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**Daniel Yoder, Turbotville, Penn.:** "It has performed much better than I expected," says Daniel about the **Chicago Electric** 800-watt generator he bought at Harbor Freight. "The first one I bought ran 300 to 400 hrs. before the gas engine went out. I got another one, and it's still running with more than 1,000 hrs. on it. I use it 7 to 8 hrs. a day, five days a week, to operate two 300-watt bulbs. I think that's pretty good for a \$90 generator."

**John Burr, Sharon Springs, N.Y.:** "In 2008 I bought a used 2007 **Chevrolet** Uplander minivan with about 20,000 miles on it. It now has about 66,000 trouble-free miles. We've used this minivan to take four trips to Florida, averaging 25 mpg. It handles well, has a comfortable ride, excellent braking, and plenty of power."

**Aubrey Hargis, Higbee, Mo.:** "We own two 2002 **Honda** Recon 250 ES 4-wheelers. My wife uses one to water our garden and flowerbeds and to just get around. It's ready for its fourth set of tires. The other one is ready for its third set. No problems except for a switch under recall."

"I like my 2006 **Branson** 2910 4-WD tractor, which has about 300 hrs. on it. The 29 hp engine has plenty of power. I use this tractor to pull a 6-ft. tiller in heavy clay and to pull a 6-ft. bush hog. It's easy on fuel."

"The 2004 **Polaris** Ranger 500 utility vehicle I bought used now has about 1,100 hrs. on it, yet has required only routine maintenance. I don't use my Dodge pickup much since I bought the Polaris."

**Vincent Haines, Tabernack, N.J.:** Vincent's disappointed with his 2010 **Case IH** 1660 combine. "Before I could even go to the field I had to replace the combine's upper and lower sieves. I was able to make only 1 1/2 rounds before the machine stopped dead. I checked the oil and found it was dry, so I added oil. However, I made only 1 1/2 more rounds before the combine stopped again. I ended up having to replace two hydraulic lines."

"In 2011 I had just started to harvest rye when the inside of the machine broke all to pieces, and it cost \$17,000 to repair. Then

## "I wish the combine had burned up instead."

the main belt that drives the rotor broke and the combine almost caught on fire. I was told some bearings and bushings were bad and that I would have to take it apart and rebuild it. I wish the combine had burned up instead."

**Jerome Sprong, Meppen, Ill.:** "I've found that **Harbor Freight** tools work best for light duty use. I think their customer service is excellent. I bought an air stapler which turned out to be defective, so I called the company and they immediately sent a new stapler at no cost."

**Bob Pouelson, Elsberry, Mo.:** Bob's impressed with his 2004 **Kubota** BX2230 loader tractor equipped with a 60-in. mid-mount mower deck. "It's easy on fuel, even when working hard, and starts easy in both hot and cold weather. No major repairs. The only problem was with the seat, which the company replaced with a comfortable, new and improved seat."

He's disappointed with his 2009 **Homelite** 35cc chainsaw. "This saw is hard to start, and I can't keep the chain tight enough. Cutting performance is poor and the oiler doesn't put enough oil on the chain."

**Noel Isaac, New Virginia, Iowa:** "I nominate my **Foton** 504 tractor as my worst buy. When this tractor runs, it runs good.

However, it seems like it's always broken down. It needed a new clutch at 20 hrs. and a new starter at 45 hrs. The hydraulics fail at random for 2 to 3 days and then start working again. Two mufflers broke at the flange due to vibration. When the seat fell apart, I replaced it with an American-made seat."

"The owner's manual is written in Mandarin Chinese with just a bit of English. The worst problem is that no one but a Foton dealer will take this tractor in on trade."

**Carter Edgar, Three Brooks, N.B.:** "Some of your readers have complained that the batteries quit working on their **Sears Craftsman** cordless drills. I own six of the company's 19.2-volt models, and the batteries quit working on them, too. However, I find that if you take the battery apart usually you'll find a heater bar has burned off. To solve the problem, I just solder these back together with a flameless solder gun. By using this technique I've been able to keep my drills working for at least two more years."

**Robert Kinkammer, Anamosa, Iowa:** "I'm happy with both my 2008 **New Holland** TM120 and TN60A tractors. No more oil leaks like I used to have with Deere tractors."

"I've noticed that **Harbor Freight** tools sometimes get a bad rap in FARM SHOW, but I've had good luck with many of the company's products, including their 29-piece drill bit sets."

**William Armstrong, New Burnside, Ill.:** "I'm getting old and can't start gas saws any more, so I love my **Remington** 16-in. electric chainsaw."

**Solomon R. Miller, Eaton, Ind.:** "My 1989 **Deutz** Allis garden tractor equipped with a Kohler 20 hp engine is still going strong. It's equipped with a mower, rear pto, and on-demand posi-traction. I also use this tractor with a snowblower and garden tiller. I change the oil every 100 hrs."

**John L. Nissley, Millersburg, Ind.:** "My 2011 **Gehl** 5240E skid loader is always ready to go. I really like the 2-speed feature. The machine is powered by a Deutz engine that starts every time. This skid loader is built solid, whereas a lot of the new skid loaders are made of thin metal with poor rubber hoses."

**Rich McDonald, Maple Valley, Wash.:** A **Deere** LX288 riding mower rates as Rich's "best buy". "I bought it to mow the grass between the trees on my Christmas tree farm. It does the job well and takes a lot of abuse on rough ground. We also use the tractor to tow trailers through the rows as we pick up stumps and brush."

**William Chaffee, Bryan, Ohio:** "I just finished my 41<sup>st</sup> season mowing and plowing snow with my **Deere** 110 lawn tractor. The belts have only been replaced once and this tractor still runs like a deer. I wish I had installed an hour meter on it when it was new."

**Rich Millhouse, Terrebonne, Ore.:** "I bought my 1963 **Ford** 400 tractor used 10 years ago for \$6,500. It starts every time and has a lot of power. I upgraded it with larger capacity hydraulics, a 6-ft. loader bucket, bicycle air horn, and drink holder. This tractor is my best friend. I also put steel angle brackets inside the bucket to hold forks I made from trailer springs to handle brush."

**Charles W. McDonald, Inwood, W. Va.:** "We use our 2008 **Kubota** ZD21 60-in. zero turn riding mower to mow 7 acres of grass every week, and to mow alongside all our fences. The tachometer shows more than 1,200 hrs., yet the machine still has the original V-belt. The other mowers we used on this acreage wore out two belts per year."

"The machine is powered by a small diesel engine that uses very little fuel compared to gas engines. Our only expense has been



Fjords are work horses, but they're not as big and intimidating in size as most draft horses, say John and Bev Sluss.

## "Best Buy" Workhorse

"They can pull a carriage, be used for field work, or you can ride them," says John Sluss about his "best buy" Fjord horses.

The biggest attraction for the Brooten, Minn., farmer is that the Fjords are work horses, but not as big and intimidating in size as most draft horses. Fjords are typically shorter than a quarter horse – 13-2 to 14-2 hands – but have a more muscular build and are in the 900 to 1,200-lb. range.

Their gentle temperament was what cinched the deal for his wife, Bev, when the couple purchased their first Fjords in the late 1980's on a trip to Wyoming. The plan was to look at crossbred geldings, but they returned with four pregnant Fjord mares instead.

"The lesson is never travel with a four-horse trailer," Sluss laughs.

In talking to others and reading books, he learned how to work with them.

"They don't need to be broke. They just need to be trained," he says, noting that his 11-year-old daughter rode a stud that had never been ridden. "Working with them is a partnership type thing. They're very willing and forgiving."

Sluss notes that Fjords are very smart, and, like mules, they know their limit and will just stop working when they need to rest. If they receive calm, consistent and fair handling, Fjords develop a partnership with a trainer and forge a trusting and loving relationship.

Besides using his Fjords to pull carriages, he has used them to haul bales and manure on his organic farm.

"You have to keep them on a diet so they don't get fat," says Bev Sluss. "We put them



The Sluss's use their Fjords to pull carriages and to haul bales and manure on their organic farm.

on a dry lot at night so they can't eat."

The only disadvantage to the breed is that because of their smaller size and shape, work harnesses must be custom made for them.

Since he had a knee replacement surgery, Sluss notes he hasn't been able to work with the Fjords as much as he would like to. The couple currently has 10 Fjords, and they are willing to sell some of them.

While Sluss says he has seen Fjords sell for \$12,000 or more, in his area they typically sell for \$700 to \$3,000. When markets are high, the range for purebred, registered Fjords runs from \$1,500 to \$8,500 depending on bloodlines, ages and level of training. They come in five "dun" colors, have a dorsal stripe, zebra markings and sometimes a stripe over the withers.

For more information about the breed, go to [www.nfhr.com](http://www.nfhr.com).

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, RuralLife Farm Fjords, John and Bev Sluss, P.O. Box 475, Brooten, Minn. 56316 (ph 320 346-2538; [jsluss@tds.net](mailto:jsluss@tds.net)).

for two new front tires and for routine maintenance. We like this mower so well that we recently bought another one."

**Mary J. Speed, Toccoa, Ga.:** "My 2010 **Fiskars** pole saw is my worst buy. Up until about 5 years ago I was satisfied with every Fiskars tool I bought, and I still use most of them. However, the blades on their newer saws are too thin so they buckle when I push on the saw. Also, the teeth don't flare out as far. As a result it takes a lot more sawing to cut through wood, and the blade binds much more easily."

**Arnold Weber, Stacyville, Iowa:** "I'm disappointed with the **Goodyear** Wrangler tires on my new Ford F-150 pickup. I was able to put only about 13,000 miles on the pickup before all the tires had to be replaced."

**Mike Cobb, McLeansville, N.C.:** "My 2011 **Hay King** Pasture Renovator is my 'worst buy'. I bought a 6-shank model and used it exactly as specified in the user guide and with the recommended size tractor. I wanted to use the machine to open up hay and pasture ground, just as the machine is intended."

"However, I hadn't covered two acres before the shanks started bending and the machine was doing more damage than good. I contacted the dealer, who said he would

contact the distributor. I didn't hear back from either of them for two weeks, so I contacted the distributor and he said I must be using the machine improperly. I insisted he come down to inspect the machine and see exactly how the equipment had been used and how the ground had been worked."

"Finally after about three weeks, the distributor came out and agreed the machine was defective and that I had been using it as designed. He said he would have all the shanks replaced and after that, there should be no more problems. From that point on, I was instructed to deal directly with the dealer so they could resolve the problem."

"Another two months of unreturned phone calls went by, and finally I loaded up the unit and took it to the dealer for repairs. Once again, I heard nothing for about two months and had to drive to the dealer to see what was going on. Several other attempts to speak with the dealer failed. I finally asked for my money back. I was given an outrageous price for rental on the acreage that I had covered with the machine. In the end, I decided it was worth it just to get out from under this piece of junk."

**Homer Nelson, Andover, Minn.:** "I'm happy with my 2009 **Deere** 125 riding mower equipped with an automatic transmission. It