

sucked out through the dipstick tube, but that would leave a lot of used oil in the crankcase. Another problem is that it's almost impossible to grease two zerks at the bottom of the steering column. The zerk's position makes it almost impossible to fit the grease gun onto the zerk and make it hold."

**Donald G. Husek, Ritzville, Wash.:** Donald's impressed with the service provided after he had problems with his **MTD 5 hp chipper/shredder**. "Some welds cracked on the bottom side of the chute that's used to feed branches in. I wrote a letter to the company. They didn't write back but instead sent me a new chute at no cost."

**Kurt Schroer, Perham, Minn.:** "I'm impressed with my 1997 **Case-IH 8840 windrower** which I bought used with 600 hours on it. It drives and handles well and cuts clean and fast. It also has a comfortable and quiet cab. Everyone in my family wants to cut hay now."

On the "worst buy" side, he's had problems with his 1996 **Gehl 1265 forage chopper**. "It's equipped with electronic sensors that are supposed to regulate the chopper and shut it down if something plugs up or if any shafts slow down too much. However, the sensors never have worked. Since day one we've had to use a manual bypass switch. The dealer's mechanic told me that most of these sensors fail within one year. The chopper itself runs well and has a lot of capacity. But the electric gismo's on it belong on the rockpile."

**Charles Snapp, Cynthiana, Ky.:** "I'm well pleased with my **M & W 4590 round baler** equipped with a plastic wrap attachment. I find that the quality of plastic-wrapped hay stored outside is as good as square bales stored in a barn. Very little hay is wasted during storage because the only loss is what touches the ground. I store the bales on a rock bed in order to minimize losses. Another advantage is that plastic-wrapped hay doesn't develop a musty smell as do non-wrapped round bales. The round bales have a soft core which is probably why cows prefer these bales over square bales. I made an unloader to handle the soft core satisfactorily. The body condition of my cows has improved since I started feeding the wrapped bales two winters ago."

**Murray Clarke, Rosetown, Sask.:** "Its accuracy and simplicity make it an excellent seeding outfit," says Murray, impressed with his 1996 **Morris Maxim air drill** equipped with a 7180 seed tank. "This drill is easy to set for both seed rate and machine level. The 60/40 split cart has a walk-through design with ladders on both sides that make it easy to fill."

**Dale V. Grahl, Eden, Wis.:** "One of my best buys ever is my 1997 **Agri Speed automatic wagon hitch** (Bergman Mfg. Inc., Box 82, Arthur, Iowa 51431 ph 800 551-4554 or 712 675-4733). "It eliminates the need to constantly get on and off the tractor in order to hook up and unhook wagons. I have a disease that makes it hard to get on and off tractors. Now it's fun to run my forage chopper again."

**Dudley Adams, Union, S.C.:** "When I bought my 10 1/2-ft. wide **Bush Hog** it cut my bush hoggin' time in half compared to the 6-ft. model that I had been using. It also reduces fuel usage and wear and tear on my tractor. I use a 52 hp Massey Ferguson 255 tractor to pull it."

**Eva McLelland, Goshen, Ala.:** "I would like to caution anyone ordering a low-cost modular house from **MT Housing** in Yakima, Wash., to be careful about sending too much money to the company before receiving the

unit. I read an article in **FARM SHOW** about their low-cost housing units which are made out of ocean-going cargo containers. I ordered a unit in July, 1997 and sent them a check for \$5,886 in August and another for \$11,398 in September. After that I couldn't get them to deliver it. They kept telling me it would 'come next week' but it didn't. We went back and forth and they had lots of excuses. I finally asked for my money back but they wouldn't refund it. They finally shipped the house to me in February.

"I am 82 years old and legally blind and the money for this house represented much of my life savings. This was a traumatic experience for me. I should never have sent the money before shipment. The house itself is okay but not everything is set up the way I requested."

**Warren Lathé, Brattleboro, Vt.:** Warren likes his 1996 **Morton 54-ft. by 75-ft.** building. "It's attractive and well-constructed with no obstructions or pillars inside which makes it easy to move equipment. I have a sawmill inside that's opposite a large set of double doors. With the doors open it's like the sawmill is out in the open - there are no dark areas. The building is equipped with large skylites which add more light."

"My best buy of all time is my **Sears Craftsman 300 amp AC welder** which I bought in 1950. It was expensive at that time. However, I've used it to weld large trailers and all sorts of things over the years and it's still purring away like new. I wanted to be able to weld out in the field so in 1975 I bought a **Lincoln AC-DC** unit with 6,000-watt auxiliary power. Both welders are best buys. They're ready for action any time."

**Randy Mathews, Memphis, Miss.:** "I'm well pleased with my 1996 **Krone** disk mower. I have a custom baling service so I've covered a lot of ground with it."

**Marshall Ulrich, Baldwin, Kan.:** "I

### "Both welders are ready for action any time."

bought my 1968 **Deere 4020** used in 1973. It's a very dependable tractor and I've had few problems with it although I did replace the tractor's front end. It has been a pleasure to drive ever since.

"My 1983 **Killbros 250** gravity flow wagon is a best buy. No problems."

**Duncan Brock, McTaggart, Sask.:** Duncan's impressed with his **E-Kay hydraulic bin sweep** (E-Kay Enterprises, Sedgewick, Alberta). "It's advertised as a bin sweep that you can use either on your auger or mounted inside the bin to fill an under-floor auger. The company says it won't climb a pile of grain and that its curved back allows it to clean right down to the floor while you stand outside the bin and out of the dust. Well, it works like they said. We think it's the best sweep we've ever used."

"We're reasonably pleased with our 1993 **Deere 9600** combine but wonder why Deere made two design changes on it. We had a 1990 **Deere 9500** model that had an easily adjustable control panel that you moved up and down by simply moving a spring-loaded pin. It also was equipped with a beater grate with two spring-loaded pins that made the grate easy to raise and lower. However, on the 1993 model they changed the design on both of these items which makes for two gruesome, time-consuming jobs. Another prob-



Insurance investigators believe the fire that destroyed this Ford-New Holland bi-directional tractor started in the wiring.

## Suspicious Tractor Fires Provoke Lawsuits

"I came across my first tractor fire involving a Ford-New Holland-Versatile bi-directional tractor in 1996. Soon after that we got another one and then another," says Larry D. Mills, manager of Dakota Claims Service of Pierre, S. Dak.

Mills says there are currently four burned-up bi-directional tractors involved in lawsuits in South Dakota alone. The insurance companies and farmers are trying to recoup their losses from New Holland, claiming defects in manufacturing.

Mills has looked into the problem for the past two years. His investigators determined that most fires originate in wiring that runs through grommets in the cab and engine compartments. The grommets work loose, leaving the wiring up against bare metal. If the insulation gets rubbed off, an electrical arc is set up and burns through fuel or other lines, starting a blaze.

"If you look at a bi-directional tractor that has been out in the field for a few years, you'll often notice that the grommets are loose or are working their way loose," says Mills, who often stops at farms with bi-directional tractors and checks the wiring. "In some cases, I'll notice that the wiring has been patched up with electrician's tape."

Mills says it's impossible to know how

many of the tractors have burned up in fires, but he has received calls from adjusters all over the country looking for information on similar cases. He is working with the insurance companies suing New Holland and says the lawsuits could benefit farmers in several ways.

"First, the farmers involved may be compensated if they had uninsured losses. Second, if the insurance companies can be reimbursed by the manufacturer for the tractor fires, they won't have to pass those losses onto farmers, which should help keep rates down. And third, the publicity involved in these lawsuits should help get information out to the public. This is a potentially life-threatening situation and farmers who own these tractors need to look them over carefully to avoid having a tractor fire in the future."

New Holland just released the first all-new redesign of the popular bi-directional tractor since 1977 (see story on page 20). Mills says he has heard that the tractor are supposed to have a new-style grommet on the wiring harness that can't break loose.

Contact: **FARM SHOW Followup**, Dakota Claims Service, Box 400, Pierre, S.Dak. 57501 (ph 605 224-6155; fax 605 224-4735).

lem is with the metric nuts and bolts they use. They are odd-size metric sizes that most companies don't use - 13 mm, 15 mm, 18 mm, and 21 mm. It seems odd to me that a company that's supposed to be so interested in its customers would strive to give you less for more money and then add to your grief with all these funny-sized bolts and nuts."

**Larry McGill, Glencoe, Ontario:** Larry's impressed with his 1997 **Deere 7810 MFWD** tractor equipped with a power quad transmission. "We traded in a 10-year-old **Case-IH 2294** tractor equipped with front wheel assist and powershift transmission. It was reliable and fuel efficient but had a long turning radius and a transmission that was difficult to shift between gear ranges. The 7810 turns short, shifts effortlessly between ranges, has a lot of power, and is fuel efficient."

"My 1993 **Thurston Blue Jet Landracker** coulters caddy is one of the heaviest and best built on the market, but the 900 series coulters on it wear out too fast at the pivot point. The axles and pivot bushings went out after I used it on only 4,000 to 5,000 acres, causing the coulters to track poorly. Also, the company doesn't make left and right side coulters assemblies which are required for better residue flow. I replaced 27 coulters with ones

made by **Till-Tech** (RR 5, St. Thomas, Ontario N5P 3S9 ph 519 775-2405). This company offers left and right coulters that are larger in diameter and have longer pivot axles and bushings. The coulters are also equipped with an adjustable 2,200-lb. spring. They should last a long time."

**James D. Teeter, Clarksville, Tenn.:** "The one tool that I can't live without is my **Gerber Multi-plier** pocket tool. I can use it to fix just about any small problem. The pliers can be opened and closed with one hand - it's almost an entire toolbox in one hand."

"The hydraulic reversing transmission I bought for my 1997 **Deere 5400 MFWD** loader tractor is really not as much a "worst buy" as a case of overanalyzing on my part. We use the tractor primarily for loading sawdust and wood in dark-fired tobacco curing barns. "Dusting" these barns gets pretty rough on your clutch leg so we ordered the optional hydraulic reversing transmission. This decision turned into a \$2,500 mistake. The tractor and transmission work fine, but working in close quarters is made more difficult with the hydraulic reverser. We made a snap decision without trying out the new transmission before we ordered it. Next time we buy a 5400 we won't order the reverser option."