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hydraulic fill auger that mounts on the rear frame; hydraulic variable speed population control; and 24-row unit-mounted wavy coulters. We installed two 150-gal. liquid fertilizer tanks and deliver in-furrow fertilizer through Keeton seed firmers. In the tractor cab we have two boxes – a PC 4000 seed drive controller and a SM4000 population monitor. The radar sensor is mounted on the planter frame. The controller has a population rate adjustment knob. The operator can turn the knob to increase or decrease the set population up to 20 percent, in 2 percent increments on-the-go.

“This planter has excellent seed spacing and singulation, so small soybean seed goes farther which saves money. It has a large 45-bu. tank which requires fewer fill-ups and saves time. The rear splitter rows can be removed or installed in only about 15 minutes. If the monitor shows that the planter is over or underplanting we just turn the controller knob one or two clicks to increase or decrease the population to the desired setting. The controller automatically figures and displays seed spacing in inches for the programmed population. The monitor will even count wheat seeds – for example, 1.49 million per acre.

“This planter does have a few negatives. Cleanout when switching varieties is a time consuming job. The radar-controlled seed drop takes 10 ft. or so to start so if you stop in the field you have to raise the planter, back up, and lower the planter twice in order to get the correct marker down again.”

Stan Becker, Grand River, Iowa: “The two worst buys in my life are a pair of **Ford Escort** cars - 1991 and 1996 models. Both are equipped with 1.9-liter engines and automatic overdrive transmissions. The 1991

model has 85,000 miles on it and the 1996 model 91,000 miles. The main problem is with their transmissions. The transmissions on both cars received regular service and yet both went bad. A mechanic told me the transmission on these cars has an oil flow problem. I had to put in remanufactured transmissions which cost \$2,100 each.

“My 1988 Ford Escort equipped with a 5-speed manual transmission was my best buy. When I sold it last year it had more than 300,000 miles on it and was still going strong.”

Austin Krusselbrink, Woodstock, Minn.: “My best buy is my 1998 **Caterpillar** 45 row crop tractor. It handles great in the field without compacting the soil and has a super smooth powershift transmission. It also provides great operator comfort for long working hours.”

Eric Wallis, Rudyard, Mich.: Eric likes his 1998 **DeWalt** 18-volt cordless drill. “When both of my 110-volt drills died, I decided it was time to get a cordless model. I can carry it anywhere on the farm and do basically any job a 110-volt drill will do. It has adequate power for any job. I’m well satisfied with it.”

Ron Besler, Leader, Sask.: Ron nominates his 2001 **Chevrolet** Silverado 1500 pickup as his “worst buy”. “It’s very hard on fuel. The tie rods failed and I got in an accident and totaled the pickup out the first month that I had it. The company was hard to deal with. I wouldn’t recommend this pickup to my worst enemy.”

Henry F. Schmitt, Elkhorn, Wis.: “My best buy is my radio-operated **Drive Alert** driveway alert (Dakota Alert, Inc., Box 130, 112 West Main, Elk Point, S. Dak. 57025 ph 605 356-2772). It consists of two parts – a transmitter and a bell receiver. The transmitter is operated by a 9-volt battery and

He Likes Roto Chop Stalk Chopper

Chopping corn stalks while harvesting corn is an idea that makes a lot of sense. But does it work?

FARM SHOW recently talked with David Sather, Franklin, Minn., who has used a “Roto Chop” header-mounted stalk chopper for a number of years (Crary Co., Box 849, West Fargo, N.Dak. 58078 ph 800 247-7335 or 701 282-5520; fax 9522; E-mail: sales@crary.com; Website: http://www.crary.com).

“I’ve used the Roto Chop for seven years now to chop more than 5,600 acres. I couldn’t be happier with it,” Sather says. “The 10-in. chopper blades mount under the header and are chain-driven off the combine jackshaft. I used them this fall on my Deere 9550 combine equipped with a new 6-row 30-in. corn header. This header has sharp knife rollers that chew up the stalks a little, and the Roto Chop blades do the rest. I leave the chopped stalks on the ground over the winter to reduce soil erosion and don’t do any fall tillage at all. The following spring I go over the field



with a field cultivator. My soybeans averaged about 50 bu. per acre this year so the system is working for me. My only maintenance cost was to replace a gearbox that got damaged by a rock. I use an offset grinder to keep the blades sharp. The blades are reversible. A set of blades can be expected to last about four years.

“I paid about \$1,200 per row for the blades and I think they’re worth it, considering the expense of running an extra tractor and fuel for operating a pull-type chopper and also the expense of fall tillage work. It also saves a lot of time.”

sends out an invisible beam about 80 ft. If a person or vehicle breaks the beam, the transmitter sends a signal up to 500 ft. back to the bell receiver in the house or shop, which rings for about 3 seconds to alert you. I installed it in 1984 and it has never missed a car or truck that’s come into my yard. It hasn’t required any repairs.”

Henry C. Letellier, Greynull, Wyo.: Henry rates **Red Wing** shoes as his “worst buy.” “The shoes warped in the toe area so that I couldn’t wear them. The dealer sent them back to the company, but they said it wasn’t their problem and offered no solution or service.”

Noel Elfering, Kenosha, Wis.: “My 1991 **Ford** Ranger pickup is my best buy. It’s a small pickup but does a great job and has more than 100,000 miles on it. I’ve spent less than \$150 on repairs and it still has the original battery. It sits outside all the time but never fails to start.

“My 1993 **Chevrolet** 4-WD Blazer is my worst buy. I’ve had to spend more than \$4,000 for repairs. It has had three different batteries and has had to be towed three or four times. I can’t depend on it and, as far as I’m concerned, it’s a piece of junk. It has had two recalls for bad brakes, and now the gas tank leaks. I’ve always kept it inside a garage.”

John Tjoelker, Quincy, Wash.: “My **Whirlpool** Water Saver washing machine was my worst buy. I thought its water-saving feature would be a good deal for me to lessen the amount of water that goes into our septic tank. However, neither the company’s literature nor the salesman told me that the machine leaves the dirt in the bottom of the tank. From day one my wife said our clothes weren’t coming out clean. I went to the dealer and he called the company. They said the machine wasn’t designed to wash heavily soiled clothes and was past its warranty anyway. The machine is now sitting in a grain bin awaiting a trip to the dump. Anyone want it?”

Lyle Noland, Spring Bay, Ontario: “My 1991 **Dodge** 4-WD pickup equipped with a Cummins diesel engine is my best buy. I bought it used when it was two years old. It does a good job pulling a load.”

C.J. Phillips, Bluemont, Va.: “My 1998 **Worksaver** post driver is built much stronger than the Shaver drivers I’ve used in the past. The company was helpful with a couple of problems I had with it.

“My **Shaver** post driver is my worst buy. I had problems with the hydraulic leveling part of the driver but got absolutely no support or help from the company. When the problems couldn’t be solved I finally traded it in for the Worksaver.

“My **Deere** 6400 4-WD tractor and Deere 466 round baler are both best buys.

“My **New Holland** 258 and 260 hay rakes and the **Ellerbe** double rake hitch I use to pull them are all best buys. They’re real time savers.

“My **New Holland** 617 disc mower works great. I don’t think I’ll ever go back to a sicklebar mower.”

Vic Stratman, Argyle, Mo.: “My best buy is **Dickey** work pants. They outlast blue jeans by about four times and the pockets hold up well.

“My 1994 **Chevrolet** K3500 pickup equipped with a 6-cyl. 350 cu. in. engine is my worst buy. I bought it used last year with only 24,000 miles on it. I’m a Chevy man, but this pickup is the doggiest truck I’ve ever driven. I’ve owned a lot of 6-cyl. 350 cu. in. engines but this one runs like it only has four cylinders – three if I turn on the air conditioning. The dealer has worked on it many times with little success. It gets only about 8 mpg and uses more oil than my 1986 **Chevrolet** K20 pickup, which has 160,000 miles on it.”

Walter Brauner, California, Mo.: “I like my 1998 **Deere** 5210 tractor. It shifts good and has a lot of power in the field.”

Scott Lecompte, Shelbyville, Ky.: A **Kawasaki** Mule 2500 utility vehicle rates as Scott’s “best buy”. “It’s easy to operate and will go practically anywhere. It works good for spot spraying weeds along fence rows and for working around our barn lots. It can carry up to an 800-lb. load which works well for fencing chores or hauling feed and seed. I think everyone should have one.”

Dean Verghaus, Columbus, Texas: “The **Massey Ferguson** 282 tractor I bought in the fall of 1984 has more than 12,000 hours on

Readers Comment On Staber Washing Machine

John Tjoelker, Quincy, Wash.: We bought a new clothes washing machine from **Staber Industries** after reading about it in FARM SHOW. We like it just fine (Staber Industries, Inc., 4411 Marketing Place, Groveport, Ohio 43125 ph 800 848-6200 or 614 836-5995; fax 9524; Website: www.staber.com). It uses much less water and detergent than conventional machines because of its side-mounted drum that loads from the top. The tumble action allows you to wash more laundry per load and do a better job because of the more aggressive cleaning action. The normal gearbox is eliminated which reduces the energy required along with maintenance and repair costs.”

Nancy Heibel, Dorr, Mich.: “My **Staber Industries** clothes washing machine is my best buy. I bought it after reading about it in FARM SHOW. I wonder how I washed without it. It uses much less water and detergent than conventional machines so I save on water, electricity and soap. Where else are you going to get a machine that uses 1 oz. or less detergent? I’ve washed clothes without using soap and they still come out clean. I ordered the washer and within 24 hours it was at my doorstep.”

Joanna Vesecky, Baldwin, Kan.: “We bought a **Staber** washing machine after reading about it in FARM SHOW. We like

the fact that it uses much less water and energy. The salesman told us the machine was 100 percent guaranteed or we could get our money back. Unfortunately, the company does not appear to stand behind that guarantee.

“We paid \$1,200 for the machine. When it arrived, the water would not drain out of the machine. We had to bail it out by hand after washing our first load of clothes. The company promptly sent out repair parts for us to install and we got it working. But then we discovered that if you use bleach, it does not get rinsed out of the machine. If you put in a load of colored clothes afterwards, the bleach ruins them.

“After damaging a couple batches of clothing, we contacted the company. At first they just told us not to use bleach, but we have a disabled daughter who uses a lot of medicine that gets into her clothes, and we need to be able to bleach it out.

“Now the company wants us to ship the machine back to them in Ohio so they can test it. But they won’t admit there’s a problem so we feel we could get stuck with the shipping cost and still have a machine that doesn’t work right. In addition, they never did send us the rebate check we were promised when we bought it. They say they’re waiting to see what happens with the machine. This company has been very difficult to deal with.”