

Howard Stemen, Dickey, N. Dak.: “My 2010, 2012, and 2014 Ford F-150 pickups all run smooth and quiet. They have a comfortable ride and are very fuel efficient. Everything a farm pickup should be.”

Roy Richters, Utica, Neb.: Roy says his 2013 Deere Gator RSX 850i “has a strong suspension system to handle rough off-roading and enough power to get me where I want to go in a hurry. This thing is just plain fun to drive.”

Trent Urie, Craftsbury Common, Vt.: “It’s small, friendly to drive and very reliable for a 50-year-old tractor,” says Trent about his 1964 Deere 302. “The powershift transmission on it works better than the transmission on our newer Deere 4455.”

Walt O’Brien, Jackson, Miss.: “My 2005 Dodge Ram pickup has more than 200,000 pleasurable miles on it and has required only routine maintenance.

“The rubber belts on my Seedway garden seeder get stretched out every year and have to be replaced.”

Dylan M. Hermes, Palmer, Alaska: “I like my 1973 Leyland 262 and 272 4-cyl. diesel tractors. The 262 is amazingly fuel efficient yet has plenty of power. One time I filled its 18-gal. fuel tank to the brim and went 26 hours on a single tank. I bought the 272, which has a cab, for \$3,000. That’s a great deal in Alaska.”

Virgil Clark, Westfield, Wis.: “My 2011 Kubota BX 2360 tractor is always ready to go. It doesn’t require tire chains during winter, even when using a loader bucket.”

David Naugher, Anniston, Ala.: “It’s the best lawn mower I’ve ever owned,” says David about his 2010 Kubota Z-222 zero turn riding mower. “I grease the fittings and change the blades once a year. No problems.”

John Larson, Hancock, Mich.: “I purchased my DR Field and Brush mower along with a 46-in. DR mower. I’ve mowed acres of lawn and ditches with this equipment, starting each spring and working late into fall to mulch leaves. The Kawasaki engine works great, and customer service is good.”

Gary Cramer, Emmaus, Penn.: “It has about 192,000 miles on it with few

problems,” reports Gary about his 1999 Ford Ranger XLT pickup equipped with a 2.3-liter, 4-cyl. engine and 5-speed manual transmission. “It still runs and drives great. I’d buy another one in a heartbeat if the company still made them.”

Lester H. Queener, Sweetwater, Tenn.: “I’m a farmer with severe arthritis, and my doctor recently prescribed the drug Diclofenac. It really works for me.

“Another product that helps with my arthritis is Two Old Goats arthritic lotion (www.twooldgoats.com; ph 866 324-3787). My local co-op sells a 4-oz. container for about \$11.”

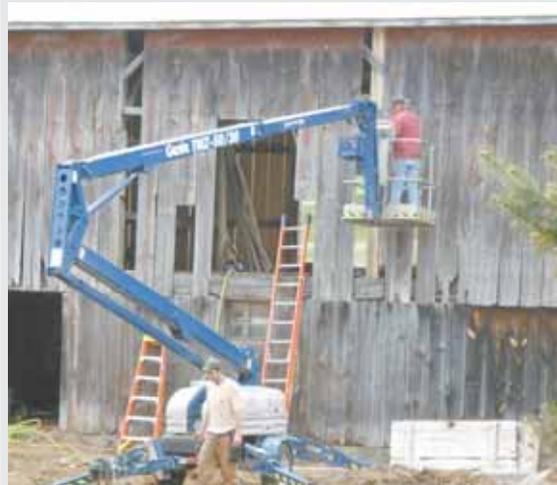
Mark Wayne Gascho, Bridgewater, Va.: Mark nominates his 2011 Husqvarna 460 Rancher chainsaw as his “best buy”. “We’ve used this chainsaw hard to make commercial firewood. It has required only routine maintenance. No problems.”

Ray A. Langston, Manning, S.C.: “In 2000 I bought a 1997 Tahoe with about 130,000 miles, and now it has 220,000 miles and I’m still driving it. My only problem is that the steering section gets ‘loose’. I’ve replaced some parts but nothing has helped. Any ideas?”

Edward A. Conklin, Chester, N.Y.: “About 4 years ago I bought a used 1983 Lamborghini 904D 4-WD tractor to use on my small vegetable farm. The engine was shot when I bought it and no replacement parts were available. So I welded up the holes in the pistons and cut grooves for the size rings I could find. It’s only a 4-cyl. air-cooled diesel, but it has more power than my Ford 5610 4-WD tractor.”

Randy Howard, Marble Hill, Mo.: “I use my 2012 Husqvarna 576 chainsaw almost every day. It’s reliable and has plenty of power to handle the saw’s 24-in. bar. I also own two Husqvarna 372 chainsaws and two 359 models. I like all of them.”

H.C. Bickley, Butler, Ga.: “The 1952 Ford 8N tractor I bought used in 1972 is my best buy ever. This tractor still doesn’t use any oil and has the same rear tires that it had when I bought it. I’ve always kept the tractor inside a shed whenever I wasn’t using it.”



In less than 3 weeks, Barn Doctor Aaron Barritt restored this old barn owned by Jim Ruen to useable condition.

Barn Doctors Rescue Aging Structures

By Jim Ruen, Contributing Editor

Before Barn Doctor Aaron Barritt looked at the old barn on our newly purchased farm, my wife and I weren’t sure if it should be restored or torn down. The roof sagged. The walls were bellying out, and the posts on the bottom level were slanted. Sill posts were rotted out, as were the ends of numerous posts and beams.

When I asked if it could or should be restored, Barritt didn’t hesitate. “If we tighten it up, the roof will straighten, the sides will pull in and the support posts will straighten up as well,” he said. “We can cut away the rot and splice in good wood.”

The former owner of our barn had at one time partially fixed the ailing barn. On the positive side, he had replaced buckling stone walls with poured concrete and installed a new concrete floor in the basement. The metal roof had only two small leaks.

On the negative side, many fixes had been left half done, or poorly done. Railroad ties on the loft floor were bolted to support beams in the basement as triage against rotted sills. Steel channel iron and thin plate did a poor job tying posts and beams to sills.

We told Barritt we wanted useable, not museum quality restoration. We needed equipment and parts storage, a workshop area, and a place to set up a small sawmill. Tearing down the barn and building new wouldn’t be cheap. Also, we would lose a visual barrier between where we planned to build a house and the township road.

Barritt’s bid came in at \$18,770 and included a list of what would be done. Another company’s bid came in at about the same price based on pictures. They didn’t bother making an on-site visit. A third company, when asked for an estimate, instead made an offer to take the good lumber for \$1,500. The remains would be left for us to clean up.

After talking it over, my wife and I decided to make the investment. Six months later, Barritt showed up with 3 men. In less than 2 weeks they did everything he promised and more. The more cost a little extra, but it was worth it.

Barritt and crew installed steel cable with come-a-longs in the basement. He anchored them to the most westerly post pads in the concrete floor and pulled the east wall back into place. In the loft he installed more cable, pulling the east and west walls together. As promised, these actions straightened the roofline and the support posts in the basement.

A few new holes were made in the floor



Spliced sections were reinforced with channel iron and steel plate.

of the barn loft. These allowed temporary supports to be placed between the roof sill beams and jacks on the basement floor.

Literally raising the roof and supporting walls allowed the Barn Doctors to do surgery. Railroad ties found new life as sill beams on the foundation walls. Rotten wall post ends and floor beams that had rested on the old sills were cut away with new/old wood spliced in place. Spliced sections were reinforced with channel iron and steel plate.

The west side of the barn faced the road. Barritt suggested covering it with new wood and using recovered boards to patch the other 3 sides. This meant the sides we would most often see would all have the old wood.

“I have a supplier with the wood we need for the wall and two sliding doors,” he said. New wood and installation, including 2 sliding barn doors, would come to \$1,700. The recovered west wall boards proved just sufficient for repair of the other walls. A little extra was used to make a sliding door on the basement level.

At the advice of a friend who had similar barn repairs done, I was on-site for a time nearly every day. That gave me the opportunity to check on progress and review plans with Barritt or his foreman.

When Barritt and his crew were finished to our satisfaction, the total bill came to \$20,470. It is still an old barn. The hayloft floor needs patching, and the 2 small leaks in the roof remain. Basement windows and doors need replacing. However, the side bellies are gone, and the back is straight. The Barn Doctors have given the old barn another 50 years of useful life.

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After an electrical fire in his farm shop, Roger Gutschmidt used Break Down and Degrease All to clean things up.



“Best Buy” Fire Damage Products

After an electrical fire in his farm shop, Roger Gutschmidt was faced with a massive cleanup job. The fire burned mostly in one corner of the shop, creating clouds of thick black smoke that coated the metal walls with thick grime.

“After an extensive search for products to clean the walls and ceiling, I ordered 2 products from www.jondon.com, an online cleaning products company (ph 800 400-9473). One is called Break Down, which costs about \$50/gal. You spray it on and let it soak for a few seconds and then you can wipe smoke residue right off. You can’t leave it on too long or it will take the paint off. I use paper towels to wipe it off because I didn’t know if the product would wash out of the

walls. The second product is called Degrease-All, which will not take off paint but does require a bit more scrubbing. If there is still residue left after using Break Down, I take it off with Degrease-All. It also works great on my toolboxes, tools and shop equipment. Sells for \$25/gal. and says you can dilute it with water, but I’ve found it works good right out of the jug.

“The hardest work is cleaning the ceiling. I couldn’t do it without my scissors lift.”

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