WTT SPECIAL FEATURE

By RAY LARIVIERE
Formerly Branch Manager
Berkeley Pump Company

Irrigation Pump

START UP MAINTENANCE

A WEEK TO several days prior to actual start up, an operator should remove the spark plugs and add a 50-50 mixture of diesel fuel and 10 weight oil to each engine cylinder and replace the spark plugs. At this time he should also open the seal on the suction of the pump and inject this same mixture between the eye of the impeller and the wear ring and then reseal the suction. When ready for the actual start up, the batteries should be charged and connected, taking care to clean all connecting terminals.

The tape on all engine openings should be removed, and the air cleaner refilled and replaced on the engine.

All electrical connections should be checked for tightness and corrosion and cleaned if necessary.

The spark plugs should be removed and the engine turned over slowly, without starting, to expel the oil in the cylinders. At this time the operator should insure that the pump is turning freely and is free of foreign objects. The spark plugs can then be replaced.

The suction and discharge piping and connections should be checked to be sure they are clear of foreign objects and, using new gaskets and pipe dope, can be reconnected.

The packing gland should be removed and new packing should be installed in the stuffing box as far forward as can be reached. The gland can then be installed, just tight enough to prevent the entrance of air while priming. If the stuffing box is equipped with a grease fitting, a new charge of grease should be applied.

The primer and priming valve should then be reinstalled and the pump primed.

After checking engine oil and coolant levels, the engine should now be started and slowly brought up to warm-up temperature. At this time the operator should check all of his safety switches to insure they are working. The over-temperature switch can be checked by removing a fan belt, water pump belt, or covering the radiator. During these tests the operator should watch the engine gauges very closely so that should any of the safety switches fail to work he can shut the engine down and replace or repair the switch. Since the engine oil must be drained anyway, the operator can check the low oil pressure safety switch by removing the drain plug from the engine while it is running slowly.

The engine should then be refilled with the proper oil and restarted.

To check a loss-of-prime safety switch the connection between the pump and switch can be removed allowing the pressure to drop to the switch.

The operator should then check the engine and pump for any leaks

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OPERATIONAL

THE STUFFING BOX area is of primary concern in the operational maintenance on the fluid end of the pumping unit. Most centrifugal pumps used in the irrigation field are of stuffing box construction. By its design, a stuffing box must leak a little of the fluid being pumped in order to cool and to lubricate the area where the packing contacts the shaft or shaft sleeve. If we do not allow proper leakage through the stuffing box the packing will become overheated and dry, resulting in the burning of the packing and the scoring of the shaft sleeve.

Once the packing is burned and hardened and the shaft sleeve scored, no amount of adjustment will maintain proper leakage for any length of time. The shaft or shaft sleeve must then be replaced and a full new set of packing must be installed. Proper leakage varies some among the manufacturers, but generally a leakage of 8 to 10 drops per minute is acceptable.

Although most sprinkler systems today operate at high pressures at the pump, usually in a 60 to 100 PSI range, pump manufacturers have designed most pumps used in this field so that the stuffing box of these pumps are subject to considerably lower pressures than what is felt at the pump discharge, usually only 20 to 30 PSI. This means that when tightening the packing gland of a pump that is producing

TROUBLE SHOOTING

WHEN I THINK of troubleshooting, I think of a story that was told once about a lady who had a domestic pump that had stopped working. The lady called a repairman. The man studied the pump for a couple of seconds and then hit it once with a hammer. The pump immediately started working. Several days later upon receiving a bill for $28.17, the lady called the repair shop and demanded an itemized statement.

She received the statement and it read: Repair of pump: Hitting with hammer—.17, Knowing where to hit —$28.00.

Troubleshooting a centrifugal irrigation pump is much the same as that repair job. Fixing the trouble is usually easy, knowing where to look for the trouble is the big thing. To know where to look for the trouble, a person must understand the function of a centrifugal pump.

The function of a centrifugal pump is to take the water that is delivered to the eye of the impeller and pump this water to another destination. It is **not** the function of a centrifugal pump to pull water from any source. It only pumps water that is delivered to it. Ninety-five percent of all troubles when a centrifugal pump will not perform can be found on the suction side of the pump unit; the failure to deliver water to the pump, or the failure to deliver enough water to the pump.

Let's take a case where a centrifugal is operating under a suction lift condition. The operator has a vacuum type primer on this unit and after operating the priming device for some time is unable to raise the water into the eye of the pump. This trouble is usually caused by air leaking into the pump or suction

And Engine Care

MAINTENANCE

75 PSI at the discharge you are only working against a pressure of approximately 20 PSI at the packing. Therefore, a pump of this type with the sleeve and packing in good condition and properly adjusted should not require constant readjustment, but should be checked daily.

Operators of the pumping equipment should take caution that should additional rings of packing be needed, add only the type and size of packing as recommended by the manufacturer. Different sizes or types of packing, other than recommended, might not give the proper service and might damage the shaft sleeve.

Most operators of pumping units are more familiar with the proper operational maintenance for engines than for pumps; most will check the coolant and oil levels. However, in many cases the operator, when adding to the coolant or oil, fails to add the proper materials. Most manufacturers recommend that their engines be run with a year-round antifreeze type coolant. When running an engine with just water for a coolant, you lose the advantage of the anti-rust type additive that is found in most types of antifreeze. In addition, if only water is used the manufacturers recommend that prior to winter the coolant be drained and refilled with antifreeze for winter storage.

Most engines cannot be complete-

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SHUT DOWN MAINTENANCE

THE MAINTENANCE performed on a pump and engine unit at the end of the irrigation season greatly affects the overall life expectancy of the unit. It may well make the difference between being able to get the unit in operation at the beginning of the next season.

Ideally, the pumping unit should be stored inside a protective building during long periods of shutdown. Regardless of whether the unit is stored in a building or left outside, these steps should still be followed prior to storage:

On the pump end, the suction and discharge piping should be removed, all water should be drained from the pump unit and a 50 weight oil should be injected between the eye of the impeller and the wear ring of the pump.

All openings, including the suction and discharge openings should be covered to prevent the entrance of rodents and foreign material into the pump unit.

If the unit has a diaphragm type hand primer on it, the primer should be removed, the opening into the pump plugged and the primer stored in a building.

If the unit has an intake manifold type primer made of glass or plastic, this should also be removed and stored in a building.

If the unit is equipped with a discharge priming valve that has a rubber seat or clack face, the valve should be removed and stored inside or the rubber parts should be coated with a good rubber preservative.

The stuffing box gland should be loosened and if the stuffing box is equipped with a grease cup or a grease zerk a couple of shots of grease should be applied to the stuffing box to force out remaining water and give some measure of protection to the packing.

If the unit is not equipped with grease fittings, the packing gland should be backed off and the last two rings of packing removed and grease packed into the stuffing box. The packing gland can then be tightened slightly to force the grease into the remaining rings of packing; then the gland should be again loosened.

If during the season you had encountered any difficulties with the pumping unit, such as excessive stuffing box leakage, or a serious pressure drop, indicating that your pump was wearing out, now is the time to order the necessary repair parts or remove the pump and get it to your dealer or manufacturer for necessary repairs.

This is the time of year when these people are usually at the low ebb of their season and can get your repairs accomplished. Your unit will be ready to go when you want to start your new season.

If your pump unit is connected to the driver by a flexible coupling

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line as fast as the operator is removing it. A vacuum gauge installed on the pump or suction line will tell an operator if he is actually pulling a vacuum with his primer or just moving air through his pump.

Air leaks can be found in a number of places: holes in the suction hose or pipe, cracks around welds on the suction pipe, loose or poor fitting flanges or gaskets, or cracks or holes in the pump case. If the air leak is not found in one of these areas, the operator should look at the valve on the discharge side of the pump.

Sand or other foreign objects may prevent the valve from sealing properly. The rubber face may be cracked or chipped and not seating properly. Many gatetype valves of all-metal construction will never seal properly to allow a vacuum to be applied to the pump.

The stuffing box on the pump may leak air. This is particularly true of a pump that has been out of service for some time and the packing has dried and hardened. If the pump is equipped with a grease fitting, usually a shot of grease will seal the stuffing box. If the pump is not so equipped, the packing gland might be tightened down to seal. However, the operator should be sure to loosen the packing gland again after he gets the pump going to insure proper leakage.

One other area to look for trouble is in the primer itself. Insure that it is functioning properly. On hand-type primers a check valve insures that air can be pulled out of the pump but not put in the pump. If grass or other foreign objects get into this check valve the operator may be putting air back into the pump at every stroke.

I have seen some trouble getting prime on pumps used as boosters, where a turbine pump is pumping into a centrifugal pump. On this type of installation, where a check valve is used on the discharge side

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OPERATIONAL MAINTENANCE *(from page 23)*

ly drained of all coolant and if the engine contained only water, enough water might be trapped in the engine after draining so that a cold snap could still cause cracking or other damage in the engine. Therefore, if antifreeze is going to be needed for winter storage anyway, it might just as well be used for the year-round coolant. When adding to a cooling system containing antifreeze, the operator should insure that even during the summer the additive consists of the proper ratio of water and antifreeze.

The use of the proper oil in an irrigation engine is the one area where more operators fail to follow the manufacturers recommendations and consequently shorten the life of their unit. Different fuels in the same basic engine require different oils. The type of oil that is just right for a diesel engine is not the right oil for a dry fuel engine. This is an area where the manufacturers recommendations should be checked before using any oil, and if an operator has to add oil during operational maintenance checks, he should insure that he adds only the recommended oil to the engine.

Each irrigation engine should be tagged by the operator with a label identifying the proper oil for that engine. Adding the wrong oil to an engine in many cases will do more harm than good to the engine. This is, of course, the time to check and clean all of the engine filters, and here again the manufacturers recommendations should be followed.

I would like to point out, while on the subject of manufacturers recommendations, that although all pump or engine manufacturers send out a packet of operation and maintenance instructions with their product, many times we find that these instructions are lost or misplaced during assembly or installation of the units and never reach the operator. It is important that distributors and installers of this type of equipment insure that the instructions reach the operator of the equipment or he has nothing to refer to in order to follow proper maintenance procedures.

If the pumping unit is powered by an electric motor instead of an internal combustion engine, the pump and maintenance remains the same, but the motor maintenance would consist of following a regular schedule of motor lubrication as recommended by the manufacturer.

Electric motors should not be greased every day, and, when greasing, the proper steps for flushing the old grease when installing new should be followed. Motor bearings can be ruined just as quickly by over greasing as by under greasing.

One other step to follow during operational maintenance of an electric motor driven unit is to insure that the area of air intake for the motor is free of weeds and trash that would prevent a full flow of air to the motor for cooling. The base or supports of the electric motor should be such that it will not trap and hold water directly under the air intake of the motor. Should water be held in this area it can be pulled into the motor along with the air by the cooling fan. Although most motor windings today are protected against this type of moisture, minerals contained in this water can sometimes attack the windings causing early winding failure.□

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