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with a 46-in. deck works great, although its Briggs & Stratton engine is a bit hard to start."

On the "worst buy" side, he lists his 2012 **Cub Cadet** riding mower equipped with a 42-in. deck. "I have to replace the drive belt on it several times a year, at a cost of about \$30 per belt, and the installation isn't an easy job. The Kohler engine runs good, though."

Walter Kolba, Rice Lake, Wis.: "I find that **Seal Lube** seal expander does a great job of sealing rubber rings and gaskets. One time I used it to seal a leak in the power steering system on my tractor. Another time I gave some to a friend who had a leak on his tractor, and it did the job."

Ronald Hubred, Unity, Wis.: "About 25 years ago we acquired an **Oliver Super 88** tractor from an elderly neighbor. I let my son buy it at the age of 10 with money he had saved from raising tobacco. Once in a while he would even sneak the tractor out of the shed and drive it to school."

"My son is the second owner of this tractor and, other than replacing the plug and points, it has been maintenance-free. It has done a lot of hard work in its lifetime, but now with field equipment getting bigger we just use it to rake hay and haul loads."

On the negative side, "When I was lucky enough to get my 2011 **McCulloch** chainsaw started, I was only able to cut wood for a half hour or so. I finally got so disgusted that I smashed the saw with a hammer and threw it away. I owned an **Echo** chainsaw for 30 years and it worked great, but after I moved I couldn't find an Echo dealer. We use firewood to heat our 6-bedroom home and a shop, so my son and I do a lot of sawing."

Wayne Fuller, Raleigh, N.C.: "As a senior getting on in age, I wanted to make sure my wife had a dependable lawn tractor to use after I'm gone. So I bought a **Kubota GR2100** for her for about \$7,400. I was assured this tractor would last a long time. But after just 5 years and 213 hrs., the hydrostatic transaxle on it froze solid. The dealer told me the maximum customer satisfaction assistance allowed by Kubota was \$1,500, which left me with a \$1,300 repair bill."

"I did some research and discovered this was a known problem, so at the very least I think there should have been a manufacturer recall. I could have bought 6 large garden tractors at **Lowe's** or **Home Depot** for the money I spent on the Kubota, and still been way ahead. I trusted the Kubota name, but I was wrong."

Rex Peterson, Plano, Iowa: "I bought my **Echo 330 EVL** chainsaw many years ago and have no idea how many sprockets, bars and chains I've worn out, yet this saw still starts and runs good."

Scott Schultz, O'Neill, Neb.: "I bought my **Bobcat 763** skid loader used 3 years ago and mounted a tree shear and brush grapple on it. I use this skid loader hard to cut cedar trees but haven't had any problems. I'd buy another one."

"My **DeWalt** 18-volt impact wrench lacked torque, so I bought an **Ingersoll Rand 24-volt** model. Wow."

Don Nelson, Bottineau, N. Dak.: "I bought my 1950 **Massey Harris 44** tractor used in 1967, and it has been trouble-free ever since. I mounted a **Farmhand F-10** front-end loader on it and use it every year for snow removal. This tractor starts in the coldest weather without the need for an engine heater."

Jackie Leeper, Cartersville, Ill.: "The riding mower lift I bought from **Harbor Freight** works well on all standard size mowers. I bought it on sale for 20 percent

off so it was just \$79. It's hydraulic-operated which makes it easy to use."



Tony D'agnone, Foremost, Alberta: Tony is impressed with the **Kasco** helmet respirator he bought from the St. George Co. (www.thestgeorgeco.com; ph 519 442-2046).

"I've farmed for almost 40 years and have always suffered from allergies due to grain dust," says D'agnone. "I used to have difficulty breathing, a high fever, sore eyes, and be sick for 3 days when using other masks."

"After I purchased the **Kasco Prof 88** mask, I can now easily do my work and be confident that I won't get sick. It's a freedom that I haven't had before—no down days after working with grain. I'm looking forward to using this mask during spraying season because of its protection from herbicide smells. I highly recommend it."

Jeff Roberts, Needville, Texas: "I'm really impressed with my 1989 **PZ Zweegers CM 212** drum hay mower. I've used it to cut miles of roadside hay, to do custom work, and to cut our own hay fields as well. I've worn out 2 driveshafts, one set of skids, and countless blades. This mower has only been in the shop once, to replace an input gear behind the drive belt. Otherwise it just keeps on going. I'd buy another one in a heartbeat."

On the "worst buy" side, he lists his 2002 **Ford F-150 SuperCrew** pickup equipped with a 4.6-liter, V-8 engine. "I bought this pickup used in 2003 with about 29,000 miles on it and changed the oil every 5,000 miles, but it just isn't built as tough as the 1996 F-150 it replaced. It started running badly on a cold day last January while I was hauling hay. I replaced the idle air control valve, since this is a frequent problem with this pickup model, but it didn't help. The pickup acted like it was on cruise control all the time, and I had to ride the brakes to slow down to 35 mph whenever I drove through town."

"The pickup threw some codes so I took it back to the shop. It didn't pass smog inspection there so I told them to fix it. A smoke test showed an intake leak, but the shop told me they didn't want to work on it because they couldn't find a new manifold."

"Evidently, Ford has decided to quit supplying critical parts on pickups more than 10 years old."

"Evidently, Ford has decided to quit supplying critical parts on pickups more than 10 years old, and no one else manufactures a smog-area legal manifold for this pickup - which we need because we live close to Houston. I finally had another shop replace the intake gaskets, and they found the lower plastic intake manifold wasn't actually cracked so it didn't have to be replaced. But the pickup still isn't working right and they've pretty much given up on it."

"I've been through this same problem before with **IH** cotton pickers; the company decided to 'freeze out' its older machines by not supporting them with parts. So I junked my **IH** pickers as they died for lack of parts, and replaced them with **Deere** machines which have a good, steady parts supply. I



Granberg precision chain grinder clamps onto chainsaw bar and can be easily adjusted for accurate sharpening.

"Best Buy" Saw Sharpener

"The thing with the Granberg precision chain grinder tool is that once you have a sharp saw you just barely touch it with the grinder and you get a razor edge again," says Hans Porter. He appreciates the value of a sharp saw living in a small community near Ketchikan, Alaska.

He had plenty of wood to cut when he and his wife, Timbi, purchased 1 1/2 acres of undeveloped land a decade ago and built 300 ft. of boardwalk out of cedar he sawed into boards with a **Stihl MS660** on a **Mark III Alaskan Chainsaw Mill**. Plus, he sawed timbers for an addition to his house.

Porter also uses the grinder on chains for his **029 Farm Boss Stihl** saw.

The precision grinder clamps onto the saw bar and can be adjusted for accurate sharpening for cross cut and ripping chain. Porter keeps a 12-volt battery handy on his workbench to power the grinder, and adds that he can run it off his pickup battery if he needs to sharpen a chain while in the

woods.

"I can sharpen 105 teeth in about 15 min., then I set it up a little different and take down the rakers," Porter explains.

He recommends using Granberg stones and changing them when they start to wear down.

"You need to have the right size to get into the tooth, but the worn stones work for taking the rakers down," he suggests.

Before getting the precision grinder, Porter says he used a file.

"I was constantly busting my knuckles on sharpened teeth," he says. He has no intention of going back to hand filing.

"A sharp chain adds life to the chain and you can cut more wood with less gas," Porter says.

The Granberg precision chain grinder can be purchased for \$75 at www.granberg.com.

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wouldn't even think of buying an **IH** cotton picker now, of any kind. I won't do business with a company that doesn't stand behind its products."

Mike Miller, Topeka, Ind.: "I'm well pleased with the horse box stall I bought from **Sunset Equipment** in Topeka, Ind. (ph 260 593-9158). A year ago I needed more room for my horses and didn't have any room in our barn. So I bought a box stall front panel and one side panel and fixed them up in the corner of our tool shed. The door rolls smoothly, and all I had to do to fasten it together was screw 4 plates with a bracket against the wall and then drop a pin in each bracket. If I ever want to move it, I'll just pull 6 pins and the stall will be ready to go."

Leonard B. Gilbreath, Meridian, Texas: "I love my 2010 **Mercury Grand Marquis** but they don't make them any more. I've had very few problems with it. I don't know why they quit making these cars."

Ralph J. Kluth, Limon, Colo.: "The transmission on my **Case IH JX95 4-WD** tractor makes a screaming sound, especially when it's in third gear, third range. Unfortunately, this is the speed we need to use when doing haying work. I have to plug my ears just to make the sound bearable. Yet my dealer says this screaming sound is normal."

Jim Harkness, Laingsburg, Mich.: "I bought an **All-Power 6500-watt** generator from **Northern Tool**, but the filler cap was so low to the tank that I couldn't get it open without using a large pair of channel pliers. The machine is so loud that when it's running I can't even hear myself scream. Also, the muffler disintegrated within the first few hours of use."

Jeff Prose, Lakeville, Minn.: He says the **Erskine** heavy duty 6-ft. brush mower that mounts on front of his father-in-law's skid

steer is the best rough-cut rig he's ever seen.

"I've used different cutters on other skid steers and 2 different 3-pt. mounted models behind tractors, and this one beats them all," Prose says. "The front of this mower has 2 V-shaped cuts in the frame that keep



material feeding into the blades rather than sliding off to the side. The center in front is flat and we can easily knock down and cut off 4 to 6-in. trees along fence lines and field edges. We use the hydraulic mower on a 74 hp **JCB** skid steer that has plenty of power to handle trees, tall brush and thick grass. I've cut trails in the woods and the stump jumper feature, which is like a cone over the blade mounts, keeps the mower from plugging in heavy trash conditions."

Prose says, "The mower also works great to trim 4 to 6-in. branches up to 10 ft. in the air. To do that we tilt the deck at an angle to make sure we're not throwing debris into the front of the skid steer or hitting the window. The mower has 2 quick-tach hoses wrapped with tough fabric to protect them from flying debris. Hydraulic power runs through a heavy duty gearbox that has a flow-control override rather than shear pins."

"The 5/8-in. thick blades have 2 cutting edges so we can turn them around if they ever get dull. The tip speed on the blades is more than 19,000 ft./min. when the engine