keeps the fans and competitors on edge. Consistency, a good engine program and hooking the tractor are what it's all about. With so many good tractors spread out from Kentucky to Alabama, it's hard to recognize just one team, but this article will spotlight the Dixie Deere.

Owner(s) Tim Pettus and Russell Counce,

Tim Pettus is President of First Farmers & Merchants Bank in Tennessee and partners in the Pettus & McClain Trucking Company.

Russell Counce farms 600 acres and has 3 Semi Trucks on the road.

Driver(s) Jed Pettus and Russell Counce

Home, Lawrenceburg Tn.

Tractor, Dixie Deere

History of the Team.

Russell started working for Tim washing semi trucks on the weekend and later became a mechanic, working on the road tractors. Tim, in the banking business, trucking and cattle, laid the foundation for a solid, effective pulling team, however unwilling and without his knowledge at first. It seems Russell took a John Deere G off the farm and put it on the track without the blessing of the owner. Russell married Sandy Threet in 1992. Sandy's brother Stan is now part of the "Crew" along with Tim's son Jed, (Driver), Colby Counce (Russell's son), Chase Long, Gary Lambert, Darren Long, Keith Sanders and Jeff Allen. As with a lot of pullers it all starts with Antique Pulling, and grows from there. Enter the National Farm Machinery Show. After a few years, Russell and Jed talk Tim into going to the show with them. The power and excitement planted a seed, (this is what tractor pullers do) and Tim's interest starts to grow. He asks Russell what kind of money it would take to do something like this, (exactly what Russell and Jed had planned). Russell locates a 4430 which Tim buys and they start buying used parts from the Mastersons. They start pulling Farm Stock then move up to Hot Farm, pulling for three years and earning a few wins. The progression continues and they sell the tractor to Mike Statton which he re-names Deerelirous and is piloted by his daughter Audra, another crew that started in Antiques and made the move up. At this time they buy the Tinker Toy from Don Masterson after consulting with Tim Engler regarding the chassis. Tim's suggestion was "buy it" as building another chassis that would hook better than the Tinker Toy wasn't likely to happen. It should be obvious to most readers at this point that making wise decisions is what brought Tim Pettus the success he enjoys, because unlike a lot of teams, starting from scratch and figuring out things as you go just didn't seem like a sound financial choice. Riverside Engines was hired to build the power plant for the Dixie Deere. J&J built the 1st Turbo.

By 2006, everything came together for their best season ever with 16 wins. In 2007 they won the Mid-South Super Farm points championship and is credited with 22 total wins for the season. In 2008, Dixie Deere repeats the Championship Win in the MSPA circuit, won their qualifying session at the Southern Invitational in Murfreesboro and at the Southern Illinois Shootout in DuQuion. On a hot streak, the Dixie Deere wins the Saturday afternoon session at the National Farm Machinery Show.

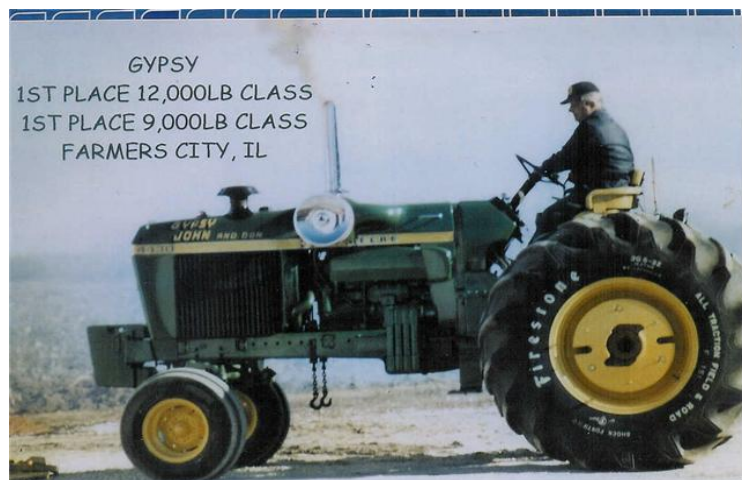
In 2009, Jed Pettus and Russell Counce take aim at the Grand National Circuit of the NTPA. The first year pulling on the Grand National level, Dixie Deere earns the Rookie of the Year title. Unbelievably, this team also takes home a National Championship.



Dixie Deere was bought originally by Don Eldert of Gilman IL. The tractor was bought as a new 4430 that had been damaged in a fire at the dealership. He took the tractor home and began work on it putting two turbos on it and turning it into the “Gypsy”. Don competed in the 14,000 and 15,000 pounds super stock division and won several titles including the National Farm Machinery Show 3 years in a row.



The tractor was later bought by the Armistead family, where Joel and Kevin shared the driving duties for about 3 years. The name was changed to “Night Train”. They pulled in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Alabama in the 9500 and 12,200 lbs. super stock classes.



“Night Train” became the “Tinker Toy” after it was purchased by Don Masterson. It was rebuilt as one of the well known pro stocks in the country. Don piloted the Tinker Toy to victories at the National Farm Machinery show in 1987, 1988, 1994, and 1998.



In 2005, the Tinker Toy had its name changed to “Dixie Deere”. It has won 2 Midsouth Super Farm points championships in 2007 and 2008. It also won the Saturday Afternoon Session at the NFMS. In 2009 it won a NTPA Grand National Super Farm points championship with 2 GN wins in Jerseyville, IL and Montgomery City, MO.



Left,
Dixie Deere, compet-
ing in Hot Farm,
which is now the
tractor pulled by
Audra Stratton.



Below, possibly the first
ever pass on the Dixie
Deere Super Farm at Law-
renceburg Tn. in 2005.



Left, **The Gypsy**

Below,

Night Train, owned by Joel and Kevin Armistead.





More Night Train pictures.





Dixie Deere, 2009

Mid-South continues to be a proving grounds for some of the best Super Farm pulling in the United States.

In 2009, National Farm Machinery Show

Dreamin' Too wins the Super Farm event on Friday.

Dixie Deere finishes 2nd on Saturday.

Dreamin' Too finishes 3rd in the finals.

In 2010, Mid-West Winter Nationals Thursday Evening

Bad Bodacious finishes 4th.

In 2010, Southern Motorsports Productions

Larry Dean wins the Friday Night Session

Raging Bull of John Pitt, driven by Michael Fanning takes 2nd.

Finals, John Pitt's Raging Bull, driven by Michael Fanning wins and takes home the Super Farm frame rails built by Ace Chassis.

The biggest influence on our success is our crew. They are all just a phone call away and there is no way we could do it without them. There is a lot of work that goes on during the week to make sure the tractor stays in top shape. Also, we all work together at the pulls to make decisions on how to set up our tractor and where to run on the track.

Our Crew consists of:

Tim Pettus

Jeff Allen - who at pulls will most likely be found keeping the dust off of the tractor.

Darren and Chase Long

Gerry Lambert

Keith Sanders

Ben Threet

Colby Counce

Keith Glover

Clay Jones

Gary Beaver

Thanks to:

Tim Pettus

Riverside Engines

Norm and Steve at Kavan Engine and Dyno Service

Precision Turbo

Engler Machine and Tool

Hoosier Tire Cutting

Pettus McLain Trucking

Sharp Transport

Smith Signs

Lawrenceburg Sears

Don and Kevin Masterson

H.A. and Stan Threet

Cranford Jennings and Mike Murphy

Midwest Risk Management