

Preparing Baler for Use

(Even though this is a grazing newsletter, most graziers need to harvest some forage as stored feed. This article is intended to be a review for you. Editor)

Have you thought about how much an equipment breakdown during harvest of hay could cost you? Harvesting at the right time is important in many crops, but it is more so in haymaking.

Here's a checklist to give your large round baler a thorough inspection:

Inspect bale chamber belts, rollers or chains and slats, depending on baler type. Examine for worn or damaged parts and repair or replace before baling season. Keep a belt-splicer kit on hand for belt-type balers. Keep extra chain and slats for slat-type balers.

Inspect pickup teeth for bent or broken teeth. Replace or repair any damaged or missing teeth.

Inspect hydraulic hoses and fittings for damage or leaks. Make sure the tractor hydraulic reservoir is filled for proper baler operation. Replace or repair any damaged or leaking hoses. Make sure the pressure relief by-pass valve is working properly. Keep in mind the key word when working with hydraulic systems is "clean". Dirt is the single-most common cause of hydraulic problems with farm machinery.

Inspect compression-roll springs for damage. Replace broken or damaged springs. Cone-shaped bales can be an indicator of a broken spring.

Inspect the twine mechanism for rough edges that could fray or cut twine. Make sure twine is threaded through all guides and is feeding properly. Check twine knives for residue buildup and sharpness. Sharpen knives or clean, if needed.

Adjust tension on bale chambers. Too much tension can damage belts or chains. Too little tension may cause belts to slip or form loose bales.

Inspect tires for wear, damage and air pressure. Inflate under-inflated tires and replace badly worn ones.

When not in use, store the baler inside.