

any kind. My dealer is 50 miles away but he delivered it free and came out later for the 100-hour checkup at no charge. The tractor is advertised at 42 hp, but the dealer said he hadn't heard of any that checked out under 46 hp on the dynamometer. Mine checked out at 51 hp."

Nelson Howell, Jerseyville, Ontario: I'm generally pleased with my 1994 **New Idea** Side Kick 3222 manure spreader although I have to keep the beaters free of manure in freezing weather. My biggest complaint is that the tandem axle is built far too light and can't withstand heavy loads. Last winter the axle broke completely away from the walking beam. Also, there's almost no clearance between the tires and walking beam axle so in wet conditions the tires just ball up with mud. I told company representatives about the problem but they didn't seem interested."

John F. Wohlwend, Foxboro, Wis.: John's "best buy" is his **E-Z Trail** self-loading basket wagons for small square bales that eliminate the need for a bale thrower (**E-Z Trail**, Inc., R. 133, P.O. Box 168, Arthur, Ill. 61911). Bales are pushed up an angled chute and gravity-unload through a rear gate. "These baskets allow one man to pick up 1,000 bales off a field in one day. They don't require a lot of maintenance, either. They free up workers for other jobs."

Robert Dobko, Calmar, Alberta: Robert nominates his 1995 **Bourgault** 9200 chisel plow as his "best buy". "It does an excellent job for both fall tillage and spring cultivation. It's built tough and doesn't require a lot of maintenance."

James Jalbert, Dalhousie, New Brunswick: "I had a perfectly good Cummins engine seize in my **Versatile** tractor. It happened after I used the sight indicator on the engine end of the tractor to

"It does an excellent job for both fall tillage and spring cultivation."

check the coolant level and thought that there was sufficient coolant in the radiator and engine. The problem was that the sight glass had become discolored with antifreeze so that what looked like coolant was actually only the color stain left by the antifreeze. The engine seized when I drove the tractor from my farm to my home seven miles away, even though the temperature gauge didn't indicate overheating.

"The company didn't warn me that this could happen which is why I think they should help pay for the cost to have the engine replaced. I'd like anyone else who has experienced a similar problem to contact me."

John Hayes, Rice Lake, Wis.: "I'm impressed with my **Keeton** add-on seed firmers for row crop planters (**J & K Enterprises**, 2180 Bell Chapel Road, Trenton, Ky. 42286 ph 502 265-2709). It's a 16-in. long curved nylon 'paddle' that fastens onto the back of the seed tube with two nylon tie straps. It presses seed down into the bottom of the furrow to improve seed-to-soil contact. I used them for the first time last year and could see the difference in more uniform seed emergence. They cost less than wheel-type seed firmers and don't plug up in wet conditions."

Loren Bangs, Bangs Harvesting, Doniphan, Neb.: Loren's the satisfied

owner of a 1996 **Case-IH** 2166 combine. "I've had very few problems with it or with any of the company's previous models. We can always use more power, especially when harvesting 25 percent moisture corn and unloading on-the-go. I mounted a bigger grain tank on the combine for more storage capacity. When harvesting 200 bu. per acre wet corn you have to be able to make at least one pass through the field without having to unload. I have center pivot irrigation systems on quarter sections so all my fields are 1/2 mile long."

Ken Scharabok, Waverly, Tenn.: "I like my pickup-mounted **Hydra-Bed** bale mover (**Triple C Mfg., Inc.**, RR 4, Box 4A, Sabetha, Kan. 66534 ph 800 530-5624 or 913 284-3674). The hydraulic-powered bale loading arms on the bed allow me to haul round bales from the field to storage and then from storage to my cattle herd, and I can do the job myself without any help. When the control cables became hard to use the company replaced them at no cost even though the warranty had expired. I couldn't operate a one-man cattle farm without this excellent piece of equipment."

"My worst buy is a calf-bonding product called '**O-NO-MO**', formerly known as Orphan-No-More. It's supposed to help assure calf adoption by natural or foster mothers. However, I've tried it on six calves and eight different cows with no results. I consider it a waste of money."

Richard A. Barta, DVM, Independence, Kan.: "It produces good, tight bales that stand up all winter long," says Richard, pleased with his 1996 **Deere** 435 round baler. "Several parts were put on backward at the factory, including the rear door closure. However, after we got it set up right it worked good."

"My worst buy is my **Reese** 10-ft. 3-in. mower. We couldn't cut as fast with it as we could with our other mower. Also, we were told that the belts would last forever, but they broke the first season."

Robert Klie, St. Francis, Kan.: Robert bought a **Big Valley** calving care center this spring and says it's his "best buy" (**Big Valley**, Box 569, Columbus, Neb. 68602 ph 402 563-7285). "I bought it because I have 53 heifers to calve out, and it has performed better than I ever hoped. It's easy to set up and use and allows one person to get heifers into the pen and pull the calves. We even used it to do a C section birth on one cow. It has saved calves and also trips to the veterinarian in town."

"My 1995 **Crary** double spinner chaff spreader is my worst buy. The shaker pan from the sieves to the spreader is made from aluminum and cracks where it bends at the sieve. The company was helpful at first, but they acted like I was the only one to have trouble with these units. The shaker pan will last for only about 400 to 450 acres of wheat before it breaks. I plan to beef it up using parts from another broken unit."

Harold L. Swartfager, Knox, Penn.: Harold nominates his 1995 **Hesston** 430 round baler as his "best buy". "It makes a good, solid bale and is virtually maintenance-free. We haven't had any problems starting the bale. Also, the tying mechanism works good."

Clinton Sawyer, Sawyer Harvesting, Amherst, Texas: Clinton owns three 1996 **Deere** 9600 combines and says they're all "best buys". "They're very reliable and work good in a wide variety of crops and conditions. I do wish they had more cleaning capacity which would allow higher ground speeds. Another problem is that the crop

sometimes 'bunch feeds' into the feederhouse. It should feed in better."

B.D. DeJager, Maurice, Iowa: He likes his **New Holland** quick tach mounting plate for the front of his skid steer loader. "It's a rigid, double reinforced steel plate that can be attached to any implement without having to reinforce it. Makes it easy to mount our new mini backhoe."

Herschel Carriger, Chapin, Ill.: "I'm impressed with my 1993 **Vicon** mower conditioner. It does a good job of mowing any crop at 9 mph. I can mow all day long without having to look back to make sure it's not plugging up. When I'm ready to mow I just go to the field - no need to make repairs first like on a sicklebar. The driveline design is 'chatter-free' even on corners, and it's equipped with adjustable wings that let me narrow the 10 1/2 ft. cut to any width I want. The only problem is that there aren't many dealers in our area."

"Combined with my 8-wheel V rake and **Vermeer** Super J round baler equipped with a bale kicker, I have a great baling team."

Sam Scarlett, New Market, Tenn.: A 1995 **Case-IH** Magnum front wheel assist tractor rates as Sam's "best buy". "It has a lot of power and pulls good. No problems after 1,000 hours. However, it has the most uncomfortable ride of any tractor I've ever used - it wasn't made for tall people. The company should take another look at im-

"It has the most uncomfortable ride of any tractor I've ever used."

proving operator comfort."

Ken Peil, Ayr, Neb.: "My 1995 **Ariens** self-propelled mulching mower is a piece of junk. It doesn't mow evenly and throws the grass to one side. After I used it about a month I had to take it back to the dealer. They said the idler was frozen up and supposedly repaired it. However, I used it for only one day before I had to return it again because the V-belt was slipping. They installed a new belt and now it seems to be working better. No more Ariens for me."

Allan Brooks, MarkKesan, Wis.: Allan likes his 1995 **Caterpillar** Challenger 65C tractor. "The 30-in. heavy duty track treads very lightly on our soils and causes much less soil 'berming' on turns than deep lug tracks. It outperforms our beloved **Steiger** CP1325 tractor even though the Steiger has 40 more engine horsepower."

"I've had problems with the 1996 **May-Wes** spiked poly closing wheels mounted on my row crop planter. The wheels worked well in drier soil conditions. However, in wet, sticky, heavy soils they completely balled up with dirt and didn't close the furrow. I replaced them with cast iron wheels and they worked much better. I know that I wasn't planting when the ground was too wet because the field produced my highest sweet corn yield."

Gale Shughart, Shughart Harvesting, Oskaloosa, Kan.: "I'm well satisfied with my 1995 and 1996 **Deere** 9600 combines. They do a fantastic job in all conditions and consistently produce a clean threshing sample. They're comfortable to operate and are trouble-free 98 percent of the time. There's no need for Deere to be in a big hurry to change - they already have the best combines on the market."

"One problem is that the button that ac-

tivates the 4-WD pusher wheels should be moved away from all other controls. I accidentally hit the switch that activates the wheels while going 8 to 12 mph, and it cost more than \$4,500 for a new hydraulic motor. I wouldn't have bumped it if the switch had been mounted up on a column. Another problem - I think the company should have a 30-ft. platform that feeds the crop in more evenly, such as on **MacDon** models, in order to increase the combine's capacity. We mounted **Vitteot** chaff spreaders on our combines simply because they cost less than other models and because we can swing them out of the way when necessary. Try doing that on a combine equipped with factory chaff spreaders."

Dale Melton, Casey, Ill.: Dale's happy with his 1996 **Case-IH** 7230 front wheel assist Magnum tractor and 1996 **Case-IH** 2166 combine. "I'm impressed with the company's service and well pleased with all their products. The controls on these combines are well placed, and the cab is second to none. I'm also happy with all the improvements on the tractor. I had one small problem with the tractor, but the company people came down from Racine, Wis., to correct it. I couldn't ask for more."

Harold Hutchinson, Lima, Ohio: "I like my 1996 **Deere** 6400 tractor and 620 front-end loader. I'm impressed with its power - it's rated at 85 hp but actually has 95 hp. We use it all the time for grinding feed, baling hay, and a lot of other jobs. The loader is operated by a joystick control which really works slick."

Harvey Zabel, Prairie du Chien, Wis.: "My best buy is my **Aqua Therm** outside wood burning furnace (**Aqua-Therm**, Rt. 1, Box 1, Brocton, Minn. ph 800 325-2760). It goes outside the home, usually in a shop or woodshed, and ties into your existing forced air or hot water heating system. It makes heating with wood easy. I only have to fill it twice a day and it uses a thermostat control in the house so I can keep the house as warm or cool as I wish. It's an efficient way to heat with wood and it saved on my heating expense as I have my own wood."

Larry Brandau, Nora Springs, Iowa: "I've had problems with my 1992 **Farm Fans** 410 dryer equipped with **Focus I** moisture control. The moisture control system hasn't worked since we bought it, and the service is bad. Last fall we had to wait three weeks for parts."

Leo J. White, Wagoner, Okla.: Leo likes his 1992 **Ford-New Holland** 650 round baler equipped with a wide pickup and fast net wrapping system and computer controls. "The customer service and free update system has been great. The baler's trouble-free and consistently makes an even diameter bale of 1,000 to 1,100 lbs."

On the "worst buy" side, "I bought a T83698 short block engine assembly for my **Deere** 2510 tractor. When I opened the shipping crate all I found was the first page of the installation instructions and six fax sheets about the contents. When I asked for the complete assembly instructions I was refused. I was refused again even after I offered to pay for them. The engine didn't run right and a \$400 tune-up didn't help. The dealer refused to give me the Deere address. I've used Deere tractors ever since 1947 but I guess it's time to change paint."

Dallas Henry, Seneca, S. Dak.: "I like my 1994 **Flexi-Coil** 5000 33-ft. air seeder equipped with a 1720 series tow-between cart. It seeds uniformly and with accurate depth control. It's also easy to load and clean out."