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"My 1997 **Lincoln** Town Car equipped with a 4.6-liter engine is my worst buy. The engine has a plastic intake manifold that started leaking at 60,000 miles. The company offers a kit with a new intake with metal inserts in the water jacket. There's also a replacement mount for the alternator. It cost me \$1,800. Why didn't Ford recall this problem? Do all Ford 4.6-liter engines leak behind the alternator?"

Wayne W. Urffer, Moorestown, N.J.: "My wife and I are well pleased with our hybrid 2002 **Toyota** Prius. It comfortably seats four big adults, has a generous-sized trunk, and a lot of power. It's very fuel efficient, getting anywhere from 45 to 53 mpg. Our best mileage was on a 660-mile round trip from southern New Jersey to western Massachusetts, when we got almost 56 mpg. We've had only one problem, a faulty computer module that was fixed under warranty. We're already looking at ordering another Prius, as Toyota has improved the power, lowered the emissions, and increased luggage space.

"I'm not impressed with my **Wagner** electric power painter. The commercials make using it sound so easy. But this paint gun was so noisy the neighbors complained and the dog howled. And to get the paint to flow properly, I had to thin it down and as a result it looked like stain when it was applied. It took four to five coats to get decent coverage and no matter how I fiddled with it, it dripped

"This paint gun was so noisy the neighbors complained and the dog howled."

paint all over the place. I paid \$45 for the deluxe model, and I was happy to see it go at a yard sale for \$5."

Scott Engleka, Fairhope, Penn.: "This truck is awesome. It's the best I've ever owned," says Scott, impressed with his 1999 **Ford** F-350 4-WD pickup equipped with a Powerstroke diesel engine. "My pickup had some aftermarket work done to it so it really runs good. Whenever I pass people on the road they always look, because my truck is really loud and sounds like a jet plane. It's an excellent truck."

Blake Engleka, Fairhope, Penn.: "I think **Carhartt** offers by far the best clothing on the market. It's super tough and super comfortable. It's simply the best.

"**Redwing** boots are also excellent. All you have to do is look where both products are made - in the U.S.A."

Henry Groeckel, Hanover, Kansas: "I own an outstanding 1966 **Deere** 4020 tractor that runs on LP gas. It has more than 13,000 hours on it but the transmission has never been repaired nor have I ever had to do anything to the hydraulics. The engine has been overhauled three times. The only problem is the main bearings are a little weak. They're the same bearings used in the gas engine that comes with this tractor. The bearings should have been bigger, because LP gas results in higher compression."

Joseph Stauffer, Leonardtown, Md.: Joseph bought a **Rhino** FM100 finish mower slightly that's his best buy. "We remodeled this 100-in. mower by adding a 25 hp Kohler Command engine to the deck. We changed the drive ratio by reversing the position of the gearbox, and we replaced the 3-pt. hitch with a simple pin hitch. We also welded blocks to convert the rear two caster wheels into fixed wheels. The machine trails nicely

behind my two-horse hitch."

Richard Durham, Salford, Ontario: "My worst buy is my 1998 **Dodge** Dakota pickup equipped with a 3.9-liter, V-6 engine. The bumpers rusted under the paint and bubbled out during the first year. That problem was repaired under warranty, but then the same problem happened again. The bolts snapped off on the exhaust manifold and also on both sides of the engine, and the upper ball joints wore out at about 30,000 miles. When I tried to change the spark plugs for the first time, the threads broke off in the engine. Now I'm just waiting for something else to go wrong. I never had any problems with the 1990 **GM** S15 pickup I owned previously. It was a much better vehicle.

"My **Case** 220 lawn tractor is my best buy. It's probably more than 20 years old, but I've never had a problem with it. No other lawn tractor, including **Deere** models, compares to the quality of the old **Case** tractors."

David Foster, Lillington, N.C.: "My **Tennessee** walking horse never breaks down and is well tempered but spirited. It doesn't affect the ozone or contribute to bad air. It's always dependable, and always goes the distance. It has good brakes, starts easy, and accelerates fast.

"My 1994 **GM** 2500 Sierra extended cab pickup equipped with a 6.5-liter turbo diesel engine is a worst buy.

"This truck has a history of problems but the most recent was last November. I was driving home on a four-lane road at about 45 mph. As a stoplight went from green to yellow, I applied the brakes only to feel the brake pedal go rapidly to the floor. The brakes were gone, with no warning at all. I rolled through the red light still pressing the pedal hard to the floor and downshifting the automatic transmission.

"Lucky for me, the intersection wasn't busy. I found out the brakes failed due to rapid fluid leakage. After getting the truck home, I discovered a hole in a metal brake line behind the fuel tank. There was no kind of backup braking at all.

"I called GM to let them know and hopefully prevent someone else from having the same problem, but I really don't expect to hear back from them."

Gary Alford, Edwardsburg, Mich.: "My 1954 **Ford** 800 tractor is my best buy. I rebuilt it 20 years ago for my father-in-law. We use it in our truck garden and it performs flawlessly. Years ago I changed the electrical system over to 12-volts and adapted a **Dodge** truck plow with a 7 1/2-ft. Western blade. With chains on the pickup's tires and a blade on front and back, it plows snow like a tank. Now that I'm getting older, a power steering retro kit would be nice."

Michael Johnson, Marengo, Ill.: "My **Grassator** extra heavy duty blade-type replacement head for string trimmers is my best buy (CMD Products, Lincoln, Calif. ph 800 210-9949; www.grassator.com). It requires no tools for installation and features three 3-in. long high impact nylon blades that'll last the average homeowner an entire season under normal use. It fits 99 percent of all gas-powered trimmers. Works great on heavy weeds. It even survived severe beatings from rocks."

Joel T. Cowher, Philipsburg, Penn.: "My worst buy is a **United States Stove** Co. plate steel coal stove. When I set the stove up, I discovered it was missing two fire bricks which could have created a fire hazard. The grates are so sloppy, they hang up and dump live and raw coal into the ash pan. It's not very efficient, with coal at \$164 per ton.

"I drove 60 miles to the dealer, hoping he could solve the grate problem. He said he would contact the company and call me the

"Construction-Size" Farm Backhoe

An Illinois farmer and his son bought a used, construction-size **Komatsu** backhoe. They say the giant-sized machine has paid off.

Charles W. Ballinger, Atlanta, Ill.:, along with his son **Charles Allen**, own and operate 300 plus acres of Illinois land along with a cow-calf herd and a feedlot.

"We had a lot of work that called for a dozer and backhoe," says Charles W. "We contacted a local earth mover for a quote on what it would cost to get our jobs done. He quoted us a figure in the \$60,000 range. We got to wondering if we couldn't beat that by buying and operating our own machine. We paid in the neighborhood of \$30,000 for the used machine."

The **Komatsu** has a reach of 20 ft., which comes in handy for removing high banks on both sides of their driveway.

"The driveway was always certain to drift shut with even a modest snowfall. Now those high banks are gone so there's no place for snow to build up," says Charles. "We've also used the machine to get rid of brush that was clogging up our ditches and waterways."

The two men designed and built a blade that fits over the bucket's teeth. The blade is held in place with a single bolt on either side of the bucket. Lengths of angle iron were fitted and welded into place. Spaces in between were closed with fitted steel pieces which were then welded into place.



Charles and Allen Ballinger used their big Komatsu backhoe to remove high banks on both sides of their driveway.



The two men designed and built a blade that fits over bucket's teeth.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, **Charles Ballinger, Rt. 1, Atlanta, Ill. 61723** (ph 217 648-2660).

next day. However, that 'next day' has never come. Apparently the quality of the dealer and the company are the same as the stove. If you want a stove with a Cadillac price and Dollar Store quality, this is the stove for you."

George Schneider, Pioneer, Calif.: "I've come to the conclusion that the only thing an ATV is good for is getting from point A to point B. None of the ATV implements I've tried have been satisfactory, including a trailer, sprayer, trailer seeder, feeder, snowplow, and rake, My **Yamaha** 2000 Big Bear just can't handle any of them. Of course, I've had other troubles with this ATV. It leaked oil, which cost \$400 to fix. And it takes up to six weeks for Yamaha to ship parts from a warehouse just 250 miles away.

"For 20 years I fought battery corrosion on the terminals of cars, tractors, and a variety of trucks and other vehicles. Then five years ago I found a product called '**Goo-it**' which solved all my problems (Goo-It, P.O. Box 838, Fullerton, Neb. 68638 ph 866 222-5346).



"It's a non-petroleum product that the company says can sometimes double lead acid battery life. Inventor **Avre Papst** calculates that for every \$1 spent on his product, users save as much as \$50 in increased battery life, labor materials, and decreased downtime. He sells the product in 2-oz. tubes for \$19.95, which contains enough product to last the lifetime of a battery."

David Weese, Cameron, Mo.: "My **Country Clipper** zero turn mower equipped with a 17 hp Kohler engine and 48-in. deck is my worst buy. The problem is that it leaves a skip between the blades. The dealer corrected a problem we had with flying belts, but it still does a lousy job of mowing. The company won't refund my money. Appar-

ently, once the mower leaves the shop it becomes a used machine."

Robert L. Jefferson, Freeman, Mo.: A 1988 20,000 btu **Hardy** outside woodburning furnace rates as Robert's "worst buy." "This is a stainless steel unit. A leak occurred where the manufacturer bent the steel at a 90 degree angle. They sent me what they called a repair kit, which turned out to be just a tube of cement. This lasted until spring when the problem got much worse. The unit was returned to the company, which said the problem was that we had salty water. I consulted the local water district that supplies our water, and their tests have never shown a presence of salt. We lost \$2,000."

Chuck Dubberstine, Spring Valley, Ill.: "Our **Snow Flame** corn burning stove burns about one bushel per day, as advertised. It's very efficient and is our best buy."

Wayne Tankersley, Bardwell, Ky.: "I'm very happy with our **Vermeer** Rebel 5500 round baler. I use a 1976 IH 574 52 hp tractor to pull it. It's also a best buy."

Truman Ross, Comins, Mich.: Truman's impressed with **Peltor** hearing protector ear muffs equipped with a radio, which he bought from **Gemplers**. "I've farmed for 40 years and these hearing protectors are the best investment I've ever made - bar none. They make driving a tractor or combine, etc., much less monotonous."

Stanley H. Nelson, Sherburn, Minn.: "The **PolyTech** feeder house fan I use on my combine is a best buy (Poly Tech Industries, Monticello, Ga. ph 800 542-7659; www.polyskid.com). It keeps the dust away so I can see my bean head.

"I bought a 1997 **Deere** 8200 tractor used two years ago. It's user friendly and a best buy."

Denise Solt, Ashfield, Penn.: Denise nominates her **Little Giant** ladder as her "best buy." "It's very strong and can be configured in a variety of ways. It has a wide base that's very stable. We paid more than \$300 for it so it isn't cheap, but we use it several times a week. We haven't had to take our other extension ladders off the wall in more than a year.

"Our 2002 **Honda** 4-WD 350 electric shift