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Extension News by Mark Keaton: Preventative maintenance can save time, money

Have you ever noticed when you are on a tight schedule and don't have the time to waste, the equipment you need to use is either broken, or just isn't working right.

When this happens, there is no choice but to spend the time and money to fix or patch it up to finish the job.

Unfortunately, this problem can't be completely avoided, but it can be reduced.

The key is preventive maintenance.

Preventive maintenance is something we all know should be done. However, the heavy time demands of farming often prevent it during the spring, summer and fall. This leaves the winter months to focus on preventive maintenance.

A good way to start on preventive maintenance is repair the equipment that was just "patched up" to finish the season. Think back over the year.

Has the equipment that didn't work properly been repaired? Or, just patched up, setting the stage for another crisis this year?

At this time of year, time can be taken to order any needed parts and make necessary repairs. Remember, spending money on maintenance and repairs now will often save time, frustration and money in the future.

The next step in preventive maintenance is to inspect the farm for problems or conditions that need attention.

After the existing problems and the potential problems have been corrected, think about the appearance of your operation. How does it look to your neighbors?

What about someone not familiar with your type of farming? This can be a very important point because appearance is what leads to some of the complaints against livestock farms.

Remember, preventive maintenance will save you time, frustration and money by reducing the number of times something breaks just when you need it.

Spending a little time and effort to improve and maintain the appearance of your farm will make it a more pleasant place to live and work. It should also help avoid conflicts with neighbors.

For information on livestock production, call University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension office at 425-2335.

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