

Farmers Like Calmer Trash Reduction Kit

problems. It has about 3,200 hours on it, so we're now starting to have a little trouble with the header.

"Our 1968 **Deere** 4020 tractor, which we bought used, is a best buy. We've had a front-end loader on it since 1974 and have used it to handle 1-ton bales all this time. The engine has about 9,100 hours.

"We have two **International Harvester** 1466 tractors, one 2-WD and one 4-WD, that together have 16,700 hours on them. They've done a lot of work but we've had to do quite a bit of repair work on them."

Davis J. Greene, Granite Falls, N. C.: Davis says the **Westendorf** Brush Crusher grapple he mounted on his Kubota front-end



loader is "like adding fingers to my loader. It'll handle everything from brush to logs, fence posts, and debris. We use it to cut firewood, pile brush, and load logs onto a bandsaw mill."

Norman Stafford, Dryden, Ontario: "My 2007 **Dodge** 1500 pickup runs quiet, handles well, has comfortable seats, and gets up to 23 mpg on the highway. No problems.

"My 2006 **American** pto-operated wood splitter equipped with a 15 gal. per minute hydraulic pump is a best buy. It'll handle logs up to 24 in. dia. or more and has a 4-way splitting head that works well. It requires only a 30 hp tractor."

Kenneth Hatt, Kentville, Nova Scotia: "My **Jonserud** 2141 chainsaw is a best buy. It's lightweight but has a lot of power for its size. It starts good and cuts well.

"My **Stihl** HS60AV hedge trimmer is my worst buy. We wanted to use it to shear Christmas trees, but we had numerous problems with the carburetor."

Wayne Lacy, Arp, Texas: "I'm well pleased with my 2004 **Deere** L130 lawn tractor equipped with a 23 hp Kohler engine. I use this tractor to mow my 1-acre plus lawn. It has been trouble-free except for a deck clutch that had to be replaced. It starts easy, has plenty of power, and maneuvers well in tight places."

Maurice Tack, Valier, Montana: "It's put together well and works great," reports Maurice, owner of a **Degelman** 580 High Lift rock picker. "I bought it used and needed an operator's manual so I called the company for one. They were very helpful and sent me a copy right away."

He's disappointed with **Demon** carburetors. "I bought one for a 1976 Chevrolet pickup equipped with a 400 cu. in. engine. It's a great carburetor if you want to do Friday night drag racing, but it's useless for a work truck. I bought a second carburetor but it didn't work any better than the first one. The pickup actually ran better with the original carburetor. This carburetor doesn't like cold or damp weather, and I never could get it to run right. It was the worst \$425 I ever spent."

David Lynch, Canal Winchester, Ohio: David's happy with his **Kubota** 21 hp zero turn riding mower. "I've had two Kubota zero turn mowers and I think they're the best on the market. This one has more than 1,000 hours on it. It's easy to maintain and has smooth controls.

"I love my 2003 **Dodge** 1-ton diesel

pickup. It's dependable, has a lot of power for towing, and does a good job plowing snow. It has more than 60,000 miles on it but has never let me down.

"I've found that **Shindawai** weed eaters and blowers are dependable and easy to start.

"My 2003 **Hallmark** 6 by 12 trailer is my worst buy. All the bolts are coming out and it won't go down the road straight. It eats up tires, and the lights don't work inside the trailer."

Mike Sammons, Labelle, Fla.: "I must disagree with the reader in your last issue who criticized his 1997 **Surburban**. He stated that he had replaced 6 fuel pumps in 4 1/2 years. I own a 1996 4-WD **Surburban** 1500 with a 350 cu. in. engine. I bought new and it now has 240,000 miles on it and has had only one fuel pump replaced. Other repairs have been very minor and nothing has been done to the transmission other than changing filters. I frequently pull a 4,000-lb. heavy equipment trailer loaded with thousands of pounds of steel with no problem whatsoever. I think your readers just got a lemon."

Thomas Weston, Decatur, Mich.: "I haven't had much luck getting accessories for my **Bush Hog** utility vehicle. I ordered a windshield three months ago and it still isn't here."

Morris Persons, Mogadore, Ohio: Morris has had problems with his **Promow** PRO 301 trailing reel mower equipped with three 18-in. gangs. "In assembling the height adjustment for the reels, I had to file brackets in order to install pins. There's not much flexibility with the reels. With the height set at 2 1/2 in., they don't do a very good job of cutting due to the tractor's wheels pressing down on the grass. As a result I have to back mow. If you buy a Chinese-made product, investigate it more carefully than I did."

Roger Hoffman, Coldwater, Kansas: "My 2005 **Ford** F-350 Super Duty flatbed pickup is a pleasure to drive. It has plenty of power to haul a 24-ft. trailer load of cattle on hilly roads without shifting out of sixth gear. No problems. I've never owned anything but **Fords** and that probably won't change."

Archie Corrigan, Milwaukee, Wis.: "Reading your Best of Farm Show publication recently, I was pleasantly surprised to see **Lehman's Hardware** mentioned (ph 877 438-5346; www.lehmans.com). This company is located in Amish country so they offer many non-electric items such as hand-operated washing machines and wringers. The company has bent over backward to locate hard-to-find items for me. Everything I've purchased from them has been high quality, and their prices are good, too. I'd recommend this company to anyone. They have a mail order catalog."

Peter Sylvester, Ellenburg Center, N. Y.: "It has worked great since the first flick of the switch and is quiet and trouble-free," says Peter, owner of a 2008 **Patz** gutter cleaner.

He's had trouble with the braking system on his 2002 **Chevy** Silverado 1500 extended cab pickup. "While this pickup has great creature features and handles and tows well, the brakes leave something to be desired. We had to replace the front wheel hub assemblies at less than 50,000 miles. The brakes have been replaced twice, and there's no turn left in the rotors. We've also had problems with the ABS sensor. This pickup should have drum brakes instead of disc brakes. We've talked to many other people with the same year and make, and they've all had the same problems."

Robert Lake, Lexington, Texas: "My 2000 **LongTrac** 520 tractor equipped with a front-end loader is neither a best nor a worst buy. This tractor is manufactured in Roma-

nia and imported by Long Co. It costs only about 75 percent as much as a comparable **Deere**, **New Holland**, or **Kubota** model. I've used the tractor to clear brush and to pull a box blade, shredder, and disk. It moves large round bales with ease and is a good, solid tractor for the money.

"On the negative side, I had to make some minor repairs such as putting stronger bolts in the driveshaft U-joint. Now I'm having problems with the 3-pt. hydraulics, which won't lift to capacity. But the worst thing is that Long is now out of business and I can't get service or parts for the tractor."

Richard Ruggles, Marlette, Mich.: "I like my 2005 **Chevy** 1/2-ton pickup. It has a comfortable ride and the V-6 engine gets 22 mpg on the highway. Best of all, no problems."

Brad E. Miller, Ridgeville Corners, Ohio: "They're by far the best wrenches and sockets I've ever owned," says Brad about his **Mettrinch** tool set (www.mettrinch-tools.com). "These tools work on both standard and metric and on stripped nuts and bolts."

Kenneth Brackett, Rangeley, Maine: Kenneth has had problems with his 2008 **Coburn** small farm cream separator. "We purchased this product thinking it would work as good as the old crank-type models. Not! It has to be set up just perfectly in order to work. Spouts were open so milk spurted all over the place. We had to run hot water through the separator first before putting the milk through, which we never had to do with the old models. As long as the discs were in correctly, they worked."

Harold G. Painter, Springview, Neb.: Marion Calmer's "trash kits" have built up quite a reputation for reducing trash buildup in combine corn heads. We recently talked to two satisfied customers (Calmer Corn Heads, Inc., ph 309 629-9000; www.calmercornheads.com).

Calmer says the root of the problem is that combine gathering chains run too fast. The gathering chain lugs often break off the top half of plants before the stalk rolls have a chance to pull the plants through the stripper plates. The stalks are then pushed to the center of the head where they can pile up and cause a problem.

Calmer's kit installs in three steps.

Step 1 - 6-tooth gathering chain sprocket: To slow down the gathering chains, Calmer's kit uses a 6-tooth gathering chain sprocket that's 25 percent smaller than the factory 8-tooth sprocket. Slowing down the gathering chains allows the stalk rolls to make more revolutions, which makes more of the plant disappear below the stripper plate before the gathering chain lugs can break it off.

Step 2 - revolving window knife rolls: The kit comes with revolving window 2-piece knife roll shells. They create two open windows per revolution, and use four flutes in the receiving and pinching zones. These modes of action repeat several times to successfully separate the ear and chop the stalk.

Step 3 - beveled stripper plates: Beveled stripper plates are longer to scoop up low hanging ears in down corn. The plates are straight in the front retrieving area to reduce

ear wedging, and beveled in the stripping area to allow the stalk rolls to engage more ear shanks, husks, and leaves.

Mendell Elson, Miami, Mo., has five years of experience with Marion Calmer's combine trash reduction kit and says he likes everything about the system, especially the way it lets him keep moving without having to stop because of trash buildup.

Since installing the kit in 2004, Elson hasn't had to stop even once for trash. He has run up to 6 mph in 200-bu. corn without a problem.

Elson was among the first to adopt the Calmer kit. He says it's the combination of Calmer's slower gathering chains and the beveled stripper plates, along with proper stalk rolls, that makes the most difference. "There's a great reduction in crop material going into the machine, which makes it possible to operate at higher speeds," he notes.

Mike Shaw of Ogden, Iowa, used the Calmer trash reduction kit for the first time last fall. He says he likes the way the Calmer adaptations reduce down time. He also says the snapping rolls do a better job separating ears from stalks.

Shaw says Calmer is ahead of the pack both in performance and bang for the buck, and that he's totally sold on the kit's performance. He spent about \$900 per row. Deere has been following up with some improvements, too. However, Shaw says Calmer's system works better and costs about \$100 less per row than Deere's.

"My 2000 **New Holland** 1475 swather has had no problems. It does a good job in all kinds of crops whether it's 6 to 8-ft. tall sudan or 8-ft. high meadow hay.

"I also like my 2005 **New Holland** 780 baler. No problems.

"My 2004 **Husqvarna** 345 chainsaw is my worst buy. It worked fine for three years until the blade oiling system quit working. The dealer worked on the problem for five or six months with no luck. I took the saw to another man who, after three or four months, finally got the oiling system to work a little. However, he accidentally broke the clutch. I took the saw back and he fixed it. Finally, I was able to start using my saw again last fall."

Jeff Delhotal, West Brooklyn, Ill.: "My 2005 **Kubota** TRV 900 utility vehicle is built heavier than a Gator, and the diesel engine burns little fuel. It has enough power to pull two bale wagons loaded with hay.

"My **Deere** 510 7-shank deep ripper makes fields unlevel. The disk blades get loosening up and the arbor bolt breaks. The dealer said we needed 850 ft.-lbs. of torque, but it still didn't help. Finally we got so disgusted with it that we sold it and bought a **Case IH** Ecolo-Tiger 730B, which we really like."

Robert Smolik, Burwell, Neb.: "My best buy ever is my **International Harvester** 424 diesel tractor equipped with an IH front-end loader. I bought this tractor new when they first became available. It served me well when I was farming and still serves me well in my retirement years. Very few problems, and it's economical to operate."

Ted Dunder, Torrington, Wyoming: "My 1985 **Cadillac** Deville equipped with a 4.1-liter, V-8 engine and automatic transmission has had problems. The catalytic converter plugged up at 58,000 miles, and shortly afterward the engine died. The cheap cam gear on the distributor wore out so I replaced it, but it wore out again. The transmission jerked and shifted erratically. Finally I parked it."