

# TOP TIPS for a smoother harvest

As the harvest season gets underway, there can be a lot of moving pieces to address. Try these tips to help improve the process.

## **TIP 1** Scout at harvest to provide a jumpstart for next year

Scouting corn and soybean fields before and during harvest can be a good way to identify problems and help determine which fields need to be harvested first. Fields with stalk rot or breakages should be harvested earlier to limit potential yield loss. Identifying the disease causing stalk rot may help protect the following season's crop in corn-on-corn acres, as a resistant hybrid can be planted the following year. Harvest can also be a good time to check for soybean diseases and to identify any escaped weeds.



## **TIP 2** Make sure equipment is ready to go

An equipment breakdown during harvest can be a major problem, but planning and proper setup can help prevent downtime. Keep a list of all the machinery and equipment used during harvest and review any past issues to determine any needed repairs or adjustments. Other pre-harvest checks should include cleaning equipment and running tests or system diagnostics. In the immediate leadup to harvest, ensure new equipment is set to work with the correct crop.



## **TIP 3** Monitor moisture and avoid self-imposed penalties

When accounting for crop dry down, it's important to balance the risk of moisture dockage at the grain elevator with overly dry crops or phantom yield loss. Grain elevators may discount wet grain 2.5-3% for each percent moisture above their standard.<sup>1</sup> To achieve the best balance, try to finish harvesting before corn falls below 15% moisture or when soybeans range from 13-15% moisture. Harvesting soybeans that are too dry can increase shattering losses.



## **TIP 4** Be aware of yield loss and underperforming fields

During harvest, it is important to check for kernel loss and track yield performance by field. If a combine setup is demonstrating kernel loss of much more than about 2 bu/A for corn or more than 1.5 bu/A for soybeans, there are several elements to check, including equipment setup and driving speed.<sup>2</sup>

Harvest is an important time to explore causes of reduced yield, including insects, disease, equipment or other issues. Update field yield records annually and reset yield monitors when hybrids or moisture levels vary significantly between fields.



## **TIP 5** Keep quality high once grain is stored

Properly preparing grain bins can help maintain harvested crop quality. Keep bins pest proof by identifying and repairing holes, screening roof vents and removing spilled grain and weeds outside the bins. Old grain can house insects or harbor quality-damaging molds, so bins should be cleaned before new grain is stored. Spraying the inside of the cleaned bin with a protectant may also be helpful. Additionally, grain handling equipment should be cleaned before working with new grain.

<sup>1</sup>Larson, Erick. "Corn Grain Drydown and Strategies for Successful Harvest." Mississippi Crop Situation. Updated August 7, 2021. <https://www.mississippi-crops.com/2021/08/07/corn-grain-drydown-and-strategies-for-successful-harvest/>.

<sup>2</sup>Pocock, John. "Top 10 Corn Harvest Tips." Corn+Soybean Digest. September 4, 2004. <https://www.farmprogress.com/top-10-corn-harvest-tips>.

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