



Equipment Maintenance

Get to know the equipment. Read the owner's manual.

Introduction:

Many farm tasks require the use of equipment. Proper maintenance of equipment is crucial in the smooth day to day operations of a farm. Periodic inspections are the best way to prevent potential breakdowns and setbacks. No matter what the equipment is, a few minutes to look things over before getting started could save thousands of dollars and countless hours spent on equipment repair. Several different manufacturers make equipment which performs the same job, but equipment parts and modes of functioning will be different from one manufacturer to the next. Reading the owner's manual is the easiest way to become familiar with and get a basic understanding of how the equipment functions. Operating the equipment is the best way to become familiar with how it handles and what its limitations are. Required maintenance may also vary between equipment manufacturers. Referring to the owner's manual is the best way to find out manufacturer recommendations for required maintenance. The more a piece of equipment is used, the more maintenance will be needed, even more than what the manufacturer recommends. Get to know each piece of equipment.

Best Management Practices:

1. Become familiar with the equipment. **READ THE OWNER'S MANUAL.**
2. Inspect equipment periodically, particularly before and after jobs requiring extended and heavy use.
3. Check the fluids (engine oil, transmission fluid, coolant level, etc.)
4. Check for leaks around hydraulic lines, fuel lines, radiator hoses, oil lines, and cylinders.
5. Check for loose and broken bolts and pins.
6. Check bearings for any play or grinding.
7. Check tension on belts and chains.
8. Check belts for cracks.
9. Check the air filter and change as needed.
10. Check the tire pressure.
11. Listen for any unusual sounds.
12. Pay attention to any unusual odors.
13. Pay attention to any unusual responses from equipment.
14. Change oil and oil filter as needed. Oil and oil filter will need to be changed more frequently with heavy use of equipment.
15. Change hydraulic oil once every couple of years. Hydraulic oil will need to be changed more frequently with heavy use of hydraulically driven implements.
16. Change fuel filter at least once a year.
17. Grease equipment frequently. Lubricate cables and chains frequently.
18. Tools that are used frequently should be kept with the equipment.

Much maintenance can be done during the off season, but if possible, make repairs immediately. Many unforeseen problems can occur when working with equipment and making repairs is very much learn-as-you-go. Read the owner's manual often, and if problems occur that can't be fixed with resources at hand, contact other farmers or local mechanics for assistance.

Inspect equipment periodically and pay attention to anything out of the ordinary.

For more information visit www.umass.edu/cdl

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