

warranty 3 times. Finally, after 1 1/2 years it's fixed for the time being. I wanted to return the mower for an upgrade, but the company refused."

Bob Ritzell, Haynesville, La.: Bob likes Deere steel toe work boots made by **Dan Post** (ph 866 824-7970; www.countryoutfitter.com). "These boots feel good the first time you put them on, and they last a long time. I'm on my third pair and got 3 years of service out of each of the other 2 pairs. I'm lucky to get one year out of other brands of boots."



William Samse, Sheboygan Falls, Wis.: "My 2012 **Whirlpool** Cabrio washing machine is a high efficiency model, but my wife hates it. She says it tangles the clothes. It takes 79 min. to wash white clothes. We've always had good luck with Whirlpool, but not this time."

John Hubbard, Cave Junction, Ore.: "My 2001 **Dodge** Sport Dakota pickup equipped with a 3.9-liter engine has about 125,000 miles on it with no problems. I replaced the battery once. I like the way it drives."

Mark Gray, Craig, Colo.: "I like the 2012 Cedar Creek Silverback fifth wheel RV I bought from **Forest River** (www.forestriverinc.com). Everything about this RV is superior and the craftsmanship is excellent. It has a highly livable design and tows great. The company makes sure you're happy with their product. It's a great RV."

Elmer Yoder, Bertha, Minn.: Elmer's impressed with **Woodland Pro** chainsaw chain he bought from **Bailey's** (ph 800 322-4539; www.baileysonline.com). "I really like these full chisel chains. They come with a long tooth for extra life and are made in the U.S. Bailey's also offers bars, bar and chain oil, and other chainsaw and sawmill parts at reasonable prices. If I have any problems I just dial ext. 235 and they'll help me right away."

George R. Tews, Moore, Mont.: "In April 1969 I bought a used **Melroe Bobcat** 500 skid loader for \$2,500. I don't know how many hours it had when I bought it, but it's still going strong at about 13,000. I rebuilt it once and now it runs like new."

Jacob Skrock, Trenton, Mo.: Jacob's had problems with his 2010 **Polaris** Ranger 700 utility vehicle. "The fuel injection system needed constant adjustment that ended up with an expensive trip to the dealer. Then the reverse gear went out. Finally after numerous repairs and about a year's use, we sold it. It worked great for light duty but didn't hold up for daily use."

Cindy D'Aquin-Pike, Independence, La.: "When it runs, my 2007 **TroyBilt** riding mower cuts well. But during one 4-mo. period we had to make \$800 worth of repairs on this \$700 mower. The belts break easily, and the tensioner can only be reached by dropping the entire deck."

John Hardage, Giddings, Texas: "My **Branson** 3510i tractor has plenty of power and is balanced just right to perform tillage work without slipping."

"My **Mohawk** RT 72 3-pt. mounted tiller is built like a tank and has a strong gear driveline (Ag-Meier Industries, Belton, Texas ph 254 939-3731, ag-meier.net)."

Phil Coldiron, Sr., Carlisle, Ky.: "It's the best riding pickup I've ever owned," says Phil about his 2008 **GM** Sierra SLE 4-WD model equipped with an extended cab. "It gets good mileage and has more than enough power. It's powered by the old 327 engine that was the

best of its time. My 1999 **Chevrolet** Tahoe rides nice and gets good mileage, and my 2002 **Dodge** Ram diesel pickup is excellent in every category."

Ken Richardson, Kinnear, Wyo.: "My 2005 **Ford** F-150 4-WD pickup, which I bought used, has plenty of power and is fuel efficient. Overall, I like it. However, the electronic shift on the transfer case is a joke. It almost takes an act of Congress to get it into 4-WD. Otherwise it's a good pickup."

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Dale Barker, Bloomfield, Mo.: "My 1996 **DR** field and brush mower can be equipped with either a 24-in. bush hog or a 30-in. deck. It's powered by an 8 hp Briggs & Stratton engine. Over the years I've spent less than \$100 on repairs. I've used this machine to cut down hickory saplings up to 1 1/2 in. dia., and for 4 years I used it to mow 4 acres. It still has the original spark plug and uses less than 3 ounces of oil a year. I put about 100 hours on it every year."

James Nowak, Genoa, Ohio: "I bought a new **Toro** TimeCutter 42-in. zero turn riding mower, and 2 months after the warranty expired, the Kohler 15 hp engine on it blew up. The engine was replaced after I got into a shouting match with the dealer. However, the next summer I had trouble again with cold engine start-ups. Kohler was willing to pay \$12 for a new repair part but wouldn't pay for the labor, even though the new engine had a 2-year warranty. The mower itself works good and makes mowing a fun job. Maybe **Toro** should shop for a new engine supplier."

Steven Whitefoot, Boelus, Neb.: "I paid \$14,000 for a new 2010 **Polaris** Sportsman 850 XP 4-wheeler, and this year the engine locked up with just 448 miles on the machine. The mechanic said a faulty piston had shattered and ruined the engine. The company won't stand behind its product because it's 3 months out of warranty."

Milan Larson, Jenera, Ohio: "I like my 2013 **Ford** F-150 pickup equipped with a 3.5-liter Ecoboost engine, except for the mileage. At best this pickup gets about 10 mpg pulling a cargo trailer that weighs about 6,000 lbs. loaded. Pulling against a headwind drops it down to maybe 8 mpg. On the highway without the trailer, I can do at best about 18 mpg."

"I'm disappointed with the SYNC on this pickup as well. It's supposed to allow you to talk on the phone, navigate and listen to music while keeping your hands on the wheel and eyes on the road. However, it's difficult to understand and learn, and for that reason I use it very little. Many times my phone won't connect, and answering a call is a lesson in frustration. The caller can hear me, but at times I can't hear them. The navigation system is also difficult to use."

James E. Day, Sr., Searsburg, Vt.: James is the satisfied owner of a 2012 **Husqvarna** 22-ton log splitter. "It works both horizontally and vertically. I love how it performs."

Harold Saylor, Parker, Penn.: "I find that **Nor-Trac** tractors sold by Northern Tool & Equipment work hard and are economical to operate (ph 800 556-7885; northerntool.com). The company offers models ranging from 25 to 82 hp, and you can buy front-end loaders and backhoes for them."

Marvin Reed, Reno, Nevada: "Our 2005 **Dodge** Magnum consistently gets 24 mpg and is the perfect car for my wife to drive.

Demand for Japanese mini trucks has grown now that customers know that parts and service are available, says a Missouri dealer.



Business Is Booming For Japanese Mini Trucks

There seems to be more demand than ever for Japanese mini trucks, says Travis Colin, sales manager for Ranchmaster Mini Trucks in Preston, Mo. He says demand has grown because people have seen them around for a while now and feel more assured that parts and service are available.

While they're called mini trucks and approved to drive on some roads in some states, Colin says they're more comparable to side-by-side UTV's sold in the U.S. But, he adds, the Japanese trucks have much more to offer for less cost (\$5,000, used — to \$18,000 new at the top end). Most new mini trucks sell for between \$10,000 and \$15,000.

"The advantages of owning a mini truck is the amount of work it can do as far as loading capacity (4 by 6-ft. bed, holds up to 1 ton), and you are protected from the elements," he says. "That's really important for older folks. I've sold a lot to 80 and 90-year-old farmers who are still out there working but don't want to deal with the heat and cold."

The enclosed cabs have AC and heat, and tall drivers appreciate the extended cab model. With 4-WD, dump bed and accessory options, the trucks can be set up for any job. Cattle ranchers mount brush guards and slide cube feeders in the bed. Drivers in northern states add snowplows for the winter.

Small enough (55 to 58-in. wide) to drive down the aisles of poultry and horse barns, the trucks can be used to transport feed or take out manure.

"In the off-season it's a good hunting rig

because they're quiet," Colin notes. He adds that the mini trucks are popular on college campuses and often used for utility trucks in cities.

They come equipped with catalytic converters to make them highway legal. With 3-cylinder gas engines, they travel up to 55 mph at an impressive 40 to 50 mpg.

"Typically I sell them to farmers and ranchers for use around the farm," Colin says. "But some states like Oklahoma and Nebraska allow them on roads at speeds up to 55 mph. In our county (in Missouri), we can sticker them for county road use. They are not legal on any interstate highways."

Other than new accessories and the extended cab, the models haven't changed a lot over the years, he notes. But they have proven to be dependable.

"I get calls from people who have trucks that are 20 years old, and they need an air filter or a tune-up," Colin says.

Ranchmaster Mini Trucks services trucks and sells parts, used trucks and new Mitsubishi and Daihatsu trucks. Sitting in the cab of the new vehicles is like sitting in a pickup cab with two notable differences — the size and the location of the steering wheel.

For mini truck owners, learning to drive on the right side of the vehicle only adds to the adventure.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ranchmaster Mini Trucks, Rt. 1, Box 18H, Preston, Mo. 65732 (ph 417 830-2519; www.ranchmasterminitrucks.com).

I replaced the EGR valve, and a \$10 plastic piece broke on the gearshift lever. I also had to pay an \$80 labor charge after a tow job out of our garage. But with 156,000 miles on the car I have no complaints. I wish they still made this car."

Philip Lippo, Cromwell, Minn.: "One of the power steering hoses broke on my 1958 **Ford** 800 tractor. The dealer told me replacement hoses were no longer available, but that I could have one made up at a cost of \$511. Instead, I went to a NAPA auto store and they fixed me up with two new hoses for \$56."

Jack Richardson, Tampa, Fla.: "My 2000 **Ford** Explorer Sport is equipped with a 4.0-liter engine and manual transmission. It has more than 212,000 miles on it but still runs almost as smooth as the day I bought it. I put hard miles on it as I do a lot of city driving, and I also use it as a maintenance vehicle for real estate. I drove this vehicle pulling trailers all across North America. I converted it to run on E85 ethanol fuel blend and drove it on ethanol for about 10,000 miles.

"Certain components would fail over and over again, such as the EGR, the coil packs, and the door locks. They failed before the first 100,000 miles. I would replace the parts, and then I'd have to replace them again after about 10,000 miles. However, once I figured out which were the few bad components and started putting high-end replacement parts in the vehicle, I found this vehicle to be Ford-tough."

Duane Johnson, Lohrville, Iowa: "My 2010 **Country Clipper** zero turn riding mower is affordable, dependable and has a mower deck that's easy to service. The deck is built heavy, and the blades are positioned so you can turn the mower either way without leaving a strip of uncut grass like you do with some other brands. The only problem is that I would occasionally throw a belt off when engaging the blades. To solve the problem I slightly bent a part that's used to keep the belt on its pulley, and now it works great."

Jack Anderson, Loranger, La.: Jack's 1998 **GM** C-2500 pickup has more than 383,000 miles on it, and he still drives it every day. "This pickup has performed well over the years with only minor problems. I have no plans to replace it any time soon, and everything on it still works as it should."

"My 2011 **Sears** 22-in. push mower had a lot of problems. First there was an oil leak, then there were carburetor problems. To change oil you have to turn the machine over on its side to pour the oil out through the dipstick tube. There's no drain plug."

Ayden Williams, Finland, Minn.: Ayden likes his 2008 **Poulan** 18-in. Green Machine chainsaw. "Other loggers told me this brand was junk, but I found one on sale for \$149 and thought it couldn't hurt to use it around my 2 1/2-acre hobby farm. I bought it in a plastic case with a chain sharpener, guide, and directions inside. I've used it to cut 30 cords of maple and 15 cords of birch, and it has never failed to start even at temperatures down to 15 degrees below zero."