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tread was almost down to the wear bars. I replaced them with new **Mastercraft** tires. After 32,000 miles, one of the tires threw the tread completely off, causing almost \$3,000 damage to the pickup. They're the most expensive tires I've ever bought."

Dan Hyer, Lancaster, Wis.: "It has about 86,000 miles on it but has required only routine maintenance," says Dan about his 2000 **Ford F-250** pickup equipped with a V-10 gas engine. "This pickup has a lot of power and gets about 14 mpg on the highway empty."

On the "worst buy" side, he lists his 2005 **Ford F-350** pickup equipped with a 6.0-liter Powerstroke engine. "This pickup had so

"This pickup had so many breakdowns that I was afraid to leave town with it."

many breakdowns that I was afraid to leave town with it. I used it to haul hay and farm-related equipment. The engine blew up 3,000 miles after the warranty expired, and I had to spend \$8,000 to replace it with a used engine."

Don Dance, Berry, Ky.: Don's disappointed with his 2005 **Volkswagen Jetta TDI** equipped with an automatic transmission. "These cars should have come from the factory painted lemon yellow. Mine has had problems with the compound flywheel, hood opening switch, trunk opening switch, and turbocharger. European owners got a factory recall for the compound flywheel failure, but there was no recall for U.S. owners. I've spent thousands of dollars on various repairs. Major problems with this car show up all over the internet. Volkswagen dropped the ball on this redesigned model."

Richard D. Imhoff, Ruthon, Minn.: "My **Whirlpool** Duet Sport front-load washer broke down just two months after the warranty had expired. It cost \$360 to repair and took the repairman three months to find the problem, which turned out to be with the circuit board.

"Our **Whirlpool** gas range hasn't worked much better.

"On the other hand, our 2011 **Polaris 800** Ranger utility vehicle has been trouble-free. It's a good machine."

Philip Ivey, Lizella, Ga.: Philip's impressed with his 2006 **King Kutter 48-in.** wide rototiller (ph 205 487-3202; www.kingkutter.com). "This unit has seen its share of rough ground and rocks but has been trouble-free so far. I use it on my Kubota BX2350 tractor and built a roller to go behind it. I also own two large **Kubota** tractors that have been trouble-free."

Dennis Althoff, Superior, Mont.: Dennis is impressed with his **Stihl 660** chainsaw and **Stihl** light guide bar. "I make my living felling timber in Montana and Idaho and have used several chainsaw brands over the past 37 years, but Stihls are the best. I really like their new Light guide bar. Besides the 660 I also own the company's 460, 044 and 036 models. They're all great saws.

"My 2004 **Dodge** pickup equipped with a 24-valve Cummins diesel engine and 6-speed manual transmission has a lot of power and gets 24 to 26 mpg. I installed a **BD** exhaust brake on it, which I really like."

Joe Hicks, Lillian, Ala.: "I'm well pleased with my 2012 **GM K1500 Z60** crew cab pickup. It gets more than 18 mpg on short trips and 22 mpg on the highway. I drove this pickup in our local Christmas parade and got

several compliments on its looks."

Bruce Short, North Anson, Maine: "I bought my 2002 **Ford F-250 4-WD** diesel pickup used with only about 65,000 miles on it. It starts and runs great with no problems. I've used this pickup to haul several 1-ton loads and it still gets 17 mpg. It doesn't seem to matter how much I put in the pickup or tow behind it."

William Hostetler, Apple Creek, Ohio: William's the satisfied owner of a 2012 **Toro** hydro drive, 52-in. walk-behind mower. "I like it a lot better than my belt-driven model. I have a big hill to mow, and belts kept tearing. Now I don't have to worry about that."

Leo C. Viens, Middlebury, Vt.: "I bought my **Deere 318** garden tractor used in 1986 and it still runs like new. It has about 1,400 hours on it with no problems. I use it to mow my lawn and to blow snow, and with a blade to push rocks and dirt. I change the oil twice a year."

Larry Schmidt, Lake Andes, S. Dak.: "I'm well satisfied with my **Toro Z** Master commercial zero turn riding mower. All I do is put gas in it and keep the blades sharp. I use it a lot but have had no problems."

David E. O'Brien IV, Seguin, Texas: "My **CinchChix** round bale net is durable and greatly reduces hay waste. It'll pay for



itself in one year (ph 651 277-2449; www.cinchchix.com).

"**Ramm** vinyl fencing is tough, durable fencing that's horse-safe and easy to install (ph 800 434-8456; www.rammfence.com)."

William Nelson, Glasgow, Ky.: "My 1992 **Toyota 2-WD** pickup has about 251,000 miles on it but is still going strong. I've replaced the clutch, fuel pump, and MAF sensor, but it has never needed any engine or front-end work or had any electrical problems. The engine doesn't burn oil and the air conditioner blows ice cold air. I work this pickup hard."

Jack Brandon, Bumpus Mills, Tenn.: "I use **SealLube** leak stop in my Ford 801 tractor. It's designed to stop oil seal leaks in engines, transmissions, power steering and hydraulic systems. I use this tractor every spring to till my 1/2-acre garden, and in the past the tractor would blow out two quarts of oil just doing that work. But it stopped leaking oil instantly when I started using SealLube. And, the tractor's oil pressure doubled (ph 800 434-9192; www.seallube.com)."

Gary Sampson, Freedom, N.Y.: "Our 1998 **Toyota** Avalon had about 87,000 miles on it when we bought it in 2004. At that time I added **Cenpeco 10-30** motor oil (ph 800 553-1891; www.cen-pe-co.com). I changed the oil at 15,000-mile intervals, and at first I switched the filter every 7,500 miles. Then after making two oil changes I started changing the filter only when I changed the oil. At about 150,000 miles the car used one quart of oil between changes. I'll put Cenpeco motor oil up against any synthetic oil on the market today."

Arthur Swartz, North Pole, Alaska: Arthur nominates his 1979 **Ford F-250 XLT 2-WD** GM K1500 Z60 crew cab pickup with a 400 cu. in., V-8 engine as his "best buy". "I drove this pickup for 32 years and used it to pull a camper trailer. It started in temperatures down

Dried Manure Bedding Improves Herd Health, Saves Money

"We've been happier with it than we thought we'd be," says Paul Huneke of the **Doda** manure separator that he uses to recycle cattle manure into bedding for his family's dairy herd. "We have fewer treated cows and the somatic cell count lowered."

High somatic cell count issues using sawdust bedding was one reason Huneke and his two sons became interested in using waste for bedding.

In addition to improved herd health, the system saves money buying sawdust, and labor hauling out two big loads of sawdust every month. There's also less waste going into the lagoon.

The Hunekes had a pipe going to the lagoon from the barn on their Goodhue, Minn., farm. They intercepted the pipe and installed a 12,000-gal. tank that feeds the **Doda** manure separator. The separator squeezes out the liquids and blows the solids (resembling haylage and smelling like forage) into a stacking room.

"The separator runs about 3 hrs. a day and shuts down on a timer," Huneke says. Instead of letting it heat and compost, the Hunekes use the material (about 65 percent moisture) within two or three days, spreading it with a skidsteer in the freestall barn daily. The material not used for bedding is hauled to fields with a box spreader.

The only additional labor is cleaning the separator every 150 hrs. Screens are removed, powerwashed and bolted back on in about 45 min.

Huneke says he thinks there are fewer somatic cell count issues because the material doesn't stick to the cows' teats like sawdust does, and the cows are in their own natural environment. Demand for sawdust has grown, so wood comes from varied sources that may include treated wood and



Manure from barn drops into separator which runs about 3 hrs. a day.



Dried solids are blown into stacking room.

wood with unknown pathogens.

With a loan, Huneke says his bill is \$700 less each month compared to when he purchased sawdust. He estimates a 5-year payback on the cost for his 250-head herd, and notes larger dairies would have a faster payback.

"We've been using this separator since January with no major problems," Huneke says. "It didn't add any labor and will save us labor on manure handling. Our manure hauling should be reduced by about 15 percent."

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to 60 degrees below zero and never left me stranded. It had more than 200,000 miles on it at the end."

Danny R. Holder, Kernersville, N.C.: "In the last three years I've purchased **Honda** GCV 150 and GCV 190 engines, and I think they're the standard by which all other engines should be judged. They start easy and are powerful enough to operate my log splitter and other small equipment."

Fred Lovitt, Williamsburg, Ky.: Fred's disappointed with his **Century Livestock** poly hay ring. "Someone had a good idea for this feeder, but the manufacturing quality is poor. The holes for the bolts don't line up."

Alfred J. Geiger, Jacksonville, Fla.: "My old **Deere 520** tractor still runs like a charm, and the best part is that it's going up in value. If I ever have to replace the clutch I can do so in less than 10 minutes. The power steering on this tractor is good for my arthritis, and the power lift is good enough to handle more modern implements."

John R. Clouser, Wolsey, S. Dak.: "I can service my 2010 **Toyota** Corolla XLE by myself. Everything on it is easy to reach. It gets more than 40 mpg."

Dean Steward and Janet Gabrielson, Dewey, Ariz.: "We've used our **Deere 790** mid-sized tractor on a thousand jobs during the last few years - everything from cleaning pens to doing road work, lifting shop projects, mowing, and hauling firewood. No problems."

Timothy J. Newman, Moorhead, Minn.: "My 2011 **Kubota** BX24 tractor-backhoe works great. No problems and it's easy on fuel.

"Our old **Ford 9N** tractor still starts good and does a great job."

John Austin, Sixes, Ore.: "I've owned my **Kawasaki** Mule for several years and it's very useful, dependable, and powerful. I once used it to pull a tractor off a neighbor who was trapped under it."

Mike Gobble, McDonald, Tenn.: Mike likes his 1984 **Deutz 6507 60** hp tractor equipped with a **Bush Hog** front-end loader. "This tractor is easy to repair. It starts slow in cold weather but runs forever."

Carl Smith, Ft. Worth, Texas: "I'm well pleased with my 2003 **Dodge 2500** diesel pickup. It performs great and is fuel efficient. The air conditioner went out soon after I bought it, but otherwise this pickup has been trouble-free."

Ron Hageman, Onalaska, Wash.: "I bought a used 1994 **Ford** Ranger pickup equipped with a 4-cyl. engine. It had about 155,000 miles on it and used one quart of oil every 2,200 miles. Then I started using **Slick 50** engine treatment in it, and now it has more than 315,000 miles on it but only uses one quart of oil every 7,000 miles. I'm not a dealer for Slick 50. It just works for me."

Bruce Graham, Tyler, Texas: "Crown T-105 solar system batteries are my best buy (ph 419 334-7181; www.crownbattery.com). I bought 16 of these batteries last July and am well pleased with them. I had been using 16 Trojan batteries, which required more water maintenance and didn't recharge as fast. These batteries are specifically made for solar and wind generator systems."

Ted Bowler, Moorpark, Calif.: Ted's happy with his **Boski** ATV tandem axle