



# MAFES Dawg Tracks



April 20, 2015



## Safety Tips: Big Bale Safety

For several of our stations hay time is quickly approaching. The general case for the majority of the MAFES hay production is with large bales. The obvious reason for large bale use is the labor savings. As is the case with all agricultural production, there are risks involved when inexperience and negligence become involved.

The size of the large bales and the round formation of the bales enhances the potential for injuries. It is the agricultural workers' responsibility to have a thorough knowledge of the requirements, the safety precautions and the potential hazards associated with large baling operations.

### ADVANCE PREPARATION OF THE SEASON –

Advanced maintenance and re-orienting employees on the use of the equipment and the procedure of operation will pay off major dividends when hay time commences, saving downtime, investments in parts and possible injuries to the employees involved. Following is a checklist of procedures that can reveal potential hazards to assist in improving efficiencies:

- Check the baler and clear it of old hay residue, small animal nests and other debris. Lubricate the machine according to the specifications in the owner's manual.
- Check for loose or missing bolts, nuts, screws, guards or damaged pick up teeth.
- Inspect the belts and chains for wear or breakage.
- Check belt tensions to avoid slippage, resulting in overheating or possible clogging. Refer to the owner's manual for instructions on belt installation and tension settings.
- Check all the hydraulic hoses for abrasions, leaks, breaks and that they are connected correctly.
- Check the twine feeding and cutting mechanism for proper operation.
- Check the slip clutch, roll scraper, and the rear gate latch to be sure that they are properly adjusted and operate according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Check the lights, brakes, SMV emblem and be sure that there is an operable fire extinguisher mounted in a location for easy access.

### BIG BALE OPERATION-

Baler operators should have a thorough working knowledge of the total operation of the machine. The more knowledge of the baler operation, the more efficient the production will be. As mentioned in pre-season preparation, the following tips should be in place to be checked each day before the day of baling begins:

- ✓ All protective devices are in place, functional and securely fastened.
- ✓ Check the machine for damage or missing parts. Check the hydraulic system (with wood or cardboard) for leaks. Check the lights, tires and brakes that they are in good condition.

- ✓ Make all repairs before leaving the compound.
- ✓ Check and remove debris from all the machine's components.
- ✓ Lubricate the machine according to the owner's manual.
- ✓ Checking all the baler components and respective adjustments should be according to the owner's manual.

**Never attempt to clean, adjust, or lubricate the baler unless the engine is turned off, the key removed from the ignition, and the PTO is disengaged!**

- ✓ Walk around the baler, check that the rear gate is securely closed and the latch is in place.
- ✓ Check that there are no bystanders or animals in the immediate vicinity before you head to the field.
- ✓ One seat- One rider is always in effect. No one should be on the tractor with the operator.

### PREPARING TO BALE-

Most of our employees that are involved with baling operations are familiar with the fields, but as the weather frequently changes, so can the fields. Winter rains or heavy winds can put unknown conditions in old fields, so it would be advantageous to check out the terrain for new washes, unseen debris and possibly new power lines.

- ✓ The pickup should be adjusted to have adequate ground clearance, avoiding throwing rocks and other debris on the operator.
- ✓ Engage the PTO while the baler is stationary to look and listen for possible problems.
- ✓ Cycle the hydraulic systems for proper functioning.
- ✓ Check the twine feeding and cutting mechanism for proper functioning.
- ✓ Match ground speed to the hay conditions and windrow size.
- ✓ Avoid ever trying to clean out, adjust or unplug a baler with it running.

**Don't try to feed material into the baler by hand—the hay will be taken in faster than you can let go.**

### SAFE EJECTION-

- The correct procedure for discharging is in the owner's manual.
- Remember- round bales roll downhill.
- Try to always eject bales on flat ground. Round bales can roll downhill. Serious injury and extensive property damage can occur through careless handling.
- If it is necessary to manually eject a bale- shift the tractor in neutral or park and lock the brakes- remove the key. Raise the tailgate hydraulically, lock it in place and shut off the engine.

### FIRE PRECAUTIONS-

- If a fire starts, pull out into level ground- eject the bale.
- Drive clear of the fire- call for help- then use the fire extinguisher.

### SAFE TRANSPORT-

- ~Obey all traffic regulations when traveling on public roads.
- ~Lock the brake pedals- use safety chains.
- ~The baler should have good lighting, reflectors and a clear SMV sign.

**THINK SAFETY <><> ACT SAFELY**  
**SAFETY STARTS WITH "S"**  
**BUT ENDS WITH "YOU"**