

Check planter units now, save yourself trouble later

LANCASTER — Just because your planter worked well a year ago, you've no assurance that it'll go to bat for you again this year — unless you've given it a thorough check-up this past winter or early this spring.

Worn parts, easily replaceable, or mechanisms that need a simple shot of grease, are the common but inexcusable reasons for reductions in yields, he says.

"With all types of planters, there are some common elements that should be routinely checked, once before the planting crunch begins and periodically during planting," advises Human. These checkpoints include:

Are all drive chains tight? Are all chains in good condition? Should they be tightened or replaced? Are chain sprockets showing signs of wear?

Are all bearings in good condition? Do they need grease? Replacement?

Are all hydraulic systems functioning properly?

Are the seed delivery lines or tubes clear of dirt? Do the seed drop monitors function correctly?

Are tires inflated properly? Improper inflation may cause slippage, distorting the planter's reading of distance traveled. That in turn can alter planting rate and the evenness of planting depth.

Human continues, "95 percent of all planters fit into one of three categories of design: Plate planters, finger mechanism plateless planters, and plateless air planters. Each design has its

own set of unique mechanisms that require maintenance and periodic repair."

The agronomist lists the following recommendations for each.

Plate planters

The best habit to get into is to routinely replace all planter plates before each planting season. Wear may occur that impedes the efficient operation of the plate but which may not show up on the plate's wear gauge.

Investing each year in a new set of \$2 plates is an inexpensive way to avoid jeopardizing stands with worn plates.

Check the knockout pall — the spring lever-roller that knocks each seed out of each plate — for rust, wear, breakage or dirt. When it doesn't do its job, you'll have skips in the row.

Give all parts a good cleaning. This is especially crucial if the planter has been left outdoors over the summer, fall and winter. Pay special attention to seed delivery tubes and seed drop sensors.

Finger plateless planters
The finger mechanisms are susceptible to wear and somewhat susceptible to breakage. Check these once a year.

The nylon paddle belt that delivers the seed from the finger mechanism to the seed drop should be checked for wear, breakage and proper functioning.

Manufacturers suggest

that these planters be cleaned inside and out after every 50 hours of use.

It's also good to sprinkle a little powder graphite into the seed box during planting. The dry lubricant reduces wear of the finger mechanisms, while having no adverse effect on the crop.

Check that the seed boxes and drive mechanisms are properly aligned.

Plateless air planters

Check all air lines for leakage and blockage. Also test the air pump for steady airflow. Check all seals to insure against leakage.

Inspect seed-carrying holes in the drum, looking for holes that may have become enlarged. Also check the brushes and roller wheels in the drum for wear.

If the planter is of the type that has only one seed hopper, it's imperative that the seed monitoring system work exactly, since it's the only check against a single row operating incorrectly.

Human summarizes, "Anything that shows signs of wear should be replaced. The expense for replacing a questionable part now is minimal to the cost of down time during planting."

"Most of this is very basic. But it's surprising how many farmers have trouble with their planters each spring. Giving the planter a good once-over ahead of time will help eliminate that problem."

Lincoln 4-H Club meets

LINCOLN — The Lincoln Community 4-H Club held its first meeting of the year at the home of leader Elmer Boyd, on March 24 at 7:30 p.m.

Projects were discussed and officers elected. Officers elected are Mike Pfautz, president, Dwight Graybill, vice-president, Andy Gehman, secretary, Kelly Ackley, treasurer, Ed Redcay, news reporter,

Andy Graybill and Marcy Gehman, game leaders. Nancy L. Meyers, 4-H Agent, handed out project books and discussed future 4-H activities.

Other leaders of the 4-H club are Kerry Boyd and Roland Gehman.

Refreshments were served by Mrs. Elmer Boyd. The next meeting will be held on April 28, 1980 at 7:30 p.m., at the home of Kelly Eckert.

Alternative energy fair slated at Twin Valley

ELVERSON — An alternative energy fair has been scheduled for April 17, 18, and 19 by the Twin Valley School District.

The fair will be open to residents in the surrounding areas as well as students from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., Friday and Saturday.

According to Ray Weaver, displays on windmills, solar panels, wood burning and stills will be set-up in the gym. Weaver noted that at least twenty spaces are already committed and about that many more could be filled.

Dennis Baylor, assistant engineer at Energy Development Corporation will lead off the public addresses at 10 a.m. Friday. His topic will be Wind Power.

At 1 p.m., Richard James, director at Schuylkill Valley Nature Center will speak on Economic-Environmental Balance in the auditorium.

Newton Barr, Lebanon County agent, will speak on Methane Production at 3:30 p.m. in the lecture hall.

And at 6 p.m., Morton Fry will talk on Hybrid Poplars as a Source of Alcohol Fuels.

A woodburning safety lecture will be given at 8 p.m. by Jim Lowry, Coventry Steve Sales.

Heading Saturday's agenda will be Bill Gross from Met Ed speaking on nuclear energy at 10 a.m. in the auditorium.

Newton Barr will address the group again at 1 p.m. on "Methane Production" in the lecture hall.

Also at 1 p.m., insulation will be discussed by John Garner in the auditorium.

Floyd Horst will speak at 2 p.m. on Alcohol Production in the auditorium.

At 4 p.m., John Kephart,

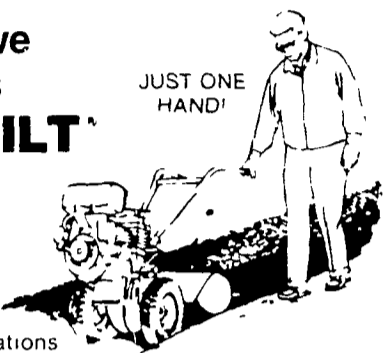
an engineer at Du Pont Corporation will lecture on Industrial Energy Conservation.

Bob Patterson, from Gulf Oil will talk at 6 p.m. in the auditorium on Petroleum Refining and Consumer Interests.

Admission charges will be \$1 for adults, \$2 for families, and senior citizens will be admitted free.

For more information contact the school at 215/286-5911.

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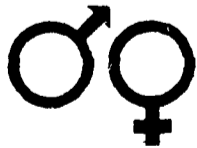


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