

# Pre-Harvest Combine Preparation Ensures Good-Condition Crops

RACINE, WI — Harvesting clean, good-condition corn, soybeans or grain for storage or sale depends on using a well-maintained, properly adjusted combine.

The following is a header-to-graintank checklist that will help ensure that a combine is ready to harvest that which is as free of dirt or damaged grain as possible.

### Cutter Bars

Cutter bars and all other grain header components should work together to ensure a smooth crop flow. A smooth crop flow allows threshing and separating components to work at peak efficiency. Problems at the cutter bar often create problems of crop flow to the threshing and separating areas.

Inspect the cutter bar's knife guards, hold-down clips and knife sections. Replace worn parts to prevent ragged cutting, poor cutting and to ensure a good clean shearing action at the cutter bar.

### Reels

Coordinate the reel speed, reel

height and forward-rearward adjustments to ensure good crop flow. These adjustments may be hand set before harvest or adjusted as conditions warrant.

Inspect the settings on the reel before harvest to make sure the settings are appropriate for the crop and the crop conditions expected. If the combine is equipped with an on-the-go adjusting mechanism, test it for proper operation.

When using a pickup reel, replace broken and worn-down tines and adjust the tine pitch to the best setting for expected crop conditions.

### Header Augers

Correct auger to header-bottom clearance makes for a smooth flow of crop to the feeder chain, increases auger capacity and prevents grain damage.

In grain crops where very little straw is being brought into the header, do not overlook the use of auger flight extensions to improve crop flow to the feeder housing.

Inspect the auger drive, slip

clutch and speed setting to be sure the auger will operate evenly without stopping or shattering the crop.

### Header Level

Carefully check levelness of the header; an unlevel header will not respond correctly to ground contour changes or cut standing crops uniformly. An unlevel header may leave low-hanging grain in the field. A level header will recover more grain.

### Corn Heads

A properly adjusted corn head creates a smooth crop flow that helps prevent damaged corn and leaving corn in the field. Inspect the gatherer chains and gatherer drive components; adjust or replace worn components. Adjust or replace worn stalk roll knives as needed. Check the stalk roll spacing, slip clutch adjustment, weed knife sharpness and stripper shield adjustment to ensure all ears are picked and not damaged.

### Feeder Housing

Inspect the feeder housing for worn parts, proper slip clutch oper-

ation and feeder chain tension. These checks will help prevent excessive wear and breakdowns, help ensure good material flow from the header to the threshing area and help produce clean, undamaged grain.

### Threshing and Separating

All components of the threshing and separating system should be inspected for wear and proper operation. Check for any dirt, rodent nests or rodent damage that may have occurred since the after-harvest combine cleaning.

Replacing worn threshing parts is one of the most important steps toward clean, undamaged grain. It is equally important to adjust the clearance between the concave and the threshing rotor in order to match crop conditions.

Rotary threshing mechanisms should be checked for wear and proper adjustment on the impeller blades that bring the crop and air into the threshing process, the rasp bars that thresh the crop, and the separator bars that agitate and separate the seed from the crop residue.

To adjust the concave clearance, turn the ratchet handle until the concave indicator is at the appro-

prate setting for expected conditions. Setting the rotor speed to the proper rpm for the crop conditions affects crop threshing and separation, which can affect grain quality.

### Cleaning

Fan speed, chaffer sieve and shoe sieve all must work together to clean the final grain sample. The fan speed must be high enough to keep husks and straw floating, but low enough to let the grain fall through the sieves to the grain auger.

### Grain Handling

Pay special attention to worn bearings or flightings on augers. Worn augers are a major cause of grain damage. To prevent grain cracking in the elevators, set elevator chains to 1/32 of an inch between chain and sprocket. Clean the grain tank of any dirt accumulated during storage and check the tank for leaks.

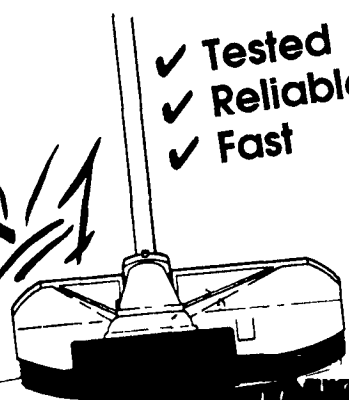
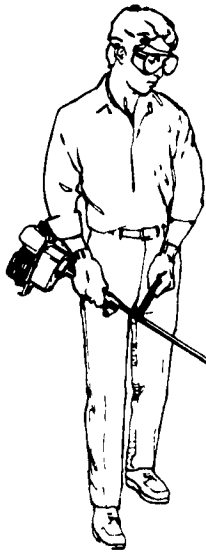
This checklist covers the items that should be checked to harvest cleanly and with little damage. These same adjustments also serve to cut grain losses, meaning more bushels and income per acre.

For pre-harvest engine, lubrication, tire and filter servicing, follow the recommendations in the combine operator's manual.

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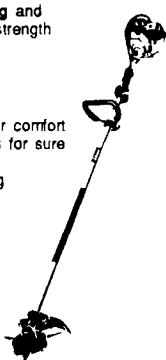
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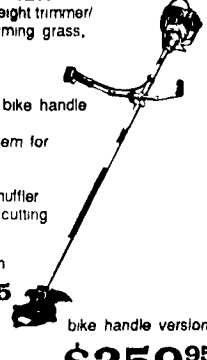
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