

# "Owner's Report" On New "Stripper" Header

We asked owners of the revolutionary new Shelbourne Reynolds "stripper" header from England to "tell it like it is" in evaluating the performance of this first-of-its-kind new combine head which uses keyhole-shaped plastic fingers to strip grain heads off stalks without the use of a cutterbar. FARM SHOW first featured the new header in 1986 (Vol. 10, No. 3) soon after it was developed by British research ag engineers.

**Mac Baggett, Adams, Tenn.:** Two years ago Baggett went to England to see the "stripper" header in action. He became one of the first farmers in the U.S. to buy one and has used it for two years on wheat and barley. It's mounted on a Deere 9500 combine.

"One combine equipped with a stripper header will do the work of two combines equipped with conventional headers. It's a big plus when no-tilling double crop soybeans. By wrapping up wheat harvest in half the normal time, I can get my double crop beans in 6 to 10 days earlier. It strips the heads from the stalk so there's nothing but husks and a few leaves and stalks going through the combine. Most of the straw is left standing in the field. The result is much better seed-to-soil and herbicide-to-soil contact.

"The stripper header also does a better job in down wheat. The plastic fingers scoop up fallen stems whereas a conventional header almost has to dig in the ground to get them.

"The only problem I had were some broken plastic fingers that hit the ground when picking up down wheat. The company has solved the problem by installing metal reinforcing on the teeth."

**Richard Dunville, Slaughters, Ky.:** Richard and his brother Jerry used the stripper harvester on 700 acres of wheat this year.

"It did a fantastic job. It travels at least twice as fast as conventional combines. Lets an older combine outperform a new one and more than doubles capacity due to the drastic reduction of crop material it puts through the machine," says Richard, who mounted the stripper header on his 1979 Deere 7720 combine. "The planter doesn't have to cut through piles of chopped straw left lying on the ground. There's also less wear and tear on the combine because there's much less crop material going through the machine.

"It lets us thresh higher moisture wheat because of the reduced flow of crop material through combine so we can harvest two to three days earlier than we could with a conventional header. You hardly know that anything is going through the machine. It's hard to believe the difference. It produces a cleaner grain sample.

"Another benefit of the stripper is that weeds remain standing with full uncut leaves so weed control is better."

**Mike Sarver, Richland, Ind.:** "I've used a 20-ft. stripper header on my Deere 9600 combine for the past two years to harvest 1,500 acres of wheat. I harvest at 7.2 mph in standing wheat. Last year most of my wheat was on the ground, but still I seldom went less than 3 mph. The header combs lodged crops right off the ground.

"I have two combines, but I liked the stripper header so much that when my conventional combine broke down this year, I never took the time to fix it.

"The company made some improvements on the header last year. They added two skid plates and improved the drive coupler to drive shaft of combine. I would like to see a 25-ft. wide model, although the high ground speed does make up for lack of width. The

price tag is a little high, but if a \$25,000 stripper header does the work of two combines, it's much less expensive than buying a new combine."

**Pat Davis, Adams, Ore.:** Pat has three 20-ft. stripper headers mounted on three Case-IH combines. He has harvested 4,000 acres of wheat and barley with them. "It increases harvest capacity by 40 to 50% because it's so much faster than a cutterbar-equipped conventional combine. I can go 6 to 7 mph in 90 to 100 bu. per acre wheat compared to 3 mph with a conventional combine. I've harvested up to 1,800 bu. per hour with one combine. Less crop material through the combine results in cleaner grain.

"One complaint is that the fingers should be made to last longer. They tend to wear out fast in heavy dust conditions."

**Errol Lounsberry, Gueydan, La.:** Lounsberry mounted a pair of stripper headers on two 1988 Deere 8820 combines and used them to harvest 1,200 acres of rice this year.

"Stripper headers get the job done faster and also reduce grain loss. They look like giant vacuum cleaners going across the field.

"A few minor engineering problems need to be fixed. My combine is equipped with a header reverser, but I can't use it because the stripper header can't be reversed. It takes up to 45 min. to unplug. Also, it's difficult to tighten the drive belt and the chains that drive the header are too light. The European-type divider bends too easily. I removed mine. When you harvest down rice, it takes in too much straw which is hard on the header. The fingers show a little wear but seem to hold up well. I think the company would sell a lot more stripper headers if they were priced around \$20,000 instead of in the upper \$20,000 range."

**Mark Nix, Wynne, Ark.:** He mounted his 20-ft. stripper header on a Deere 9600. "Last year I harvested 800 acres of high moisture wheat at 7 mph. A conventional combine couldn't go more than 2 1/2 mph under those conditions. I was filling the combine's 240-bu. grain tank in just eight minutes. The stripper is so gentle I get absolutely no damaged grain.

"One problem is that the stripper header tends to throw chaff in front of the cab which gets the windshield dirty. I stretched a tarp behind the header and across the feederhouse to solve the problem."

**Chuck Abell, Welsh, La.:** "It's the combine of the future," says Abell, a distributor. "Mounting a stripper header on an old combine can increase its capacity and increase its life. If a farmer has a 10 year old combine in good shape but needs more capacity, he can buy a stripper header. For example, a Deere 7700 fitted with a stripper header will outrun a Deere 9600 or Case-IH 1680 in almost any conditions."

**Merwyn Searle, Shelley, Idaho:** "The only problem is that the rotor takes a lot of power. I had to install a heavier roller chain to drive the header," says Searle, who otherwise is pleased with his stripper header.

Searle mounted a 20-ft. stripper header on his 1981 Massey Ferguson 860 combine. He used the stripper header to harvest 700 acres of wheat and barley. "I needed more



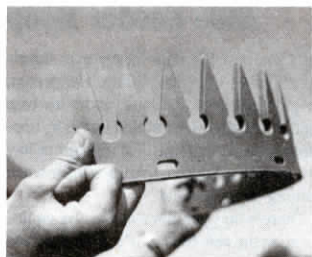
## Stripper Header Catches On In U.S.

Since it was first developed by British engineers in the mid-1980's, the Shelbourne Reynolds stripper header has created a lot of excitement all over the world.

The design is simple. Rows of keyhole-shaped plastic fingers mount on a reel shrouded by a metal hood. The reel rotates at about 500 rpm's, stripping grain heads off stalks, which are left standing in the field. Flow of crop material through the combine is reduced by 70% or more.

"We've had tremendous interest, especially from farmers in double cropping areas, where soybeans are planted after wheat is harvested, and in high-yielding wheat country where they have big straw crops to deal with. It's also an outstanding rice harvesting machine," says Paul McCredie, Shelbourne Reynolds engineer, noting that well over 100 machines have been sold in the U.S. the past two years.

Five different distributors are import-



ing the strippers independently. Contact: Big River's Ag, Owensboro, Kent. (ph 502 926-8737); Wallace Specialty Equipment, Fair Oaks, Ark. (ph 501 697-2226); Colusa Tractor Co., Colusa, Calif. (ph 916 458-4923); Blue Ridge Farm Center, Buchanan, Virg. (ph 703 254-1441); Int'l Farm Sales, Inc., Walla Walla, Wash. (ph 509 529-9837).

harvest capacity and using the stripper header is like having another combine because I can go twice as fast as conventional combines. It really fills the grain tank fast and also reduces grain loss. It does a great job in weedy or lodged grain. I think it would make a great machine for custom operators.

"I don't use the combine straw choppers at all."

**Larry Thompson, Allensville, Ky.:** "First-time users of a stripper header may not be prepared for the quicker harvest speeds and should probably schedule more trucks and grain carts," says Larry, who mounted a stripper header on a 1991 Deere 9500 combine and has two years of experience with it in wheat and barley. "On average I can cover 70% more acres per day than I could with the same size conventional combine."

**Stan Timmermann, Pendleton, Ore.:** "It's a well-engineered piece of equipment that will revolutionize wheat and barley harvest," says Timmermann, who farms in Umatilla County - the second largest wheat producing county in the U.S. He used a demonstration model 20-ft. stripper this year on an Allis-Chalmers N7 Gleaner rotary.

"It's well-suited to this area because average wheat yields are 60 to 90 bu. per acre, which means we have a lot of straw. The benefits wouldn't be as great in lower yielding wheat.

"The galvanized steel stripper guards on the fingers need to be chromed so they'll last longer. The guards wore out after only 700 acres. I also had problems with the draper system between the stripper beater and header auger. The beater could be moved back to the lip of the stripper auger to do away with the draper completely. Also, a

simpler chain or V-belt drive could be used in place of the three different gearboxes used on the drive end."

**Stanley Hula, Jr., Charles City, Va.:** "I was overwhelmed by its performance. It was one of the first machines I've ever bought that I didn't have to modify. I used it this year on 900 acres of wheat and 335 acres of barley. Because I didn't have to run all that straw through the combine, I could drive a lot faster. I cut 80-bu. wheat at 6 mph. One day I harvested 7,000 bu. on 90 acres whereas on a good day I could only harvest 3,000 bu. with my 15 1/2 ft. conventional header. I also figure I saved about 25 gal. a day on fuel with the new header because it does the job of two machines.

"It easily handles tough straw and lets me start earlier in the morning and work later in the evening. In fact, it worked best in the morning and evening. I actually had to slow down in the middle of the day because straw broke off and went into the combine."

**Don Halcomb, Adairville, Ky.:** "It's the best new piece of equipment I've ever bought," says Holcomb, who used a 20-ft. stripper header on his Deere 9600 to harvest 40 acres of wheat and barley last year, then bought one this year to harvest all of his 750 acres of wheat and 400 acres of barley. "I've been double cropping soybeans after wheat and barley since the mid 1960's, yet I've never found a good way to evenly distribute straw behind the combine. The stripper header leaves straw standing so the planter's no till coulters don't have to cut through a straw mat. It results in better soybean stands.

"Some of the fingers wore out too fast. I also had problems with the shear bolt breaking on the driveshaft. I heard that's been redesigned."