

Confessions of a Combine Driver

I must make a confession. I am the combine driver for our farm and there are a few things that I need to confess. I spend lots of hours in our combine and there are some weird things that I deal with. Let's get started . . .

I am in BEAST MODE

Normally, I am a pretty quiet, docile being. But once I climb into the combine and turn the key, I am in beast mode. Let nothing stand in my way. I am out there for one reason and one reason only—to harvest everything in sight. I drink on the go. I eat on the go. I actually monitor how much I drink so I don't have to stop and use the "outdoor" facilities. But one thing I have learned is my John Deere combine doesn't want me to go full beast mode. Can you believe the combine will error out after 20 hours of no one leaving the seat? Who does that?

Well, maybe it's not quite 20, but you get the point.

Combine Driver and Grain Cart Driver

There is no one that ranks higher than an experienced grain cart driver. No one. You need to work together—in tandem. We are like a well-oiled machine. If not, deer, birds, rodents will be eating very well. At first, you use a few body signals as to what you want them to do. For example, a nod means "take the grain cart and dump the corn into the truck." But after a bit, the body signals go away and magically, telepathy takes over. You can actually read each other's minds and know exactly what you are to do. It's amazing.

Baby Rabbits

Occasionally, as I am combining, I will see a baby rabbit, scared to death, hopping as fast as it can in front of me. Picture in your mind, an elephant and a mouse. This is what it looks like. I don't have the heart to run it over. I have been known to snail-speed drive .5 miles an hour so I don't run it over. And it's always the babies. They just haven't learned about combine dangers. Now, if the rabbit was a snake, I would run it over in a heartbeat. I couldn't look, but I know I would be helping out humanity. But baby rabbits?

Can't do it.

Bathroom breaks or lack thereof

Okay, let's talk about the elephant in the room. There are no bathrooms out in the field. But you have lots and lots of rows of corn. Those rows are your "bathroom." Before embarking on mother nature's act, I make sure I look in every direction to make sure no other tractor/combine is around. All four directions. And, oh, I also look out for hunters. Hunters that wear orange jackets. I almost forgot about them. Need I say more? And make sure you have your stash of toilet paper in the secret compartment located in the combine cab. Men don't have this issue. They can make it look like they are fixing the combine—a great coverup. Women – not so easy.

The Ultimate Buzzkill

I am not joking when I say I am in beast mode. But, when we run out of room in the corn holding bin and I get the call that says, "This will be your last truck" is like the air has been sucked out of me. I almost need a counseling session.

Meal Time

I am so fortunate that most of my meals are delivered to me out in the field. One lesson I have learned over the years is to make sure you eat what you may want to have another day. For example, if I don't eat the chips, I probably won't get chips the next day. An informal inventory is taken and it is assumed that if you don't eat something, you probably don't want it again. So the lesson?

Always eat the candy bar. Even if you don't eat it, take it for later. Because if you don't eat it, you won't get another one.

Again, always eat the candy bar.

Diet Coke

Yes, I need my diet coke Rachel Hollis. If you don't know who Rachel is or "Girl Wash Your Face" book, I understand that you may be living under a rock. But for me, it's a necessity.

All joking aside, the job of a combine driver is the best job in the world and I am so blessed to do it.

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