

Combine Stone Damage

Small Objects...Huge Impact



Combines sit for long periods until harvest time, but when you need them, they must run properly and not break down. New combines can cost well over \$300,000 and used combines can cost well over \$50,000. Depending on age and hour usage, a small stone with no value can cause thousands of dollars of damage to this valuable equipment.

Key Practices

As any equipment owner knows, stones can cause major damage to a combine. A combine repair technician noted that in addition to the direct damage, stones can break loose other combine parts that continue to pass through the thresher like shrapnel, causing even more extensive damage.

Fortunately, combines are equipped with protection features; however, these are only as good as their use and maintenance and here are some key tips:

- ✓ **Personal safety is paramount.** Never service or repair running equipment. Take all precautions to avoid being caught in any moving equipment.
- ✓ **Pick stones** during off planting and non-harvest time to reduce stone damage risk.
- ✓ **Know the fields** and work with landowners before harvest to discuss stone clearing, or at least understand if a field has a higher risk. This is time very well spent.
- ✓ **Keep all knife stone guards in place** and repair any damaged stone guards and traps before the harvest season.

Key Facts

- ✓ **Repair or replace** any stones sensors that are not working correctly.
- ✓ **Check and clean** stone traps frequently and more often during heavy harvest periods. The time spent to check the trap more frequently may be the best time that you spend.
- ✓ **Operation.** Of course, proper equipment set up and use is critical to keep cutting heads at the correct height to maximize harvest and not cut too low and pick up more debris.
- ✓ **Other hazards.** Don't forget to look for other foreign objects like fence posts, large dirt or crop clumps, or tree limbs and remove them immediately.

Fields can never be rid of all stones, but taking practical steps can be taken to reduce the risk for stone damage to your valuable equipment. Thank you and good luck on this harvest season.