

Ten Tips to Prepare Your Planter for Spring

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Many of Kinze's (headquartered in Williamsburg, IA) employees are farmers themselves and know that spending a little time on machinery maintenance during the off-season can help ensure planters are running at their best when the planting window finally arrives.

With that in mind, Kinze recommends a few simple actions farmers can take now to ensure their planters are ready for planting this spring:

1. Inspect the soil engaging components on the row units and replace any badly worn parts.
2. Check wear on disc opener blades, and replace 15-inch blades when they are worn to 14.5 inches in diameter. Ensure the disc blade contact is 1 to 1.5 inches.
3. Inspect the inner scraper to be sure it protects the seed tube, and replace scrapers when they are worn to five-eighths of an inch or less.
4. When inspecting gauge wheels, check for light contact of the tire to blade in the operating position.
5. Look over the planter arm and bushings. Different field conditions can affect the depth adjustment of the planter, so check and adjust the depth when field conditions change.
6. Assess closing wheel performance, ensuring that wheels are centered over the seed trench. Apply only enough down pressure to maintain good seed-to-soil contact. If the closing wheel plugs with crop residue, the seed trench won't close properly, so closing wheels may be offset slightly for better residue flow. An optional closing wheel shield might be needed to help prevent stalks from lodging in the closing wheel arm.
7. Adjust the hitch height so the tongue runs parallel to the ground when the planter is in planting position. The parallel arms of the row unit should be approximately level when the toolbar is 20 to 22 inches above the planting surface. On the planter's parallel arms, check the bolts, bushings, down pressure springs and the drive chains to be sure all parts are performing optimally.
8. Do not forget other planter attachments that contribute to uniform seed placement, like no-till planter parts. No-till coulters should be set at a depth slightly above the disc opener blades. Residue wheels are intended to move obstacles in the path of the row unit to reduce hair pinning of the residue and create smoother row unit operation. Residue wheels should be adjusted to just skim the planting surface and may not turn 100% of the time. If the tines of the wheel are building up with moist soil, they are set too deep.
9. Perform a safety check to confirm all lights and safety systems operate correctly.
10. Don't forget electronics and technology updates. Check for software updates - these systems are just as important as the physical aspects of the planter. Contact your equipment dealer for more information.

