



Reducing harvest losses

Overview

A successful harvest depends not only on crop conditions, but also on properly functioning equipment. While you can't eliminate all harvest losses, these steps will help you identify the source and adjust harvest equipment for optimum performance.

What you should know

Combine losses can occur in any of the three main areas of the machine: the header (gathering), the rotor or cylinder (threshing) or the fan and shoe (cleaning). Excessive loss often can be avoided by taking a few minutes to measure losses at each area and then make the machine adjustments necessary to correct them.

Action steps

- Evaluate the combine:** Remove any field trash, oil or grease buildup and rodent nests. Check for loose, worn or missing parts and replace as needed. Inspect all belts and chains for wear and tear.
- Prioritize fields for harvest:** Identify fields with the potential for loss due to stalk rot, hail damage or other injury and harvest those first.
- Prevent grain loss:** Eardrop, shatter, improper cutting height or lodging can reduce yield. Grain also can remain on the cob, in the pod or pass through the combine with the residue. Fine-tune your combine settings to avoid these issues.
- Reduce harvest speed:** A ground speed of 2.5 - 3.5 miles per hour usually produces good results. Slower speeds might be required under poor field conditions.
- Estimate yield loss:** Place a 1-foot square frame on the ground behind the combine after a pass and count the number of seeds found inside the frame. Do this at least three times and calculate the average. Every four soybeans or two kernels of corn in a square foot represents a 1-bushel-per-acre yield reduction.



Fine-tune your combine settings to avoid grain loss.



30-Second Summary

- Adjusting harvest equipment can help reduce yield loss.
- Examine areas of the combine to determine where yield loss may be occurring.
- Perform an in-field yield loss estimate to see if equipment should be further calibrated to optimize your harvest.

NOTES:

For more information, contact:



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