

built-in receiver hitch and optional built-in hay bale stabilizers.

On the "worst buy" side, he lists his **Tempur-Pedic** mattress. "After it was opened, I laid on the mattress for 15 min. but had trouble breathing because of the gases coming out of the mattress. The company said they wouldn't refund my money because the wrapper was already off. Since I needed to sleep I bought a **Select Comfort** mattress, which I really like. I later sold the Tempur-Pedic for less than half what it cost me."

**J.D. Lyall, Tonkawa, Okla.:** "It's the most dependable piece of equipment I've ever owned, and I'm 82 years old," says J.D. about his 1988 **Honda FourTrax** ATV.

**"It's the most dependable piece of equipment I've ever owned."**

On the negative side, he lists his 2010 **Buick Lucerne** CTS. "I bought LeSabres for many years before they became obsolete and were replaced by the Lucerne. Mine has less than 60,000 miles on it, but already I've had to replace the water pump and air conditioner compressor. My dealer says I should trade for a LaCrosse. I told him the LaCrosse just looks like an older Buick Century but has a Roadmaster price. No more Buicks for me."

**Frank Pfleger, Monroe, N.Y.:** Frank's impressed with **Gibbs** brand lubricant (www.gibbsbrandlubricant.com; ph 866 800-6088). It's designed to lubricate, stop corrosion, displace moisture, waterproof, penetrate, clean, and provide storage protection for up to 5 years. It can be used on any type of metal, wood, glass, leather, rubber and most plastics.

**Ted Olson, Lewiston, Minn.:** Ted nominates his **Black & Decker** 20-volt lithium battery hedge trimmer as a "best buy". "I use it to cut ragweeds and brush along fence lines and for trimming work. It weighs 5 1/2 lbs., which is much less than a gas model, and it'll run for 2 1/2 to 3 hrs. before the battery needs to be recharged. That's long enough for an old guy like me."

**Charles Campbell, Tyler, Texas:** "I've never had a single problem with my 2006 **Kubota** L3400 tractor. It still has the original battery."

**Thomas Crouse, Lafayette, Ind.:** "I like my **Ferris** zero-turn riding mower equipped with a 37 hp engine and 72-in. deck (www.ferrismowers.com; ph 800 933-6175). It handles well and does a good job of mowing at speeds up to 10 mph. I use it with **Gator** mulcher blades that chop the grass up fine (www.oregonproducts.com; ph 800 223-5168)."

**Charles Rhoten, Mantorville, Minn.:** "It's powerful for its size, fuel efficient, and easy to drive," says Charles about his 2014 **HST** 3240 tractor. "It starts easy even when it's cold outside. It also rides good and is easy to service."

He's disappointed with his **Vencomatic** chicken nests. "The gear rod that drives the egg belt stripped out after 2 mo. of use. Also, eggs get under the belts and rot there. Technical help from the company is poor."

**Vic Stratman, Argyle, Mo.:** "A few years ago I bought a used **Deere** 6400 MFWD loader tractor with about 3,200 hrs. on it. It now has more than 9,000 hrs. It's an amazing tractor. I don't know how it could be improved.

"My **Vermeer** 830 discbine is an amazing machine.

"I'm not impressed with my **H&S** 8-wheel V-rake."

**John Hayes, Iron City, Tenn.:** "I bought two **Vicon** CMZ800 disc mowers about 2 years apart. These mowers feature 3-blade discs for better cutting ability, and they have heavy cutterbars. The bar and gearbox oil are easy changes. Mows through the thickest hay with ease.

"The hydraulic coupler dust covers I bought from Deere for my 1995 **Deere** 6300 tractor cost \$12.50 apiece. These rubber covers are designed to snap onto the hydraulic couplers on back of the tractor, but after one or two uses they tore and came apart. Deere refunded my money. I went to Tractor Supply Co. and bought their dust covers for \$4.25 for two. These covers are much stronger and are still working good."

**Bobbie L. McCormick, Sebree, Ky.:** "I'm impressed with my **Woods** 990 7 1/2-ft. finishing mower and **Woods** 7-ft. box blade. The finishing mower has a heavy duty frame and wheels. It's a wonderful mower. The box blade is also built heavy and has held up great. I've always been sold on Woods products.

"I bought a used 2001 **Ford** F-250 Super Duty pickup with about 46,000 miles and sold it at about 49,000 miles. The 5.4-liter engine had no power at all."

**Daryl Bridenbaugh, Pandora, Ohio:** A 2014 **Dodge** Ram 3/4-ton pickup equipped with a Cummins diesel engine rates as Daryl's "best buy". "This is a very smooth running pickup with as much power as the average semi truck built in the 1960's. It averages 19 mpg and is the third Ram I've owned. The others had more than 200,000 miles on them with no engine problems. Unfortunately, rust from fertilizer dust and road salt took its toll.

"A few years ago I bought a used 2007 **Toyota** Tundra pickup equipped with a 4.7-liter engine. It ran super smooth but never got more than 13 mpg. When the price of gas rose to \$4 per gal. I traded it for the Ram."

**Roger Stephens, Roundup, Mont.:** Roger's impressed with his 3-year-old **Twisted X** moccasins (www.twistedxboots.com; ph 888 894-2668). "These moccasins have a round oval top and a carbon fiber composite sole that's designed to distribute the force evenly over the ground. They're really comfortable. I've worn them every day and it looks like they'll last another 3 years, or more. I'm tickled pink with them, even if they are made in China. They cost \$100 but I'd buy another pair any day."

**James Thompson, Winnsboro, Texas:** James likes to use **Blaster** small engine tune-up. It comes in an 11-oz. aerosol can and can be used on all 2 and 4-cycle combustion engines (www.blastercorp.com; ph 800 858-6605). "I've tried this product on some cranky lawn mowers and have had terrific results. Turns out it's also an excellent starter fluid," says James.

He's disappointed with his **BF Goodrich** 235 R75 15 car tires. "The tires started cracking so badly over the last 2 years that I recently had to replace them. I thought the tires were five plus years old, but then I learned from the date code they were actually nine years old. Apparently they had been stored in a warehouse for four years."

**Melvin Doyle, Plummer, Idaho:** "The most dangerous tractor I ever owned ended up being the most reliable. It was a 2007 **Kubota** L5030 50 hp, 4-WD model. The tractor's rear wheels were spaced so closely together that the tractor almost rolled over 3 different times. Then I decided to mount duals on the rear, and now it's my best tractor. It has about 6,000 hrs. on it with no problems.

"My worst buy recently was a used **New Holland** 315 hayliner baler. It made banana bales no matter what the factory-trained

## "Best Buy" Grapple Fork

By Lorn Manthey, Contributing Editor

"A lot of jobs around a farm need grab-and-go hydraulic power, and one of the best tools for that work on my place is my new **CID X-treme Root Grapple**. I looked at several different grapples and eventually chose this one because the top is made from 5/8-in. steel plate, the 1/2-in. steel teeth on the bucket have reinforced arrow-like points, and there's a 4-in. square tubing top frame. This tool can handle stumps, brush, rocks and old building materials without bending, bowing or breaking.

One feature I like is that both 2 by 10-in. grapple cylinders are protected by heavy-duty metal covers. That's important when moving large limbs and tree trunks. The 'jaws' of the attachment open about 42 in. and close to about 16 in. above the base, so grabbing brush and squeezing it tight works well. That same feature also works well for digging under stumps, roots, and rocks up to 2 ft. dia. When the fork teeth are under what I'm digging, the hydraulic grapples hold it in place so the machine can work it loose. I use it on my **JCB** 260 skid steer, so I've got plenty of power to dig and haul. The grapple and JCB easily lifted a 24-in. dia. tree that was almost 30 ft. long and hauled it to the wood pile.

"The only problem I've had with the fork were hydraulic fittings that worked loose inside the 4-in. main frame. I had to remove the bracket that holds the hoses in place, then remove the hoses so I could tighten the fittings inside the frame. Hopefully no more leaking oil in the future.

"A final feature that persuaded me to choose this unit was the 12-month warranty for any defects in materials and workmanship. I didn't use the warranty for the fitting problem. However, if it occurs again, I'll be calling the dealer.

"The **CID X-treme** grapple (www.



**CID X-treme Root Grapple handles stumps, brush, rocks and old building materials without bending or breaking.**



**Grapple's "jaws" open 42 in. to grab brush and squeeze it tight.**

cidattachments.com) I have is 78 in. wide, which covers the width of my skid steer tires. Other models include 63, 66, 72, 81 and 84-in. models. The company also makes standard heavy duty model grapples that are built with slightly thinner steel, so they're not as strong as the X-treme. A smaller grapple for lower horsepower compact tractors is also available."

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mechanics at the dealer tried. After spending \$2,500, it's on the way to the scrap heap."

**Sandy Leathers, Cairo, Mo.:** She's happy with the **Electric Hoof Trimming** hoof trimmer she bought 2 years ago (www.electrichoofknife.us; ph 877 320-8203). "I bought it to make it easier to trim the hooves



on my dairy goats. It's not actually a knife but instead works more like a grinder. The product comes with two separate discs, an allen wrench to change them, and an instruction sheet that said I should use leather gloves, safety glasses, and a dust mask when operating the knife.

"Everything came in a sturdy, zippered carry-bag with the company logo on the side. We've had trouble with raccoons in our barn and one morning I found the bag chewed up, the zipper ruined, and the contents scattered. I called the company to buy a new bag. Instead, they mailed me one at no cost. It arrived from Florida in 4 days.

"This product saves a person's back and can really help anyone who no longer has a strong enough grip to close the blades on regular hoof clippers. The company offers

outstanding customer service."

**Rollie C. Huntley, Emerson, Neb.:** "My 2014 **Ford** F-150 4-WD pickup has a very comfortable ride, and I like the rear view camera and tailgate ladder. Also, the rear doors and seats are comfortable and easy to get in and out of. It has a 5.0-liter engine that gets about 19 mpg."

**Daniel Van Dam, South Kortright, N.Y.:** "I recently bought a **Massey Ferguson** 2625 4-WD tractor. It's excellent on fuel, has conveniently located controls, and is a high performance machine with lots of 'umph'. I love this tractor and use it for mowing, raking and grading work. It was a really good buy.

"My 6-ft. **York** landscape rake turned out to be a disappointment. It digs up more rocks than it gathers even though it rides on skids."

**John C. Betka:** John's disappointed with his **Wagner** Flexio 570 handheld paint sprayer. "I bought it to paint exterior cedar shingles using an oil-based stain but it didn't handle the stain well at all. I tried all the different settings on it, but nothing helped. The gun shoots stain out as if I were using a window cleaner spray bottle. The pattern isn't uniform and the applied spray looks rough.

"The gun is very heavy for use off a ladder or even when standing on the ground. It takes two hands to hold the gun level. The use of threads to hold the paint bottle is absurd, as it's very difficult to get the threads cleaned after use. What's more, it's made of plastic that doesn't hold up.

"I contacted the company within 30 days asking if I could return the sprayer, but the company refused."