

freeze to leak into the crankcase. This problem happened on my son's ATV and also on units owned by two of my neighbors. All of them are 2003 models. The company won't admit the machines have this problem. Now I know why they come with only a 6-month warranty."

Cornie Van Lant, Chandler, Minn.: "My 2004 Dodge 2500 pickup equipped with a Cummins diesel engine is my best buy. It has a lot of power and handles nice, and it's fuel efficient. I had a 1996 Dodge 1500 which was great, too, but this one works even better. It's a great pickup."

Don Prohaska, Kasson, Minn.: "My best buy is a 7-ft. wide skid loader bucket made by SM Iron. We installed a 1 1/4-in. rod along the edge of the cutting blade. This way I can clean manure off our cement pad and when the blade hits cracks it just goes over them instead of jamming into them. It also works great for moving snow, because I can tip the bucket down to the grass and clean the snow off without doing any harm. Works great."

Robert W. Nielsen, Council Bluffs, Iowa: "My Kuhn mower is my worst buy. It cuts good and is a low maintenance machine. It's supposed to be easy to hook up but it's not. After the dealer brought it out I spent about three hours trying to hook it up. Then I called the dealer, who sent out a salesman. The two of us used a pair of tractor jacks and finally got it on, only to find out that the pto shaft was too long. So at my expense, a repair man came out and cut the shaft off. The mower's 3-pt. hook-up is about 2 ft. off when the mower is unhooked on one side."

Zack Evans, Somerville, Ohio: "My 2004 Billy Goat self-propelled walk-behind lawn mower is my worst buy. It has a three-chambered mower deck that clogs almost immediately, even in medium length dry grass and when traveling at the slowest speed. Any conditions more challenging than that, don't even bother. The mounting bolts for the blade carriers protrude into the deck chambers, which obstructs the discharge and makes cleaning it out a real hassle. The hand-operated controls are configured so that you have to keep both hands on the machine in order to keep mowing. As a result, if you want to swat a fly or wipe sweat out of your eyes you have to come to a complete stop. I can't imagine what the designers of this machine were thinking. Do they ever try these things out in real conditions? This machine might possibly make a good boat anchor, but as a lawn mower, it's worthless."

William D. Strock, Bland, Va.: "My Husqvarna riding mower is my worst buy."

"This machine might possibly make a good boat anchor."

The mower collects cut grass on the deck and drops it out in clumps or collects it until it will no longer cut. I continually have to stop and clean the grass from under the deck. Having to stop and clean grass out from under the deck is bad enough, but this mower is also a safety hazard. I've broken four blades, and when a blade breaks it gets thrown out about 20 ft. I no longer allow anyone in my yard while I'm mowing due to this hazard. When I broke the first blade I asked the dealer if this was a common problem, and he answered yes. I contacted the manufacturer but they showed no interest. They told me to take the mower to my dealer, but they wouldn't pay for the dealer to look at it."

Kevin West, Covington, Ohio: "I converted my Whitfield Quest pellet stove to

burn shelled corn simply by fabricating a burn bucket out of stainless perforated metal (Climate Control Systems, Oakhurst, Calif.; www.hearthtools.com). By turning air flow up a bit and setting the heat setting to medium, we've had excellent results. We manually remove the clinkers every day. The fire can be restarted with a handful of wood pellets and a propane torch. I can make a full-scale shop drawing available.

"My Tri-Star 4 1/2-in. flex-wheel grinding wheel is a best buy (Cronatron Welding Systems, ph 800 843-0763). These wheels cut quickly and leave a smooth finish. They also seem to last longer than some other grinding wheels on the market."

Duane Dietz, Owatonna, Minn.: He's sold on the new Fieldstar yield sensor from Agco. It replaced a sensor that was only a year old.

"Calibration was simple and easy. I compared the sensor data with a weigh wagon after one pass, made an adjustment, and on the next pass the two were within 0.8 of a pound. When I had an Ag Leader system from Case-IH, we considered ourselves lucky if we were within 3 to 5 percent. My co-op agronomist rode along and was amazed. He calibrates all kinds of yield monitors and told me this is the most accurate monitor he's ever seen."

Dietz likes his R65 Gleaner, too. Usually he trades combines every two years because of the Gleaner warranty and the great service his dealer (Isaacson Implement, Nerstrand, Minn.) gives him. "Steve from Isaacson's comes out and fixes things that I don't even know need fixing because they are under warranty."

Tom Lamont, Maidstone, Sask.: "I must hold the world record for breaking gearbox input shafts on a Deere 410 baler. I've owned this baler since it was new and have broken three shafts. After installing a steady bearing as close as possible to the clutch assembly, I discovered the problem had been caused by the improper machining of the clutch assembly. It had a wobble that caused it to wear."

"I found another clutch setup at a salvage yard which is closer to true, but not perfect. It was interesting to see that the original clutch friction plate had less wear than the one on my salvage part so I didn't abuse it."

"Other complaints: the chain drive to the upper belt rollers was too tight. I've replaced the single row no. 60 chain with a double row chain which has worked well. The upper belts have never tracked well. Why isn't there an adjustment similar to a combine pickup? The 12-in. belts wore too quickly so I bought a set of four 8-in. belts, which should get away from the short lacing life caused by chaff build-ups behind the wider belts."

"Why isn't there a rotating belt guide on the upper belts just above the compression roll, similar to the one on the lower belts? Forage gets between the side plates, pushing the outer belts into the center."

"When one lays out the extra money for green paint, one expects the engineering to be done already. If I could afford it, this baler would be treated to a paint job to match the color of the rims."

"Why do I keep this embarrassment to the engineering profession? Well, I'm scared to buy something else in case it's worse. And to be truthful, this baler has made a lot of good bales over the years."

Michael J. Young, Clinton, S.C.: "I thought my Deere 5400 4-WD tractor was a best buy, but now I'm not so sure. This tractor does a good job cutting, baling hay, bush hogging, and doing some light loader work. It also can pull my offset harrow easier than the larger Ford 7700 tractor it replaced. I bought the tractor new, and it now has 850

He Likes His Add-On Flex Deck

After four years of use, Phil Airy of Marion, Iowa loves the EZ-Mow Flex Deck he mounts on the 54-in. deck on his 445 Deere. "It sure eliminates a lot of trim work. You can mow right around a steel fence post and not miss a thing," he says.

Airy says the Flex Deck detaches quickly by pulling two pins and disconnecting the belt.

"My lawn is uneven, but the Flex Deck follows the contour really well," he adds.

"I've had no bearing problems or anything. Once I lost a small spring off it and called the manufacturer, and they sent a replacement right away. It was really good service. I wish I could say that about a lot of other things that I've bought," Airy says.

He is surprised more people don't put one of these decks on their mowers.

"It's great for going under bushes where there's an overhang. I haven't had any trouble with the unit and can't think of how you'd improve it. The inventor really did his homework on this thing," he says.

Inventor Brad Bork of Mediapolis, Iowa, designed the unit in 1995 and has since retrofitted most types of commercial lawn mowers including ZTRs, eXmarks, front mounts, tractors and Deere walk-behinds. The Flex-Deck's suggested retail price is \$1,495, installed, but the company will sell direct to customers who have no dealers in their area for \$1,299 (including shipping). All fixtures and necessary mounting instructions are included with the deck.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Phil Airy, 2969 C Ave. Ext., Marion, Iowa 52302



Flex Deck can be attached to most mower decks. It flexes up or down to mow slopes.



Add-on deck also works great for mowing around grave stones in cemeteries, fence posts, etc.

(ph 319-377-5020) or Flex Deck, Box 368, Mediapolis, Iowa 52637 (ph 877 353-9335 or 319 985-2762; email: Flex-Dek@netins.net; website: www.flex-deck.com).

hours on it. Recently the clutch seems not to disengage completely. When the clutch is depressed, the tractor's forward motion stops but when changing gears it grinds into the next gear. The longer the clutch stays in neutral the harder it is to get into gear again. I've been told the splined shaft that the clutch disk rides on my be dirty or rusty, causing the disk to stick on one side and drag. This tractor is used only by my dad and me and it hasn't been abused. I don't think the clutch should be worn out this soon. It's adjusted with the proper free play, and has adjustment left. I'd like to hear from anyone who has had similar problems with this model tractor, or about a way to lubricate the clutch shaft."

Edwin W. Ruff, Moses Lake, Wash.: "My 2000 Toyota Tundra Xtra cab pickup is my best buy. It drives nice, especially on long drives. The 4.7-liter engine has adequate power and I can expect 19 mpg. It's comfortable to drive and rides nice. It has about 70,000 miles on it with no problems. I've always been a Ford man but this pickup makes me think different."

"My Yardman leaf vacuum and mulcher is a best buy. It works great with no problems. I converted it to a self-propelled model. I had been using a Toro leaf vacuum which was absolutely worthless. I had it one month and the company told me it's my rig. No warranty at all. I sent it back to them and never heard any more about it. I was stuck with the whole price of it. No more Toros for me."

Larry Hopkins, Hurley, Wis.: Larry's disappointed with his Howe 3-pt. mounted, 6-ft. rotary cutter. "First the pto shaft twisted so bad that I couldn't slide it in or out. Then the U-joints on the pto shaft broke, and I ended up having to replace the entire pto shaft with a heavy duty shaft. Then the stump jumper warped. Next, one of the blades flew off. The transmission continually loosens up from the frame. Finally, the transmission

gears stripped."

Kevin Holst, Eldridge, Iowa: "My Bixby corn burning stove is my best buy. It's clean, trouble-free, nice looking, and requires very little maintenance. It dumps clinkers from the fire pot into the ash pan automatically so I only have to empty the ash pan once a week. It starts the corn on fire automatically with the touch of a button. It can't quite heat our huge 150-year-old farm house on the coldest days, but it has saved me a lot of money on propane for my house furnace. I think every farmer should have one."

"My 1994 White 6215 with FWA is my best buy. I bought it used and really love it. It's quiet, has a lot of power and traction, great lights, a roomy cab, and a Cummins engine that starts right up even in cold weather. The 18-speed powershift transmission is easy to use, and I don't even need the clutch to start up."

Elias Burr Nyberg, Stow, Ma.: "My Country Home Products 18 hp wood chipper is my worst buy. The company says this chipper can take up to a 4-in. dia. piece of wood. However, the first time I used the machine it bugged up so tight that I had to totally dismantle it in order to get it unclogged. I thought maybe I had used branches that were too big or too wet so I was real careful the next time I used the machine. I fed in 1-in. dia. branches that were very dry. However, the branches wound around the sprocket and nothing came out. I tried feeding in one more piece but the branch went in and never came out, leaving another solid mass of compacted branches."

"This time I called the company and they tried telling me I had used branches that were too wet or too big. I told them I was going to crate up the entire feeder assembly for them to correct and then return to me. They agreed and did clean out the feeder assembly and returned it to me without charge. However, I

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