

EXPLORING EQUIPMENT

Topdresser Maintenance

By Kevin Kyello

Of all the machines used in turf management, topdressers are among the most simple and reliable. However, even these durable, seemingly indestructible machines require some preventative and ongoing maintenance to stay in top shape.

In a sense, maintenance begins on the day you receive your machine from the distributor. Start with a visual inspection, examining all nuts, bolts and fasteners for tightness. Check all oil levels covering hydraulics and gearboxes, as well as all grease points for lubrication.

Operator Precautions

Be sure to read your owner's manual thoroughly prior to topdresser operation. Also, before loading your machine you should first operate it empty. Make sure all the parts run smoothly and quietly.

Most manufacturers recommend checking nuts and bolts for tightness before using the machine daily. Check for any alterations or machine conditions that affect safe operation.

Check tire pressure periodically. Some topdressers are ground-driven and it is important to maintain recommended tire pressure for proper operation.

Consult the operator's manual for maximum towing speeds, as well as maximum loading capacity of your machine. Also, make sure the towing vehicle has adequate power—and brakes—to handle the weight of the unit.

Preventative Maintenance

Topdressers are built tough, but no machine is indestructible. Storing your topdresser out of the elements will prolong the life of drive belts, chains and conveyor belts.

Your entire machine should be kept clean of all debris. Topdressers should be washed after every use. Pay particular attention to cleaning conveyor belts and other moving parts.

Keep all chains lightly lubricated with grease, oil or dry graphite. Maintain



Although topdressers are generally among the most low-maintenance turf management tools, consistent routine maintenance keeps them running efficiently and preserves resale value. Photo courtesy Dakota Peat & Blenders.

proper alignment of conveyor belts and chains. Proper tension of belts and chains is equally important.

Periodically check tire pressure for the recommended psi. This will help prevent ground compaction caused by vehicle weight.

After checking the hourly maintenance guide in your owner's manual, lubricate the machine accordingly. If the topdresser does not have sealed bearings, make sure you grease them after every washing.

Periodically check all oil levels and change oil in accordance with your operator's manual. Make sure to maintain records of oil changes, as well as all maintenance performed.

Additional information can be found

in the "trouble-shooting" section of most manuals. Reading this section thoroughly can save you valuable time in diagnosing problems should they occur.

The result of consistent, thorough, ongoing maintenance is an efficient, long-lasting machine. If worn or damaged parts are found during your inspections, replace them immediately. Remember, the level of any machine's performance, regardless of make or model, is directly related to the service it receives. Paying attention to regularly scheduled maintenance reduces operating costs while preserving resale value. □

Editor's note: Kevin Kyello is the assistant national sales director for Dakota Peat & Blenders.