

Continued from previous page

of 100 miles a day and this pickup grosses more than 9,000 lbs. The engine has plenty of power and never fails to start. It gets 17 to 19 mpg. The combination of the GM/Isuzu engine and the Allison transmission can't be beat."

Kenneth Blanton, Bald Knob, Ark.: "My all-time best buy is the 1938 Deere 10-in. hammer mill that my dad bought used several years ago for \$30. It's our Saturday ritual to grind enough feed for two small herds of beef cattle. Currently, we're feeding 56 5-gal. buckets of feed each week using ground hay, corn, cottonseed meal, cottonseed hulls, and trace minerals. The hammer mill is pto-operated by a 1955 Deere 60 tractor, which is also a best buy. The hammer mill was manufactured the same year my dad was born. The last time we checked, genuine Deere parts were still available for the hammer mill. Dad replaced the hammers with

"My two Kubota tractors ride like lumber wagons, and sometimes it's almost impossible to get them into gear."

disc blades off a disc mower because they were much less expensive. That's the only modification we've made to the machine. It would be impressive to see the pile of feed that has come out of this mill over the past 20 years or so.

"Our 1964 propane-powered Deere 4020 tractor and 1965 diesel-powered Deere 4020 tractor, which we use in our hay operation, are both best buys. I think the 4020 is the best all-around tractor ever made."

Richard Billings, Gorin, Mo.: "I bought my 1998 Chevrolet 3/4-ton, 4-WD pickup used with about 66,000 miles on it, and it now has more than 300,000 miles. It's equipped with a 350 cu. in. engine. I installed a new fuel pump and intake gasket, as well as new wheel bearings. But all in all this pickup owes me nothing. I use it to pull trailers and to haul hay to town."

John L. Miller, Howard City, Mich.: "My two Kubota 8540 tractors ride like lumber wagons, and sometimes it's almost impossible to get them into gear. All the controls except the shuttle lever are poorly placed. I traded one tractor off at about 600 hours for a Farmall 80 utility tractor, which I really like. It rides and shifts like a car, and the controls are placed right. It's a pleasure to operate."

Paul Volkenant, Odessa, Minn.: Paul's pleased with the Cray Wind System he uses on his combine's flexhead. "It uses a continuous stream of high-velocity air to blow beans toward the auger and keeps short beans from piling up on the platform. Very seldom do I see shelled beans laying behind the sicklebar. It does a great job of saving beans."

Paul A. Heifner, Boyceville, Wis.: "My 2006 Deere 6420 4-WD tractor equipped with a 640 front-end loader has been trouble-free. The loader bucket and the bale spear change easily. The tractor has a small turning radius so it's easy to maneuver in tight areas. The 4-WD lets it go through deep snow to get round bales to my cattle. I did have some problems with the cab door gaskets freezing to the door frames, but I solved that problem by wiping anti-freeze on the gaskets and frames. A small amount is all it takes."

"My 2006 Chevrolet Impala SS has had a lot of minor mechanical problems. The

V-8 engine has a lot of power, but the fuel economy is just okay at 22 to 24 mpg. The 4 to 8-cyl. switching option seems to make very little difference in fuel economy. The engine uses oil, and with about 125,000 miles on the car I'm already on the fourth set of tires. I've been told this is a problem with all the SS models. I wish this car worked as good as my 1996 Chrysler Concorde, which has more than 200,000 miles on it."

Max Rogers, Florence, S.C.: "It has provided me with three years of care-free service," says Max about his 2008 Yard Machine 20 hp riding mower equipped with a 46-in. deck. "A friend drove my machine once and then promptly bought one for himself."

Shelley Christian, Boise City, Okla.: "I like my 1987 Deere 4050 diesel tractor. This tractor is easy to get in, has a lot of pulling power, and requires minimal maintenance."

"My Zimmatic center pivot irrigation system works okay. However, it has been so dry here that we have to run it a lot just to keep the ground soaked. With the high cost of fuel it gets very expensive to even raise a half-circle of wheat for feed."

Edward E. Eveleigh, South Coffeyville, Okla.: "Our 1985 Ford F-350 pickup had 299,970 miles when we traded it for a 1996 Ford F-250 crewcab model. It has about 258,000 miles and is still going strong. We also own a 2006 Ford F-250 crewcab model with about 10,000 miles on it. These are diesel pickups, and they all run great."

Clarence Olson, Madison, Wis.: "My Deere 6-wheel Gator lets me go anywhere safely and is a great help for doing chores. If our cows get out they turn around and go home when they see me coming, because they know they can't outrun my Gator."

Ronald Dove, Century, Fla.: "My 2004 Chevrolet Tahoe rides great. My 91-year-old mom likes this vehicle because it's easy for her to get in and out of. It's not real fuel efficient, but the comfort makes up for that."

Larry Flesher, Ridgeville, Ind.: Larry likes his Sunflower tillage equipment. "We own two field cultivators, a 9-shank deep-till disk chisel, and a 25-ft. heavy disk. They're all built heavier than other brands."

Don Kroner, Portage Des Sioux, Mo.: "Years ago I bought a Homelite 410 chainsaw. I can't tell you how many chains I've worn out on this saw. I use it to cut firewood for my house and shop and it always starts on the second pull. I think it has many more years to go. It's by far the best chainsaw I've ever owned."

Fred Nicholson, Burlington, Kan.: "I've had problems with my 2009 Poulan riding mower equipped with a 17 1/2 hp Briggs & Stratton engine and 42-in. deck. The tractor itself works okay but it doesn't seem to have enough power. Also, I've never been able to adjust the deck so it cuts even. I guess people think a 42-in. mower doesn't need gauge wheels."

Ed Landis, Abilene, Kan.: "I ordered about \$10,000 worth of parts from N Complete in order to restore a Ford 8N tractor but had trouble with some of the parts. For example, I couldn't get a socket in the manifold to tighten the bolts. And the manifold wouldn't fit the exhaust. Also, I couldn't get the hour meter to work. The company wouldn't fix anything after 30 days."

Gary Willison, Steep Falls, Maine: "My worst buy was a Shelter Logic pop-up shelter. I ordered it using the company's 5-digit serial number for the type of shelter we desired, but they sent the wrong model. We sent it back but they wouldn't pay the return postage. Then the company billed us again for postage on the correct shelter. In

Terra-Dome Home Is Super Efficient

Terra-Domes are cool in the summer, warm in the winter, and resistant to fire, tornados, hurricanes and earthquakes, says Beth McDonald, who has lived in a home made of three Terra-Domes since 1999. She can't figure out why more people don't build with the concrete design by Terra-Dome Corporation in Grain Valley, Mo. (www.terra-dome.com).

"I'm surprised more farms don't have them. They are strong enough to park heavy vehicles on top of them," McDonald says. Besides homes, the structures could be used for animal shelter and cold storage for produce.

McDonald, an architectural and environmental design professional, chose Terra-Dome after much research. Since junior high she has been interested in buildings that efficiently use the earth, sun and thermal mass. She discovered Terra-Domes when she was planning her Medway, Mass. home.

The company sells 24 by 24-ft. (\$20,000), and 28 by 28-ft. (\$25,000) domes as well as half-size units, with additional fees for options. The customer prepares the site. Terra-Dome pours the foundation the first day, sets up the fiberglass and aluminum forms and rebar the second day, and pours the third day.

"People don't know that underneath the yellow clapboard siding is a bomb shelter," McDonald laughs, referring to her home's strength. The solid design allows for big open spaces that don't require structural walls or beams, and the roof is 20 times



Although it looks like a conventional wood-framed home, McDonald's house is actually built around 3 concrete domes.

stronger than a flat roof. McDonald mixed the domes with timbers to create a spacious 3,800-sq. ft., four-bedroom home on the Charles River.

"I insulated mine on the outside," McDonald says. "The thermal mass is unbelievable. It absorbs passive solar energy and it's partially buried so the earth also helps heat it and cool it."

McDonald thinks Terra-Dome structures make sense for all regions of the country that face natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes and fires. Design possibilities are limitless, she adds, "from caveman to ultra modern."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Beth McDonald, 9 Neelon Lane, Medway, Mass. 02053 (ph 508 523-1838; lmret14@yahoo.com).

short, we had to pay three shipping bills to get one shelter. I won't deal with this company again."

Robert A. Ruston, Kelvington, Sask.: "I still use my 1950 Allis Chalmers B tractor and 1955 Allis Chalmers WD 45. Very few problems with either one. My 1982 Allis Chalmers D17 diesel tractor has 6,226 hours on it with no problems. My Deutz DX120 tractor has about 5,000 hours on it but still runs good. My 1966 Chevrolet 1/2-ton pickup still looks and runs good. I take good care of all my equipment."

Greg Lewis, Winchester, Ill.: "My 2003 Deere L120 riding mower equipped with a V-twin engine backfired every time I tried to shut it off. The dealer claimed there was a design flaw with the carburetor. Seven years and only 300 hours later, the machine started smoking under load even though this machine has always received regular maintenance. I expected more out of a Deere."

"I bought a used Gravely zero turn riding mower to replace the Deere mower. It uses only about half as much fuel and works faster - I can finish mowing about 45 minutes sooner than with the Deere. I have a swampy area that I couldn't cut with the Deere, but the Gravely hardly slows down. I plan to sell the Deere mower this spring and buy a Gravely 260 model. The 260 can go almost twice as fast and cuts just as good, even though it has a larger deck."

Bud N. Vogelzang, Sioux Center, Iowa: "The chainsaw chain sharpener I bought from Harbor Freight is my worst buy. After I used it to sharpen about six chains, the glue holding the magnets around the armature let loose and the motor burned up."

Lorn Manthey, Wanamingo, Minn.: "A year ago I saw three Montezuma portable toolboxes mounted on 4-WD tractors and combines (ph 800 759-5157; www.montezumamfg.com). The owner said it was the best investment he ever made for storing tools. After checking prices at



dealers and online, I decided this would be a major investment as these toolboxes aren't inexpensive to buy.

"A month later I bought a used ME300 Montezuma at an auction. It was fully stocked. Ever since I've used this toolbox almost every day. It has a powder coat finish so it doesn't scratch. Inside, my wrenches and sockets store neatly on metal fingers while screwdrivers and small wrenches fit into various size holes. The base and two side compartments are used to hold miscellaneous tools. The lid lifts on a hydraulic cylinder and stays up. When closed, the lid seals with weather stripping. Tough side handles make moving the toolbox an easy job. I have a 30 by 15-in. toolbox, but smaller models are available. For tool storage, access and arrangement, these toolboxes can't be beat."

Daryl Gerber, Silver Bay, Minn.: Daryl's well pleased with his 2007 Dodge Ram 2500 pickup equipped with a 5.9-liter Cummins diesel engine. "I bought this pickup two years ago with about 7,500 miles on it, and it now has more than 51,000 miles with no problems. It gets 21 to 24 mpg. I plan on driving this pickup for many years."

Gord Jopling, Lakefield, Ont.: "I like my 1985 Split-Fire 3-pt. mounted wood splitter (ph 877 548-3473; www.split-fire.com). It splits on both the forward and reverse strokes, which really speeds up firewood production. The only part I've had to replace on it was