

Modern Machinery Matters

Fewer machines but more dependence on reliability

With the trend to fewer but larger grain farms across Australia, the makeup of the machinery required to efficiently operate these bigger enterprises has undergone a similar change. Larger and more productive – but fewer – tractors, planters, combines and boom sprayers now inhabit your typical grain farm machinery shed.

But fewer machines means a higher dependency on the reliability and productivity of these modern work-horses. And at harvest time – the money end of the sea-

son – combine breakdowns can cost grain growers dearly particularly when it maybe the only unit in operation on their farm.

Harvesting contractors are similarly exposed to costly breakdowns as their machines reduce in number but increase in productivity and size.

This underscores the importance of machine maintenance and access to spare parts and service as well as the ability of the operator to get the most out of these highly sophisticated combines. It's as important to keep the operator 'well oiled'

on the combine's capabilities as it is the combine itself.

The major combine manufacturers have extensive customer support systems in place to help minimise machine downtime and maximise operator skills.

Case IH urges farmers to undertake a comprehensive pre-season service on their harvesting and baling equipment. Their dealers can also undertake comprehensive pre-season maintenance inspections.

A standard inspection on harvesting equipment involves replacing all fluids and filters and checking every working component for damage or wear.

Many local Case IH dealerships also run maintenance clinics for owners and operators to ensure they're up-to-date on how to adjust, fix or maintain their equipment.

Product specialists are also on hand at the clinics to point out how to make the most of the latest technology and to provide advice on any upgrades available to improve productivity.

COMING TO A FIELD NEAR YOU: A SPARE PARTS WAREHOUSE ON WHEELS

A warehouse on wheels, loaded with over 4000 individual parts items to ensure minimum combine downtime in the event of a break-down, plies the highways and byways of eastern Australia each summer,

The Case IH Pro Harvest support trailer hits the road in Queensland in November and follows grain harvesters as they cross the NSW border following the harvest south.

"Each season, up to 1200 grain harvesters make their way south, following the wheat harvest," explained Case IH Product Manager, Geoff Rendell. "It's critical that their combines are operating at their peak and that should a breakdown occur, they can get back into the field quickly. By putting a mobile warehouse on the road with these guys, it basically means that Case IH dealers in the peak harvest areas will have fast access to a wide range of parts they might normally need to have freighted from Sydney."

Launched for the 2005 harvest, Case IH committed over \$200,000 to getting the Pro Harvest support trailer on the road. "It is loaded with predominately slow moving parts that dealers might not usually keep in stock," Geoff said.

"We're talking transmissions, drives and gear boxes for example. So if a customer's machine has a breakdown at Mungindi, on the NSW and Queensland border, the customer can make contact with the local Case IH dealer who will liaise with the support trailer and then deliver the part."



The support trailer follows the harvest south.

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Harvesting internet advantages

Recognising the Australian farming community's increasing access to reasonable internet services – and growers becoming more internet savvy – Case IH has established a national online parts database.

Case IH dealerships are networked via an the *National Parts Locator*. Dealers upload information on the spare parts they have in stock at any given time and the information is shared, so if a dealer doesn't have the part their customer needs in stock they can search for it across the dealer network using the online system.

"Our national warehouse, carrying in excess of 150,000 lines, is usually the first port of call when a customer requires a part that is not in stock at their local dealership," says Dean Hopping, General Manager Aftersales. "But when we experience high global demand for a particular part or there may have been a delay in shipments, the *National Parts Locator* offers excellent backup."

Order parts online, anytime

Along with the *National Parts Locator*, Case IH also runs an online database which allows farmers to search for the spare parts they need, any time of the day or night.

The *Online Customer Parts Catalogue* allows farmers to view drawings and select parts for Case IH and other machinery brands including Austoft, David Brown, Case and International Harvester, from as far back as the 1930s.

"One of the system's greatest benefits is its ability to help farmer's increase their time efficiency," Dean says. "Because farmers can log on and compile their list of parts 24-hours a day, the site is particularly beneficial at key times such as pre-harvest machinery preparation or planting."

Parts can be searched by equipment model number or the spare parts number.

The site also provides a detailed part illustration which ensures the right part is being ordered.

Once farmers have compiled their parts list, they can either email or fax it to their local dealer who will process the order and contact them when their parts are ready to be picked up.

"At the end of the day, our aim is to ensure that customers are able to get the parts they need quickly and easily so they can get back out there as soon as possible," Dean says.

To access the *Online Customer Parts Catalogue* or the *National Parts Locator* go to www.caseih.com

AXIAL-FLOW GIVES HIGHER HARVEST PRODUCTIVITY AND LOWER MAINTENANCE

Mark Panigas, who runs a diversified farming business in Queensland's Atherton Tablelands with his father, John, was one of the first contractors to put Case IH's Axial-Flow 8010 to work contract harvesting grass seeds. Mark contract harvests for around 20 growers in a 1000 km radius – from Cooktown in the north to Townsville in the south.

The Panigas farming business is split between contract harvesting, grass seed, maize and cattle production. But the most crucial piece of equipment is the Case IH Axial-Flow 8010, Mark says. "The 8010 is used for our contracting work and for use on our own farm, so it's the one machine we rely on year in, year out. I'm harvesting something every month of the year so I really don't have a time you could call pre-harvest."

"The move to an 8010 model came when it was time to upgrade the 2388," Mark explains. "We upgrade every five years or 5000 hours – whatever comes first – and because we wanted to double capacity, we moved into the larger 8010 model."

"We've always been big fans of the Axial-Flow design. In fact Dad and I were the first people to privately own a Case IH Axial-Flow combine – the 1460 model – which we purchased over 30 years ago. Since then, we've always stuck with the technology due to its superior threshing capabilities and its simple, reliable design."

"We might move between harvesting grass seeds which are only about half a millimetre in size, to 3 mm bean seeds and 8 mm corn seeds all in the one paddock and it's simply a matter of pressing a button to switch between the different crops," Mark said. "The 8010 handles all crops with ease, no matter how large or small and the single in-line rotor design prevents splitting, particularly in bean crops."

The 8010's self-levelling design is also a benefit for Mark's operation. "Because we contract harvest, we're moving to different sites all the time and the 8010 automatically adjusts to changing conditions. I estimate that when we're working on hillsides, this feature prevents around 20 per cent crop loss."

Routine maintenance and servicing

"Maintenance is simple with fewer belts and moving parts than other combines," Mark points out. "There are only five drivebelts and three drive chains, excluding engine drives on the 7010 and 8010 models, with no daily or 100-hour lubepoints. All transmission cases and gearboxes include easy-to-read sight gauges and the cab filters are easily accessed. I reckon the design helps us to reduce our overall maintenance time by about 15 per cent, which is also a money saver."

"And after 30 years in this game you get a good idea of what's needed in terms of servicing. For example, in our operating conditions I know to change feeder chains every 2000 hours and the clean grain elevator chain every 3000. If you stick to the book with servicing and maintenance you have very little trouble. In fact, with the Case IH 2388 combine I had before this new 8010, I only lost one day in five years," Mark said.

Mark and John's nearest Case IH dealer is about 80 km away on the coast but that doesn't impact on the good service they receive. "If I need a part and it's not in stock locally, the dealer organises airfreight out of Sydney and it's on my doorstep in the morning," says Mark.



Mark Panigas (right) and his father, John, find the Axial-Flow 8010 is ideal for efficient harvesting of everything from large grains like maize and beans through to half a millimetre grass seeds.