

(Continued from previous page)

still had the same problem.

"I don't understand why anyone would buy this machine, nor do I understand how the company can keep it on the market. There's no inspection cover to remove if branches or twigs clog up the blades, which means several hours of work to dismantle the machine every time it jams up. Although the company tried to help, and they agreed the design could have been better, this is one machine I'd never recommend to anyone. I'd like to buy their wood splitter, but I'm reluctant to after the design faults I've seen in this machine."

Matthew Platt, Roxbury, Ct.: "All of our six International Harvester and 23 Case tractors have worked well over the years with no major problems. Three of them have more than 8,000 hours and are still used regularly on our dairy farm.

"Our 1992 Agco Allis 6680 2-WD tractor equipped with a cab is our worst buy. We purchased this tractor through a local dealer intending to use it mostly as a chore tractor. It had been factory reworked with low hours and some remaining warranty. It was the first tractor with a cab we had ever owned. It came with an electric heater which never worked more than one month at a time. The warranty covered two repairs to it, then we were on our own. The tractor wouldn't start if the temperature got below 20 degrees. The dealer installed an ether assist, but it didn't work because there wasn't enough battery to turn it over. So I added a second one.

"This tractor had radial tires on it, and when pulling a manure spreader in snow it shook so bad, when the tires would spin that it broke a cab mount and also took out a brake line. The drawbar mounts would loosen or break off every couple of months. The front wheel bearings were insert-type ball bearings that would last only 300 to 400 hours before they broke, and then the wheel would fall off.

"The last straw was when an employee caught the front wheel on an obstacle 2 ft. in front of the parked tractor. It broke the bolster and the front part of the engine block. When we priced parts, we found that a bare block would have cost about \$4,000 and complete engine \$7,500, and neither was in the country. The dealer said he could weld it back together, but it ended up costing as much as a new engine and still leaked oil. We put it in an auction and walked away. It was the sorriest excuse for a real tractor I've ever seen. It was cheaply built, noisy, and it couldn't pull a hen off a nest."

Brian C. Harp, Blossvale, N.Y.: "My

"This tractor couldn't pull a hen off a nest."

Sears Craftsman 19-volt drill/driver is my best buy. In the spring I found myself needing a new cordless drill for around the farm. One of its first jobs was to operate a fertilizer spreader. I used it to unload 3,000 lbs. of leftover fertilizer by hooking it to the spreader's ground drive shaft. It did it all on one battery. I was impressed. In the fall we used it while putting together a friend's 12 by 24-ft. steel building. We installed about 2,500 bolts yet went through only two batteries. I use it every day and have been happy with it. It's an excellent tool at an affordable price."

R. Costello, Rome, N.Y.: "My 1985 Allis Chalmers 6070 2-WD tractor starts every time and is fuel efficient. It has about 2,000 hours on it."

On the minus side, he lists his 2002 Chevrolet Trail Blazer. "It has only about

60,000 miles on it, but already I've replaced an air conditioner, alternator, power steering pump, rear brakes, and a 4-WD selector switch. Also, the rear window leaks."

Shawn Mangham, Mullin, Texas: Shawn's had problems with his 2005 Dodge 2500 heavy duty 4-WD pickup equipped with a Cummins diesel engine. "I couldn't get the air conditioner to work so I took the vehicle back to the dealer. However, they said they wouldn't fix it because there was a hole in the condenser and it wasn't covered by the warranty. It would have cost more than \$600 to repair. Since I couldn't prove the hole was already there when I bought the vehicle, they wouldn't fix it. I felt the vehicle's bumper to bumper warranty should have covered the repair cost. The company didn't seem to care, either. I wouldn't recommend the company to anyone."

Gary Alfoud, Edwardsburg, Mich.: "A friend asked me to service his 2002 Subaru Forester. I was amazed how easy it is to service this vehicle and how well it's made. It even has a spin-on oil filter for the automatic transmission and a drain plug on the transmission. Also, one large plug at the bottom of the motor drains the whole cooling sys-



tem. And at 27 mpg it's fuel efficient, too."

Derek Suursoo, Chester, Vt.: Derek nominates a log hand cart manufactured by Future Forestry Products of Willamina, Ore., as his "best buy" (ph 888 258-1445; www.futureforestry.com). "This logging arch is capable of being towed by a tractor, let down a steep slope on a winch line, or being pulled by hand. It does all these things very well. It'll handle 24-in. logs with ease and is extremely well built. I definitely got my money's worth. This is one of very few products I've ever bought that works better than advertised."

R. W. Ellis, Seymour, Ind.: He likes to use Kroil industrial strength penetrating oil to loosen frozen metal parts (Kano Laboratories, Nashville, Tenn. ph 615 833-5790; www.kanolabs.com). "It penetrates into 1 millionth inch spaces to dissolve rust and lubricate quickly. According to the company, as long as the surface is wet with Kroil it won't corrode. It's available in aerosol cans that squirt a stream 3 ft. The company also offers a wide variety of other lubrication products."

Don Wheeler, Columbiaville, Mich.: A 1989 Dodge D250 pickup equipped with a Cummins diesel engine rates as Don's "best buy". "I bought my first model in 1990 and drove it about 475,000 trouble-free miles. The body was starting to wear out so I bought another one in 2003 which now has about 150,000 miles on it. It's a good truck.

"I like Gibbs penetrating oil. It will loosen rust and oxidation better than anything else on the market.

"My Lanair waste oil burner is by far my worst buy. I was never able to use it for a full day without a problem. The company would do nothing but charge 10 times the value of replacement parts. We offered to sell the machine back to them, but they didn't want it, either. We finally replaced it with a Clean Burn model, which is an excellent machine."

Henry Worrall, Newcastle, Ontario:

After Two Dry Holes, Landowner Tried Dowsing

Randy Knudsen of Buffalo Lake, Minn., had no previous experience with water dowsing, and says he didn't have an opinion about the controversial practice until recently.

Knudsen had hired a driller to find water on his property, only to end up with two dry holes and a big \$7,700 bill. One hole was 410-ft. and the other was 340-ft. After much head-scratching, he decided to hire professional water dowser Jim Kuebelbeck of St. Joseph, Minn. who was featured in FARM SHOW (Vol. 29, No. 2).

"I was getting pretty anxious because I had spent so much money already," he explains. "My brother had talked to some people who had used Jim, and they had had pretty good luck, with two good wells out of three that he had marked. When I heard that, I just thought it was worth trying."

Knudsen paid Kuebelbeck \$400. Kuebelbeck recommended a well driller who has a lot of experience working for people who have had dry holes.

The new team was successful at 68 ft. and

"One of my best buys is a Speedrite SP 580 electric fence. We've used it for more than 20 years and it has had only one problem, which happened when lightning hit it.

"My Staffix M3 electric fence is my worst buy. I bought it as a backup and put it into use while the Speedrite was being repaired. However, it lasted just five months and then failed. Since I had bought the unit three years before I needed to use it, the warranty had already expired. I took it to a local repairman, but after a month he still couldn't fix the problem. He had another one there with the same symptoms that he had been trying to repair."

David Downey, Jonesboro, Ga.: "My Stickler log splitter is more than a best buy (CDK Quality Products, Enumclaw, Wa. Ph 360 802-4366 or 206 387-5084; www.thestickler.com). I bought it at a flea market for \$25 about 10 years ago, and I've



modified the wheel mount for several trucks. It can be dangerous to work with, as any moving thing is, but with proper use and a kill switch I've used it to split numerous cords of wood without a single accident."

Chris Kornkven, Helenville, Wis.: "I noticed in the Vol. 29, No. 1 issue of FARM SHOW that a reader had a problem with his Mantis rototiller. I bought one and had used it extensively for about 18 months and thought it was an incredible machine. It chews through dirt easily and quickly. I also bought the detacher and it works great for power raking gravel from the lawn back onto the driveway.

"However, after about 18 months it started lagging, and then it wouldn't stay running. I took it apart several times and even cleaned the carburetor, but nothing I did would solve the problem. Eventually I got through to the company and was quickly given the correct settings for the carburetor, then was told about the spark arrestor screen in the muffler. I was told if it was plugged, the tiller wouldn't run.

"Sure enough, I took the muffler apart

the driller charged \$16.50 per foot.

"I've got quite a bit of faith in both of them now," Knudsen says. "I'd definitely recommend Jim if someone is having problems. I don't have 100 percent faith in dowsing, but definitely 70 to 80 percent."

The happy landowner says the experience also taught him that there's a lot of difference in the quality of well drillers.

"These guys that Jim recommended were real good. They were a different quality of driller; there's no doubt about it. They really have to watch the screenings—the small rocks and sand that tell them whether there's water. The first guys could have gone right through it. I'm not saying the dowsing didn't work, but it has got something to do with the well driller, too."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Randy Knudsen, 52655 780th Ave., Buffalo Lake, Minn. 55314 (ph 320 833-2240) or Jim Kuebelbeck, 28391 Kelp Rd., St. Joseph, Minn. 56374 (ph 320 363-7564; email: jkueb@netlink.com).

again, cleaned the spark arrestor screen, and the machine has been running great since then. I think the spark arrestor is some requirement for California, so it's a newer addition to small engines, and worth looking at for other small engine problems."

Robert G. Wright, Mansfield, Ill.: "We've owned many trucks of all makes, new and used, and all were good buys, but for reliability and service the Dodges come out on top. They have style and performance and require fewer repairs. Our 2004 Hemi is the best yet."

Wayne Swartz, Uniontown, Penn.: "Our old Farmall 460 tractor keeps on going just like the Energizer Bunny. I used the tractor hard for 30 years. It's smooth, quiet, and vibration-free. It's not a powerhouse but it runs great and is quite economical for a gas tractor."

Ron L. Kettler, Sauk Centre, Minn.: "My Notch Mfg. (Paynesville, Minn.) fifth wheel hay trailer is a best buy. It has a battery-operated hydraulic system and the 'floor' is made of 6-in. steel rollers so when the bed is raised the bales slide off. It pulls down the road real well and saves a lot of time."

K. Wayne Williams, Souris, Manitoba: "My Outback S and 360 guidance system is my worst buy. We installed this unit on our tractor and air seeder in the spring of 2004. The unit would hold its accuracy for a short period of time and then suddenly be off course, sometimes by several feet. The company changed just about every component, but we were left with embarrassing misses in the field.

"The most frustrating part is that the company won't take the unit back, but instead has put pressure on the salesman to buy it back. I made a deal with the salesman in the fall of 2004 to resell the unit, but as of last spring he was trying to back out of the deal and convince us to keep the unit, which is now gathering dust in a closet."

Bruce Johnson, Osage, Minn.: "My 2004 Deere 5205 MFWD tractor equipped with a 3-cyl. diesel engine and a 521 front-end loader is my best buy. It has almost 90 hours on it. I use a high volume 84-in. bucket that I've loaded full with stones but it still has enough hydraulic power to handle it. This tractor always starts and has excellent fuel efficiency. I can easily go 20 to 30 hours on a thankful of gas under moderate work loads. I live in a hilly region with slopes of 45 de-