

# Mid-season check on integrated baler and wrapper

Peter Thomas Keaveney spoke to Michael Boyle of McHale Farm Machinery for tips and advice on points to check mid-way through the baling season

**M**ichael Boyle, from Milltown, Co Galway, has been a service technician with McHale Farm Machinery for almost 20 years. He has been working on the McHale Fusion integrated baler and wrapper unit since it came to the market in 2003, so he has a vast knowledge of the machine.

For this piece, we chose a 2012 McHale Fusion 2 combination baler doing an average of 13,000 bales per year, a typical contractor or farmers' machine being worked around the country.

## Safety

From 2007 to 2016, 21% of all deaths in agriculture involved farm machinery. With the ever-increasing workload contractors and farmers are put under, it is essential that each and every one of us takes the time required to carry out simple maintenance and daily checks on our machinery.

An adequate hitch pin is essential and

Michael recommends that a bolt should be used to secure the underside of the pin. The drive shaft should have a perfectly functional cover. There should be easily accessible grease points without having to remove the cover.

All lights should be checked regularly and kept in sound working order. All panels and guards must be correctly on the machine while it is in operation. The brakes should be checked at least twice per year and adjusted if necessary. Wheel studs must be checked and tightened if required.

## Pick-up reel

The pick-up reel is an essential part of the machine and must be maintained to a very high standard for the machine to function.

Michael recommends that the pick-up reel needs to be gone through in depth before the machine is put to work.

Any broken or damaged tines should be replaced and all scroll pins on the tine



bars need to be replaced at regular intervals.

Cam bearings on the tine bar ends along with bushings need to be replaced at least once per season. The cam track should also be inspected for any wear. All bands must be attached while the machine is in operation. Bearings in the small wheels that the reel runs on should

be inspected and replaced if necessary.

## Chains

All chains should be checked on a regular basis. They can be adjusted using the easily accessible tensioners. It will be evident when chains are coming to the end of their life span, as the tensioners will be at the maximum and the chains




## Sprayer Demo Day

**Tuesday 1st August 10am-2pm**  
**Ballygunner, Waterford**

Selection of mounted and trailed sprayers on display

BLUE MEANS REASSURANCE  
**THE VEGA FIELD SPRAYERS –**  
COMFORT AND EFFICIENCY






For more information please visit  
our website [www.suirsprayers.ie](http://www.suirsprayers.ie)  
or call us on **051-821500**



**Netter:** The reservoir for the barrel wrap option should be checked and kept topped up with hydraulic oil.



**Wrapper unit:** All of the rollers on the wrap dispensers should be cleaned and oiled. All rams should be greased on a regular basis.



**Chains:** Once the baler hits around the 20,000 bale count, a complete new set of chains should be fitted.



**Pick-up reel:** The pick-up reel is an essential part of the machine and must be maintained to a very high standard.



**Safety:** A perfectly working drive shaft cover and good hitch pin are essential.



**Cleaning:** This build-up of grass around the wheel arches should be cleaned down daily.



Peter Thomas Keaveney with Michael Boyle.

will start to slacken more and more before they eventually break.

Once the baler hits around the 20,000 bale count, Michael explained that the operator should replace the full set of chains. Otherwise, these chains will begin to break one by one, which will slow down the operation on busy days when the time frame to complete work may already be minimal.

McHale Farm Machinery gives people the option of purchasing a kit containing the full set of chains cut to length, which provides for easy replacement.

**Knives**

Ideally, a new set of knives should be fitted to a baler at the start of every season. In perfect grass conditions, a new set of knives will adequately chop up to 1,000 bales. These knives should then be removed and sharpened professionally using a grindstone. This method is far better for longevity of the knives and it is safer than sharpening them at home using an angle grinder.

After their first sharpening, this process should be repeated after every 500 to 600 bales, depending on grass conditions. In perfect swarths, a set of knives can chop up to 7,000 bales (after frequent sharpening).

Michael recommends that there should be a spare set of knives on the baler in case they come into contact with any objects which may damage or break them. He said every farmer or contractor should have a spare sets of knives on the shelf in the shed ready to go at all times.

**Cleaning**

Michael emphasised the importance of



**Knives: Knives should last for 7,000 bales with regular sharpening in good grass conditions.**

regularly cleaning down the baler. He said: "It is absolutely vital that these balers are often cleaned down. Old grass will build up and can pose a fire hazard.

"Operators who clean down their baler on a daily basis may spot something loose or even a hydraulic hose leaking oil. Simple things like this can avoid major downtime later down the line.

"Dust and dirt should be cleaned off sensors and valve chests using an air compressor. This will help maintain and improve the overall life span.

"Operators should back their baler into the shed on a wet day when things are not too busy and spend time going through the machine. These days should be spent oiling and greasing all points, changing knives, cleaning out the knife banks and replacing scroll pins, etc," he said.

The control box should be mounted



**WATCH ONLINE**  
watch the video on  
[www.farmersjournal.tv](http://www.farmersjournal.tv)

on a safe bracket in the cab. The wiring loom should be kept free of any dust and dirt. If possible, there should be a good power supply to the control box.

As Michael said himself, "if you respect and look after the machine, it will look after you".

**Wrapper unit**

The wrapper unit doesn't require much maintenance. The break pad unit for the wrapping ring should be maintained at the beginning of every season. If this is done correctly, it should be perfect for the full season.

All of the rollers on the wrap dispensers should be cleaned and oiled. All rams should be greased on a regular basis.

The two cut-and-tie units can be easily taken out and cleaned. They should be taken out at the beginning of the season every year. It's a simple task of opening one bolt, sliding them out by hand and then cleaning and oiling them. The blades can be changed very easily too if required.

**Netter**

This particular baler comes with the option of applying standard netting or the more recently introduced barrel wrap option. Because of this, there is a small oil reservoir for the barrel wrap, which is located on the right-hand side of the baler beside where the roll of barrel wrap is placed. This reservoir should be checked and kept topped up.

At the beginning of the season, the netting unit may require some maintenance around the erring wheel. Michael said that if this is gone through at the start of the season, it should be fine. The erring wheel should be kept nice and rough. If it has gone smooth, it means that it requires replacing.

Michael explained that for larger issues, such as problematic valve chests or any issues with sensors, operators should contact main McHale dealers. Michael stressed the importance of having a good dealer on hand who is willing to provide a top-notch after-hour and weekend service if required.

Michael also reminded us of the importance of storing these machines indoors in a dry environment for the off season.



home of BKT tyres in Ireland



**SKIDSTEER TYRES**

*for agricultural & industrial applications*

SKIDSTEERS & BOBCATS  
SMALL LOADERS & TELEHANDLERS



Like us on  
**Facebook**

*Tyres available from  
BKT Agents countrywide*

