

Tips from the Pros

THE ANNUAL MAINTENANCE LIST for a baler can be a lot to keep up with. So, we compiled 20-plus checkpoints for round and/or square balers. Thanks to the following for help with this list: Kevin Bermingham, service writer and 21-year veteran of the service department at Agri-Service in Twin Falls; Tim Brannon, owner of B & G Equipment in Paris, Tenn. We also received input from the many service technicians from Hesston® by Massey Ferguson, as well as producers, such as Norris.

Bale Chamber

- Examine hay moisture monitoring and preservation application systems to make sure they are operating properly.
- Remove any crop material wrapped on belt rollers or drive sprockets.
- Check all bearings, including those on drives, square baler plunger components and round baler forming belt rollers.
- Clean and lubricate all net wrap and twine wrap components; grooves and areas of rust can make the net or twine stick.
- Ensure that all knives are sharp, including the plunger and knoter knives on square balers, and twine and/or net wrap knife on round balers.
- Order wrap and twine for the upcoming season.



On the Outside

- Use air pressure to remove dirt, dust and hay debris. If this is followed by washing, great care should be taken to keep high pressure away from bearings and seals to prevent premature failure. Run the baler after washing for several minutes, then oil all chains and moving parts.
- Inspect tires for damage and excessive wear.
- Check all lug bolts to ensure they are tightened to specifications.

Belts and Chains

- Check all drive chains for wear and tension. If a chain is replaced, change out the sprockets as well, and vice versa.
- Check all drive belts for cracks, and ensure that idlers turn freely.
- On round balers, inspect belts for checking and other wear. Also check the belt lacing, if applicable, to make sure they haven't pulled loose. Loosen belt

tensioners so they are not sitting under full tension during the off-season.

- Check to ensure that all forming belts are within 1 to 2% difference in total length. If one or two belts are a little shorter, move them to the outside and place the longest belts in the center, since that part of the bale always receives the most hay, even when weaving.

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There's much more online from professional producers. For more maintenance tips from Jesse Wilmot from Oklahoma and Nevada's Gary Berrington, see myFarmLife.com/balermaintenance.

Miscellaneous

- Check gearbox fluid levels and change as recommended in the operator's manual.
- Grease all grease zerks on wear points.
- Check with your dealer about any "upgrades" that appear on new balers that, in many cases, can be retrofitted on earlier models for increased performance and reliability.



Hoses and Hydraulics

- Change hydraulic-system filters, then run the machine to purge air from the system.
- Ensure that the auto-lube system is working properly. Refer to your owner's manual for the correct type of oil when filling the reservoir, as other oils will not cling to components as well. Also, make sure tubes leading to destination points haven't been cut, kinked or damaged.
- Examine all electric cables and hydraulic hoses for damage.

Feeder Mechanisms

- Check to make sure all guards are intact and in place.
- Examine and replace any broken tines in the pickup, and make sure stripper plates haven't been bent or damaged.
- Check pickup cam track bearings for wear, and check cam track for dents or abnormal wear.
- Check the flighting and bearings on pickup feeder augers used on square balers and large round balers.

