

News Column

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Stop spreading weed seed during harvest activities

I realize that fall harvest has been going pretty steady now for at least a few weeks and some may even be about done, but none the less this article has some good points to keep in mind for future harvests.

Weeds can spread in a variety of ways, including on farm equipment. As you move harvest equipment from field to field, be aware of the potential to spread weed seed – especially if uncontrolled weeds are known or suspected to be herbicide resistant. Some steps that can be taken to prevent the spreading weeds when moving harvest equipment from one field to another are listed below.

- Clean purchased used equipment (new-to-you) so someone else's weeds are not introduced to your farm.
- If possible, harvest fields with excellent weed control first.
- Harvest fields where weeds are the worst or might be herbicide resistant last.
- Harvest around areas with extremely dense weed populations.
- Slow the combine to 'self clean' between fields:
 - run the unloading auger empty for a minute or two
 - open grain elevator doors, rock tramp, and unloading auger sump then run the separator with maximum air flow and suction
- Use an air compressor to remove material remaining in rock trap and grain auger and from the head, feeder house, and straw spreader
- Take half a day to do a deeper cleaning when possible
- Check fall-tillage equipment between fields

It is very difficult to completely remove weed seeds from harvest equipment. However, taking a few minutes to reduce the number of seeds on your harvest equipment may ultimately save time, and money in the future.

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