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a lot of reserve power. The cab is quiet and comfortable.”



Loren Johnson, Osceola, Wis.: “I love my **Koehn** drive-through electric gate (ph 800 658-3998; www.koehnmarketing.com). It saves a lot of climbing on and off tractors and ATV’s. I wish I’d had it 50 years ago.”

Cecil Bearden, Piedmont, Okla.: “My **Belarus** 8345 and 825 4-WD tractors always start, even in winter. I use them to feed cattle. Both tractors have air-conditioned cabs, but the air conditioners were a U.S.-installed option and aren’t dependable.”

“Even though I use these tractors almost every day, I’ve spent less than \$300 on repairs.”

“Even though I use these tractors almost every day, I’ve spent less than \$300 on repair parts. They come with a centrifugal oil filter that can be washed out and reused. Fuel and hydraulic filters for these tractors cost only \$10 apiece. The heater is a problem, though, as the engine never gets hot enough to heat up the cab. I haven’t found anything these tractors can’t pull.”

“I bought my 2002 **New Holland** TS100 tractor used and equipped with a **DuAll** front-end loader. It had about 1,400 hours on it. However, within 3 weeks I had to replace the fuel injector pump, and then the fuel lift pump and sediment bowl. It has a clutchless shuttle shift transmission that works great for baling hay, but the gear indicator light doesn’t work in low range. Also, the tractor’s air ride seat wouldn’t stay inflated. After spending \$200 on compressors and valves, I installed a new **Wise** seat made in Arkansas (www.wisesats.com).

“At about 1,500 hours the loader’s hydraulic hoses started leaking at the fittings, and the 3-pt. top link failed while I was hooking up to a rototiller and nearly injured my foot. Another problem was that fuel started leaking from the sending unit inside the gas tank. The dealer couldn’t fix it so my only option was to buy a new \$1,000 tank. Instead, I fabricated a steel ring that fits inside the tank and holds the sending unit in place. Now the tank is leaking only about a gallon of fuel per month.”

Irwin McCullough, Sharpville, Penn.: “Our **Massey Ferguson** 8680 tractor has a lot of power and is built heavy. We use it to pull a Gold Digger tile plow.”

C. Todd Russell, Conyers, Ga.: “My **Deere** 5105 4-WD tractor equipped with a front-end loader is an awesome machine. I’ve used it to clear land, plow, do grading work, spread gravel on driveways, and plant wildlife food plots. I also use it to haul logs and firewood. This tractor will go anywhere.”

“My 2013 **Sears Craftsman** zero-turn riding mower equipped with a 54-in. deck doesn’t turn like a zero-turn mower. It keeps going straight even when the lever is moved which leaves drag marks on my lawn. It mows great but isn’t really a zero-turn mower.”

Don Baker, Omaha, Ark.: “No problems with my 2009 **Dodge** Ram 1/2-ton, 4-WD pickup equipped with a crew cab and 5.7-liter Hemi engine. It runs great and has power to spare. The cab is very quiet and comfortable.”

J.E. Beard, Schroeder, Minn.: “My 2006 **Toyota** Tacoma pickup equipped with a manual transmission gets 22 mpg on the highway and 20 mpg in 4-WD. It has about 100,000 miles on it but has been in the shop only for oil changes and tire rotations. I drive on gravel roads that get muddy, icy and snowy. This pickup sits outside all winter long, yet always starts right up even in below zero weather. It has a high body and a wide wheelbase and is a good, hardworking hauler.”

“I bought a 1997 **Ford** F-150 pickup but sold it 5 years later. It was in and out of the shop a lot for transmission problems. It was advertised as Ford tough but turned out to be Ford lemon. It was rated to get 12 mpg and that’s just what it got.”

David B. Batker, Brooklyn, Wis.: David nominates his 2009 **Kubota** RTV 900 utility vehicle as his “best buy”. “Both my wife and I enjoy driving it because it has power steering and the engine and transmission are very responsive.”

Edgar Phillips, Marshall, Mo.: Edgar’s impressed with **Seal Lube** seal expander which is designed to stop any rubber seal leaks in engines, transmissions, power steering and hydraulic systems (ph 800 434-9192; www.seallube.com). “About 7 years ago the hydraulic hoses that drive the reel on my **Deere** 3300 combine popped apart while I was harvesting corn. The oil got too hot before I noticed the problem. Every seal, gasket and hose leaked profusely, even after I changed the oil and tightened every connection.”

“After I added Seal Lube, for the next 6 years I was able to harvest 100 acres per year with this combine with less than normal oil seepage. I’ve also used Seal Lube to stop serious leaks in the cylinder liner O-ring seals on my **Deere** 3010 gas tractor.”

E.R. Lehmann, Bynum, Texas: “I think **Mahindra** offers the best small utility tractors on the market. I bought a 2003 3505 model and the only repair it needed was to an O-ring in the tractor’s power steering cylinder. The tractor has no metric bolts on it, which I like. I use this tractor every day. It does a great job handling 5 by 6-ft. round bales. I recently bought a second Mahindra.”

Mary Breit, Utica, Kan.: “We love the power of our **Fence Master** 12-volt solar fencer (ph 877 596-3101; www.fencemasteramerica.com). It has a 5-year warranty. You might find a cheaper fencer, but you won’t find a better one.”

Doug White, Unity, Sask.: “It’s the best pickup I’ve ever owned,” says Doug about his 2007 **Dodge** Ram 1500 Mega Cab equipped with a 5.7-liter Hemi engine. “It has a great power curve so I can easily pass in overdrive. It averaged 22 1/2 mpg on a recent trip. This pickup is a real improvement over the Ford models I had been driving for many years.”

Joe Sharp, Grass Valley, Ore.: Joe’s happy with his 2010 **Deere** 324 riding mower equipped with 4-wheel steering and a 48-in. deck. “It always starts right up, runs well, and has a lot of power. Also, the controls are easy to use.”

Travis Theobald, Beaver City, Neb.: “It’s built solid and made to last,” says Travis about his 1986 **Marty-J** riding mower equipped with a 20 hp engine and 60-in. deck (ph 800 624-6774; www.marty-j.com). “I bought this rig used in 1996 and have used it to mow around home and to do custom work. The deck is easy to service and clean,

and I can sharpen the blades without having to remove them. I recently sold the mower for almost as much as I paid for it. Now I own a new **Marty-J** and it works great, too.”

“Our 2011 **Deere** 7330 loader tractor works okay, but for what it cost I’m somewhat disappointed. If I don’t remember to relieve all the oil pressure before removing the loader, it’ll lead to O-ring failure in a valve and then I have to replace the entire valve. The housings around both air filters in the cab broke and now I’m using duct tape to hold them in place. One of the loader mounting brackets is in the way, making it difficult to change the oil. We’ve also had trouble with the cab’s rear window latch, and sometimes the left door latch sticks. **Deere**’s older tractor models were built much better.”

Gary Schomburg, Aledo, Ill.: “My **Porter Cable** 18-volt, NiCd 4-tool combo kit includes a drill/driver, flashlight, circular saw, and a reciprocating saw which works great for trimming branches (www.portercable.com). I use at least one of these tools almost every day. Their batteries last a long time. If the batteries get sticky, I just spray silicone onto the contacts. That keeps them clean and makes it easy to put them on or take them off.”

On the negative side, he lists his **Deere** D140 riding mower equipped with a 48-in. deck. “The gas tank opening is too small, and because the tank is black, I can’t see the gas level. As a result, whenever I fill the gas tank I end up spilling fuel. Also, the tank

“Because the fuel tank is black, I can’t see the gas level.”

only holds a little more than 2 gal. That’s a problem because the Briggs & Stratton engine is a gas hog and vibrates terribly. I wish now that I had fixed my 10-year-old **Sears Craftsman** riding mower equipped with a Kohler engine, instead of buying this one. I can’t believe **Deere** would put their name on this mower.”

Dean Wehr, Blum, Texas: “The 2 ‘**Mighty Mule** 500’ automatic gate openers I bought several years ago have been nothing but trouble. The designer and distributor, Gates That Open, LLC, honored the warranties until they expired, and now it costs me \$75 plus postage to send anything back to them for repair.”

R.D. Hoffman, Albuquerque, New Mexico: “I ordered 2,400 grass plugs from **Zoysia Farm Nurseries** last April 18. They didn’t arrive until May 3. All the plugs were completely dead. I tried calling the company 4 times, until finally on May 6 I was able to tell someone about the dead plugs. A company rep said they would replace all the plugs that didn’t grow after 45 days or refund half the purchase price. I told them I had no faith in the company so I took the half-refund offer.”

Carsten Hovland, Fertile, Minn.: “The 1973 **Case** 1175 tractor I bought used with 2,100 hours on it in 1981 is my best buy. I put in one set of sleeves and pistons at about 3,000 hours. The tractor now has almost 11,000 hours on it and has been virtually trouble-free. It has a lot of power, is easy on fuel, and uses no oil. The only problem is there’s a big gap between fourth and fifth gear. There should be another gear in between for a more usable ground speed in the 5 1/2 mph range.”

J. Vilander, Wamelo, Kan.: “I bought a used 1969 **Case** 580 backhoe in 1971, and it still runs great today. The engine hasn’t been

worked on and is fuel efficient, using just 2 gal. per hour. I used this backhoe for a long time in my trenching business, and now I use it to feed big round bales on my farm. You never get stuck with a backhoe. I think every farmer should have one.”

Douglas Dewing, Grantsburg, Wis.: “I paid \$450 for my **DeWalt** 36-volt impact wrench and two 36-volt lithium ion batteries. The batteries are supposed to hold their charge for a long time, even when not in use. We used this wrench a lot at first to drive lag screws while anchoring the base of a hoop shed, and then only occasionally after that. However, after less than 2 years neither battery would take a charge and new batteries sell for about \$170 apiece. That’s when I went online and bought the **DeWalt** 18-volt impact wrench with 2 batteries for about \$240. It has almost as much power as the 36-volt unit, but costs only half as much.”

William Richardson, Hemingway, S.C.: “In 1973 I bought a **Sears Craftsman** 3 1/2 hp, 12-in. direct-drive table saw. It has always worked well and we still use it constantly. My friends tell me I should have a belt-driven model, but a belt-driven model couldn’t handle what this saw can. It’s built heavy and is a pleasure to operate.”

“My 2013 **Deere** Gator XUV 550 utility vehicle saves a lot of steps. We use it to check our fence lines and our cows. Our grandchildren really like it, too.”

Alan Borud, Wisconsin Dells, Wis.: “My **Split-Fire** 3-pt. mounted log splitter splits in both directions so there’s no dead time on the return stroke (ph 519 468-3647; www.split-fire.com). It’s extremely well built.”

Everett E. Stowers, Newport, Va.: “I like my 2004 **Power Trac** PT422 tractor (www.power-trac.com). I bought it after seeing it described as a ‘best buy’ in FARM SHOW. Nine years and 1,400 hrs. later I’m still using it for bush hogging, digging ditches, moving dirt and gravel, loading and unloading my trailer with forks, and mowing my yard.”



Erv Hilty, Monroe, Ind.: “My **I&J** 7-ft. ground-driven, horse-drawn sicklebar mower runs smooth and is quiet (ph 717 442-9451). It pulls easy and has a unique scissors cutting action that won’t plug up, even in loose hay. I&J is a small company that doesn’t advertise much.”

Menno Hochstedler, Topeka, Ind.: “My late 1970’s **Yanmar** 240D 4-WD loader tractor sips fuel even when it’s working hard. In creeper gear it can move most things, even though it has just 24 hp.”

Emil Kalvoda, Mandan, N. Dak.: “I like my 2013 **Ford** Escape 4-WD, 4-door crossover vehicle. It’s equipped with an EcoBoost 4-cyl. engine that has a lot of power and gets 26 to 27 mpg. It’s easy to get in and out of and is a quiet ride.”

“My 2008 **Ford** Ranger pickup has a powerful 4.0-liter engine and handles well.”

Bill Medlin, Shingletown, Calif.: “I’ve owned tractors for more than 30 years, but this one is the best yet,” says Bill about his 2006 **Deere** 110 loader tractor.”

On the “worst buy” side, he lists his 2010 **Sears Craftsman** LT2000 riding mower. “Sears technicians have made 7 visits trying to understand why the engine shuts off without warning. The company extended the