

Custom Operators Nominate Best, Worst Combines

three 2001 9750's and two 9650's," says a Nebraska cutter. "The 9750's all have nearly 800 separator hours and 1,100 engine hours on them with very little downtime. They have unbelievable capacity. However, the company needs to beef up the feederhouse chain and increase unloading capacity.

"The 9650 STS is a little short on bin room and horsepower, and both models need a heavier feederhouse chain.

"The 936 draper header needs to have a reverser on the center belt. Otherwise it works good. The corn head needs to be beefed up to handle the bigger combine and higher yields. Deere hasn't updated its gearboxes for 32 years. We added Bish bin extensions to increase grain tank capacity.

"All our combines have the Green Star crop monitoring system. Deere needs to improve the system's reliability. We replace our combines every year and recently traded in for 2002 models."

Deere: A South Dakota cutter who owns three 2000 9650 STS's says he's "very happy" with them in terms of performance, capacity and maintenance. "They're constructed well except for the pipe that turns when you adjust the concave. It's built way too light and the bracket broke off. The controls on this machine are very good, as is its cleaning ability. I installed a hitch on back for pulling a header behind the combine."

New Holland: "They do a good job of handling weeds and produce a clean threshing sample," is how a Colorado cutter describes his 1998 TR 98's. "The company should make the clean grain elevator out of heavier material. My elevators wore out at the top and bottom. The cage by the rotors is also made too light. I installed an air chaffer, which helps the performance a lot by saving more grain at higher ground speeds."

Deere: Two 1998 9610's have been nearly trouble-free, says a North Dakota harvester. "We've put about 1,000 hours on each one. One complaint is that the combines are hard to work on due to interference from either the body structure or belts and chains. More thought should go into designing these machines so they can be worked on by the farmer as the machine gets older.

"We installed Easy Cut sickles on our headers. They do a better job of cutting and

"These combines are hard to work on due to interference from either the body structure or belts and chains."

also last longer. We had a similar experience when we used the Cray Gold Cut sickle system, but maintenance requirements with that system were too high - similar to Deere."

Case-IH: An Oklahoma cutter switched from Deere to Case-IH last year, buying two 2388's. "I'm very satisfied with them. My productivity increased by 20 percent. I had less than two hours downtime on both machines with a total of 1,830 separator hours and 2,550 engine hours. One improvement would be to give a 10 percent increase in horsepower. The optional feederhouse quieting kit should be standard equipment. The rear axle could be moved back, allowing the use of larger rear tires without interference from the return elevator. I also wish it had a

grease bank so greasing the machine would be a less time-consuming job.

"I used a MacDon 962 header last year, and ordered a 36-ft. 1042 model for this year. I've operated MacDon headers for seven years and they're very good.

"We adjusted the angle of the rotor drive to provide maximum belt area on the pulleys. We also adjusted the throttle linkage to keep rpm's at maximum and we extended the feeder chain by adding half-links to keep the chain as close to the auger as possible."

Case-IH: "This machine performs well in all crops," says a Minnesotan about his 2166's. "More engine power would be a plus. Otherwise it's a good-running combine. The header seems to be matched well with the combine. I've had a few electrical problems but they were solved by the dealer or myself."

Deere: An Iowa custom cutter is satisfied with his 2000 9550's. "They have a lot of power and good capacity for their class. They could use a longer sieve when working on side hills. I hate the single control lever. I have a small hand and it gets sore after a few hours of use. I don't like the auger controls on the handle. It's too easy to make mistakes by hitting the wrong button.

"It costs too much to switch old headers over to fit the new machines. There should be a better solution than trading headers or buying new drive shafts."

"I cut out every other plastic finger on the sieve extension corners so I don't lose as much grain on side hills.

"If I were in the market for a new combine, I'd stay with a Deere conventional model. You can't bale straw behind a rotary when the straw is dry, and they don't spread straw out far enough when the straw is tough. Also, I wouldn't want a rock to get into a new STS - they're too expensive to repair."

Deere: A Texas harvester says he's had "too many problems" with his 2000 9750. "I received recall notices about the straw chopper that my dealer didn't even know about. My 930R header fatigued in the middle. I had to replace the main frame which kept me out of the field for a month. The full fingered auger shaft inside moved and poked holes in the auger. In sunflowers we close off the precleaner to keep the return auger from plugging. They should make the precleaner adjustable.

"Next time I'll buy a New Holland CX. I watched it being demonstrated and liked its performance and capacity."

New Holland: An Illinois harvester says he likes his TR-99. "It has high capacity, a lot of power, few moving parts, is easy to adjust, and a great straw chopper. The new platform augers with full length retractable fingers work great."

Case-IH: "It has a lot of capacity and is generally a dependable machine," says an Iowa cutter about his 1999 2388. "However, it does use a lot of fuel. Unloading is slow if the machine is parked uphill. This machine needs some grease banks for easier servicing. The metal is too light in the feederhouse floor and auger bed. The flex header could cut closer, and the rigid header doesn't cut well if it's pushed to capacity. The slats on the feeder chain were too light. I bought a replacement chain from Manchester Mfg., Manchester, Okla. I also replaced the concaves with ones from St. Johns Welding, St. Johns, Kansas. They worked okay until we got in rocks. Then the bars broke. I never had that problem with Case-IH concaves."



Pull-type track system is designed to fit everything from wagons to planters.

Lower Cost Track System Designed For Multiple Uses

A new lower cost, multiple-use track system is designed to fit everything from wagons to planters.

What makes the new tracks different is that you can use one set of tracks on more than one machine. They also feature a new flex wheel support system that floats better over rough ground.

"Many farmers would like to try tracks but they can't justify the expense on a machine they use only for a few weeks a year," says Chuck Fulk about the new Track Specialties track system. "Our tracks are designed to fit your existing equipment. For example, after you're done planting you can pull the tracks off and put them on a wagon or manure spreader. The tracks are easy to install, with bolt-on plates.

"What's more, we're working to keep the price down," notes Fulk. "Farmers can save money by installing the tracks themselves, or by fitting the undercarriage with used tracks, which sell for one third to one half the cost of new tracks. Used tracks will last a long time on something like a grain wagon, which is used only for a few weeks each year.

"We're currently designing a toolbar system for planters that will be in the field this spring."

A key feature of the new track system is that it's designed to better distribute heavy loads along the entire length of the track. The result is less stress on the track's supporting wheels and also on the implement frame. "When the track goes over an object, the supporting wheels are free to move independently up or down. The wheels can also pivot left or right up to 90 degrees," says Fulk. "The track system absorbs all the shock. Conventional track systems don't have this flexibility, and as a result some wagons have had weld failures due to stress caused by the twisting action of the track."

Fulk says the company's new track system for 60 to 90-ft. toolbar planters "will be a



Photo shows undercarriage mounted on Kinze grain cart. Note how tracks tilt outward, a feature not found on any other track system.

great step forward in design. As planters get bigger and heavier, their wheels sink into soft ground, causing compaction. Some farmers are now using 36-row planters, which starts to max out the weight that typical rubber wheels are designed to carry."

Track Specialties offers three different track systems - 3/4 (234 in.); full (344 in.); and a pull-type, multiple track caddy system. Track widths are available from 16 to 36 in.

The company has also come up with a kit for the Deere seed meter vacuums that's designed to improve the accuracy of seed placement. "Most farmers who own a Deere vacuum planter have a problem with accuracy when planting certain seed sizes at certain speeds," says Fulk. "The Deere vacuum meter does well with round seeds but can have problems with flat and/or non-uniform seeds. Our vac meter kit greatly improves accuracy of seed meters. It lets you plant most kinds of seed sizes with one plate, one vacuum setting, and at speeds up to 8 mph."

The company's track systems start at \$15,500 (price does not include tracks).

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Track system designed for big planters "greatly increases flotation," says the company.