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Neal Houston, Readsboro, Vt.: “My 2003 Century 2535 tractor equipped with a C50 front-end loader works great. This is the same tractor as the Branson 3510 model. I use it in summer with a New Holland haybine and a New Holland 276 small square baler, and with a 6-ft. snowblower in winter. This tractor always starts and is very dependable. It still has the original battery.”

Larry Safford, New Lothrop, Mich.: Larry’s happy with his Mitsubishi ductless air conditioner/heater (www.mitsubishiipro.com). It uses a heat pump and compressor technology specifically designed to work in



cold climates. No ductwork is used. Gas and refrigerant lines run to the wall-mounted units inside.

According to the company, typical ductwork in most homes loses 20 to 40 percent of the heating and cooling generated due to leakage or conduction. But with Mitsubishi’s ductless technology, indoor units can be installed in multiple rooms to deliver heating or cooling exactly where and when it’s needed. Sensors detect hot and cold spots in a room and focus air flow to those specific areas.

“My old furnace always seemed to be running and was either too hot or too cold,” says Safford. “Since installing this system my heating and cooling bills have dropped almost 50 percent, and the system has maintained a year-round comfortable temperature without requiring any adjustment. I was so pleased with the comfort and energy savings that I even talked my nephew into buying one for his home.”

Gary Max Busler, Blane, Tenn.: Gary likes his 2015 Massey Ferguson 2605 4-WD tractor equipped with a front-end loader. It has 38 live pto hp. He also likes his Massey Ferguson DL 250 4-WD tractor. “The DL 250 has a lot of power and can easily pull a 5-shank chisel plow and a 14-coulter Case disk. It’s also fuel efficient and can go all day long on 8 gal. of fuel while mowing, raking or baling hay. Having 4-WD really helps a lot, too. The joystick control makes the front-end loader easy to operate.”

Nathan Nevels, Whitley City, Ky.: “I think my 1970 Ford 3000 diesel tractor is the best 40 hp tractor ever made. I’m still using it for all kinds of farm work. It cost just \$3,800 new.”

Wayne Luepke, Courtland, Minn.: A 2007 Kubota B3030 front wheel assist diesel tractor equipped with a front-end loader and 3-pt. mounted snowblower rates as Wayne’s “best buy.” “It starts in cold weather just as well as a gas-engine tractor. The loader is built strong and is a pleasure to operate, and the cab is comfortable year-round. And with front wheel drive I don’t have to use chains, even in winter.”

Jim Holt, Cincinnati, Ohio: “I bought my 2012 MTD/Cub Cadet LTX 1050 riding mower based on the great service I’ve already enjoyed from earlier MTD products I’ve owned, including two 46-in. riding mowers equipped with V-twin Briggs & Stratton engines. I’ve read in FARM SHOW about people who have had drive belt problems with their LTX 1050’s, and last summer I

had to replace the drive belt on my 1050, too. But my two 46-in. MTD riding mowers have never worn out a drive belt, even though they’re much older than the 1050.”

Richard Miller, Forrest, Ill.: “I like my 2009 GM Sierra 1/2-ton pickup. I salvage wood from barns and corn cribs as a business so this pickup has hauled a lot of big loads, yet it’s still performing well even with more than 120,000 miles on it.”

Richard Crabtree, Calhoun, Ky.: Richard rates his Rural King Chuck Wagon utility vehicle as his “all time worst buy.” “From the very first day, the engine wouldn’t idle down enough to let me shift into gear. Apparently the throttle cables were stuck because the wrong tension spring had been

“The engine wouldn’t idle down enough to let me shift into gear.”

installed. Then within a few days the battery failed and I couldn’t start the vehicle, so a new battery was installed. However, 5 days later that battery failed, too. I had to charge the battery every day because the vehicle’s lights were draining the battery in minutes.

“Once I did get the vehicle in gear I couldn’t idle the engine down or shift gears, which caused me to accidentally run into things. The brakes worked only on one wheel, the vehicle’s generator never worked right from day one, and the engine ran so rough that the whole rig shook hard which caused bolts and nuts to back off and fall out. The dealer says it will take weeks to get replacement parts and now the machine sits in his shop.”

Matthias Hilty, Monroe, Ind.: “I’m impressed with my Carhartt Fleece 2-in-1 headwear, which consists of a fleece cap with a pull-down face mask. The cap is incredibly comfortable, and the face mask stops the biting cold but still allows me to breathe easily. The mask hugs my head tight enough to keep the warmth in and the cold out.

“Our steel Kodiak scoop shovel outperformed our aluminum shovels not only for how long it has lasted, but for how well it works (www.kodiak-shovels.best-price.com). Some people think steel shovels are too heavy, but considering that I’m using one that’s about 8 years old with a lot of hours on it, I can get used to the slight weight difference. I’ve even used this shovel to chip ice off concrete.”

Rando Kauffman, Monroe, Wis.: “I use Cooper Weather Master snow tires on my 1991 Geo Prism. In 3 to 4 in. of snow I can get around as well as I can with my 4-WD pickup, if not better.”

Robert L. Fisher, Burlington, W. Va.: Robert nominates Fluid Film, a lubricant and corrosion-preventing undercoat product, as his “best buy” (www.fluid-film.com; ph 888 387-3522). “It’s a lanolin-based lubricant that clings to components rather than running off. I use it on everything. It even works great as an anti-seize agent on bolts and other parts. It’s the best lubricant I’ve ever used.”

Paul Miller, Gardiner, Mont.: “I bought a Stanley 500-amp battery jump-starter with air compressor 1 1/2 years ago. Part of my decision was based on it being a good American name product. However, the compressor quit working after I had used it to inflate just 5 tires. I called the company, but they said the machine was out of warranty and that no repair parts were available.

“I took a closer look at the machine and discovered it’s made in China. No more Stanley products for me.”

“Fast Fix” Repair Tape

Jim Ruen, Lanesboro, Minn.: “When the aluminum shaft on my 20-year old Stihl weed trimmer snapped, I hated to toss it out. I had used it with chain heads, circle saw blades, and half a dozen different string heads. It was versatile and tough.

“I considered several options to mend the break, but nothing made sense until I saw a box of FiberFix at a local hardware store. The fiber tape impregnated with a specialized resin was introduced on the TV show Shark Tank by the inventor, a college student named Spencer Quinn.

“The product claims of ‘Hardens like steel’ sounded too good to be true, but the \$9.99 price seemed worth the gamble.

“FiberFix is available in 3 different sizes. I went with the widest 4-in. tape. It came with plastic gloves, some vinyl wrap and a small piece of sandpaper.

“FiberFix is nontoxic but it’s messy. That’s why they include the gloves. The sandpaper is used to roughen up a smooth surface for a better grip.

“Following the directions in the box, I submersed the FiberFix in lukewarm water for about 10 sec., squeezed out excess water and began wrapping the tape over the break. The first 2 turns were loose with the remainder tight. I wrapped about 5 layers directly over the break with others overlapping to cover about 4 in. to either side of the break.

“Once all 60 in. of the tape was used I smoothed the surface and distributed the



Before and after photos show how Jim Ruen used FiberFix tape to repair the broken aluminum shaft on his Stihl weed trimmer.



resin by rubbing it with the gloved hand. I then wrapped the tape tightly with the vinyl strip and left it for about 5 min.

“By the time I took the vinyl off, the FiberFix felt about as hard as steel. I reattached the arms and throttle control while easily trimming away a bit of excess FiberFix tape that was in the way.

“Although there aren’t many weeds to trim in Minnesota in February, it appears to be a good fix. It certainly beats spending several hundred dollars on an equivalent, new trimmer.”

Ben Hoffman, Bradford, Maine: “My Conestoga 80 manure spreader works great with my small Deere 670 tractor (www.conestogamanurespreaders.com; ph 855 822-1976). I bought the spreader used in near mint condition and I clean it up after each use. It has a simple design and construction, and its stainless steel chains and rubberized floor should assure a long life.”

Jim Sura, Grand Rapids, Minn.: “I checked the fuel economy twice on my wife’s 2013 Chevrolet Sonic, and both times it got 52 mpg. That’s really good.”

Randolph Drumm, Manitowoc, Wis.: “I like my Dixon Ram 44 zero turn riding mower. It’s equipped with a rear-mounted, 26 hp Briggs & Stratton engine and a hydro transmission.”



Ron Adams, Denver, Iowa: Ron’s pleased with his Swift Hitch portable wireless backup camera (www.swift hitch.com; ph 617 600-8282). “It’s equipped with a magnetic base and a handheld display with a color 2 1/2-in. LCD screen. I mount the camera on my pickup’s tailgate and aim it at the hitch. It lets me back up to equipment without needing someone to help.”

James L. Swanson, Russell, Penn.: “I bought a New Holland 4105 tractor in December 2014. Just before Christmas the dealer had the tractor in stock but not the loader, so he ordered it from the company. However, it took 3 months to get the loader in and for the tractor to be delivered.

“With less than 10 hrs. on the tractor the

transmission went out, apparently because the factory hadn’t installed the pin to hold the gears in the transmission. The gears got torn up badly and the tractor was in the shop for a month.

“At about 50 hrs. the pto went out because of shavings and pieces that were left behind when the transmission went out. It took two weeks to get the pto fixed and to get the tractor back. But when I went out one day to mow hay with my discbine, the pto went out again and was in the shop for more than a week. The dealer agreed that the company should replace the tractor, but they refused.

“Finally in August the company said they would replace the tractor by October or November. But December came and I still hadn’t heard anything so I went back to the dealer. However, now he said the company wouldn’t replace the tractor unless I paid them \$7,500.

“I’ll never buy another tractor from this company. They don’t treat their customers fairly.”

Clifford Litwiller, Delavan, Ill.: “One of my best buys is my 2001 Behlen Country 10-ft. feeder (www.behlencountry.com; ph 800 447-2751). It comes with a galvanized metal frame, and the tub is made of some kind of plastic which made me a bit skeptical at first. But before I got around to placing the feeder in our fence line I went out to do chores and found a market weight steer standing in the feeder - with absolutely no damage to the tub or frame.”

Ed Friedhaber, Rushford, N.Y.: “My 1972 Ford 4000 2-WD loader tractor is my go-to machine for almost everything. It runs like a champ and always starts, even in the coldest weather. It’s easy to fix, and parts for it are readily available.

“I’ve had three Tecumseh engines fail in the last two years. These engines seem especially vulnerable to ethanol gas. I’ve had better luck with Honda and Kohler engines, as well as Briggs & Strattons.”