

at that point because the tractor was apart. The engine head has never been off and the torque converter, hydraulic pump, hydraulic valves, fuel pump and rear end have never been worked on.

"I only wish the door opened from the other way, like the newer Case-IH Magnums doors do."

Robert installed a 3-pt. stabilizer on it, which keeps his 12-row mounted planter "right where we put it" (Klingler Mfg. Co., Rt. 1, Box 186A, New Ulm, Minn. 56073; ph 507 354-8735).

John Out, Enderby, B.C.: "I like my Deere 6400 MFWD tractor equipped with a Power Quad transmission. It has a lot of power, is easy on fuel, and has a comfortable seat. It's also easy to service."

Roger Eberly, Dalton, Ohio: "My 1996 Knight 8024 Pro Twin manure spreader is my best buy. It has a good spreading pattern with all types of materials and tears packed manure apart very well. Before I bought it I tested two other brands. On one model the manure jammed at the discharge point. On the other model, sticky manure stuck on the flat sides. I talked to that company's territory manager and he told me that I should travel across the corn rows in order to shake the manure down. What a joke!"

Chris Hendricks, Franklin, Ind.: "It's one of the best kept tillage secrets on the market," says Chris, impressed with his 1998 Case-IH 4300 field cultivator. "We're able to pull it through weeds and trash which in

"I think it's one of the best kept tillage secrets on the market."

the past would have required a disk. We pull a five-bar harrow behind the cultivator and make two passes before we plant. It prepares the soil better than anything we've ever tried before."

On the negative side, he lists his 1986 International 800 planter. "The corn seed drums don't have enough options for different seed sizes so with small seed it plants doubles or else skips planting the seed entirely. The dealer gave me the wrong monitor, and then when I got the right one it had to be repaired. I didn't get much help from the dealer, either. Planting depth was inconsistent and the operator's manual does a poor job of explaining how to calculate the proper air pressure. Overall it was a big disappointment."

Jim Jorgenson, Broadview, Mont.: "It has 5,000 trouble-free hours on it," says Jim, proud owner of a 1987 Versatile 876. "The L-10 Cummins engine is great. It starts well and provides good fuel economy. This is a better tractor than the Steiger Cougar we had before, which had problems with U-joints and hydraulics."

"However, the cab filter could be located in a better position and needs a better mounting system. The dealers are few and far between but the factory is great at answering questions."

Rondel Murray, Carroll, Iowa: Rondel has had few problems with his 1976 Deere 4230. "I like the power shift transmission and cab. It starts well in the coldest weather and offers good fuel economy," he says. "I only wish I could find a new command arm, like those on the 8000 series Deeres, installed. I hope Deere or someone else comes up with

a retrofit kit."

Rondel added a Buckeye front 3-pt. hitch to his tractor for hauling hay, spraying and blading. He also installed a factory turbo-charger to increase torque and improve fuel economy.

Lloyd Schade, Homer, Alaska: Lloyd owns two Same tractors - a 1984 130 and a 1986 85. "They are both 4-WD's and do a good job handling the slopes and hills we have," he says. "We've had very few repairs even though a number of different young people operate them. There is also enough clearance to use them in the woods logging. The 85 hp tractor has a 3-pt. lever control outside the cab which helps on 1-man hook-ups."

Joe Chase, Wolsey, S. Dak.: "Our best buy is our 1993 Deere 535 round baler. We've used it to make more than 10,000 bales and it still works great. It makes nice, tight, uniform bales. The bale size and amount of twine used can be adjusted easily. Also, the bale monitor lets the operator know which side of the baler needs hay and when the tying has started. We've had to replace only two bearings. My only suggestion is that they make the pickup teeth easier to change. Also, the hitch could be built stronger."

Stu Mayhew, Roseville, Ill.: "My 1997 Chevrolet pickup has more than 44,000 miles and gets 19 mpg. It's a best buy."

"My worst buy is my 1998 Deere 260 disc mower. I was able to mow only about 7 acres with it before a small disc shaft broke. The dealer came and got it. He returned it two weeks later with a bill for \$1,261.40. I tried to read the warranty and the only thing I could see that I did wrong was that I mowed in the daylight. I'm talking to a lawyer."

James Love, Lime Springs, Iowa: "The one good thing about the tractor is that I only leased it for two years," says James about his 1997 AGCO-Allis 9815. "It has no power with very weak low end torque. The transmission is so jerky that under load, it almost ejects the driver. The brakes are spongy and you never know whether you're going to be able to stop when you need to. It has poor fuel economy. The cab style is older than I am, a throwback to Deutz-Allis days."

Bob Gamble, Sundre, Alberta: The only problem Bob's had with his 1991 Deere 2755 4-WD is with bad seals in the steering column. "My last tractor was a Deere 3130 and it had the same type of problem. My dealer fixed them both."

Otherwise, Bob's "real happy" with the tractor. "I farm some real wet land and have only got stuck once."

Larry Bauer, Brighton, Colo.: "My Wilton bench vise is built with quality in the U.S. It works smooth and has removable jaws. It's a great tool."

Duncan L. Cumming, Madison, Ga.: "I'm well pleased with my three Kubota tractors. They're very dependable."

Steven Wollmann, Neepawa, Manitoba: Steven says his two 1989 Deere 8960 4-WD tractors are both "best buys". "We've put 6,000 hours on one model and 5,000 on the other one with only a few minor problems, until we had to put a new hydraulic pump on one model at 5,500 hours. I've used the tractors to do everything from scraping to chisel plowing to pulling a stoneboat. One complaint I have about all Deere equipment is the operator's seat. It's very uncomfortable and I think the company can do better."

David C. Prause, China Spring, Texas: "My 1997 MTD 46-in. riding mower equipped with an 8 1/2 hp Briggs & Stratton gas engine and automatic transmission is my

best buy. It came with a 2-year warranty. It's a good mower and moves along at a good clip. I had a Cub Cadet that cost three times as much and was a piece of junk."

Ralph and Lois Cole, Storm Lake, Iowa: They like their 4 by 2 Deere Gator. "When we bought it our first reaction was, 'Why didn't we get one sooner?'" says Lois. "Health problems made this purchase imperative for Ralph. We use it all the time and will probably have it until our ride in a hearse. This fall will be Ralph's 58th year to combine grain."

John Schaneman, Scotts Bluff, Neb.: John's "best buy" is his 1975 Ford 1-ton truck equipped with a Farmhand loader on back. He bought it at a farm auction two years ago and it now has 60,000 miles on it.



"The only repair I've had to make is recently replacing the master brake cylinder. The rig is really handy for hauling feed, machinery, or 1,200 to 1,400-lb. bales, especially in winter since it's got a good heater. It's great to stay warm and dry in winter. Also, you can travel 50 to 60 mph down the road from farm to farm, instead of 20 mph or so with a tractor."

Norman B. Chambliss, Dale, Texas: Norman says his "worst buy" is his 1997 Gehl RB1875 baler. "I'm not dissatisfied as much with the baler as I am with the company and its dealers. My dealer did some warranty-covered work on the baler, but he didn't have all the parts that he needed to repair it. Three parts had to be shipped in and I had to pay \$149.75 in overnight express fees for them. The company's RB1870 model has some of the same parts found on this model, but the company didn't have them in stock. Evidently, they don't require their dealers to stock enough spare parts. Maybe the dealers should cannibalize from the company's other new balers so that they can keep their customers going. Farmers should be able to order parts through regular channels and not have to pay high overnight express fees."

Arven Vondy, Woodrow, Colo.: "It's a good tractor that's economical on fuel," says Arven about his 1997 Ford Versatile 9682. "The only problem we have is power hop with the radial tires."

Robert Hellebuyck, Avoca, Mich.: Robert is pleased with his 1968 Allis-Chalmers 5050 diesel. "It starts easily in even the coldest weather, has plenty of power and is easy on fuel," he says. "It has many convenient features such as a foot accelerator, easy-to-use flip lever hydraulic hose hook-ups, and spin-out rear wheels that allow you to change tread width."

However, there is an oil leak between the engine block and transmission and it wasn't equipped with a tool box or adequate front end weighting, he adds.

"I installed a tool box from Quality Farm & Fleet. It works well and was easy to mount on the fender with an adjustable bracket to fit existing holes. I also added front end weights."

Stanley J. Davis, Live Oak, Fla.: A 1995 Mazda 2300 extended cab pickup equipped with a 4-cyl. gas engine rates as Stanley's "best buy". "I've owned several Mazda pickups over the years and have been satisfied

with all of them. They handle good, ride well, and have a lot of power for a 4-cyl. engine."

"My 1998 Mazda B4000 extended cab pickup equipped with a 6-cyl. gas engine and automatic transmission is also a best buy. I use it to pull a gooseneck trailer which I use to haul my Allis-Chalmers CA tractor to shows."

David Rudy, Warwick, N.Y.: "I'm well pleased with my 1997 Vermeer 504I round baler. It does a good job of baling all types of hay, from wet silage bales to thick, fluffy dry hay. It's a remarkable baler. I'd recommend it to anyone."

John H. Poland, Ava, N.Y.: John says his 1994 Belarus 310 is adequate but could use some improvements. "It does what I need it to do and the price savings on everything from fuel to repairs may well work to my advantage," he says. "But it needs to have the brakes adjusted two or three times during a typical haying season, even though they're used very little. The injector pump vent leaks fuel. Quality control at the factory would help greatly. Floor plates should have access plates to fill the hydraulic tank. It should have unobstructed routine maintenance plugs. Some thought should have been put into maintenance instead of mass production. Also, someone should have been responsible for making sure all bolts were tightened before it was painted."

John made an access door for the battery, rebent the arms for hydraulic controls, and made an anti-sway control arm to replace the chain anti-sway system that it came with. He also moved hydraulic parts so they were easily accessible and lengthened one hydraulic control for easier access.

Larry M. Moore, Hull, Ill.: "Larry's the owner of a 1997 Ford F-150 pickup. "No problems after 46,000 miles. This is the first Ford I've owned in 22 years, but I wouldn't hesitate to buy another one. It's definitely a best buy."

On the "worst buy" side, "My Deere 714 mulch tiller pulls too hard. I think it would make a better ship anchor."

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Jason D. Breeding, Palmetto, Ga.: "It needs better gearing," says Jason about his 1988 Massey Ferguson 250 diesel. "It does not have ideal gearing for many jobs. High range is too high and low range is too low. Power steering is somewhat sluggish, too."

Nonetheless, he says, the tractor is reasonably reliable and fuel efficient.

Cary L. Brown, New Madison, Ohio: "It has tremendous power," says Cary about his 1998 Case-IH 8940 equipped with MFD. "This tractor is 20 years ahead of its time. There's nothing the manufacturer could do to improve it."

John Luke, Marion, S. Dak.: John's generally satisfied with his 1977 Ford 9700 but still has a few complaints. "I think the dealer is over-pricing parts," he says. "We had to put in a new clutch and the dealer's price was almost twice as much as I got it elsewhere. The manufacturer should make it easier to get at some parts, such as the pto live shaft."

John Miller, Rodney, Ontario: John's impressed with his 1995 Hardi 500-gal. sprayer.

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