

side, 4-WD utility vehicle equipped with a differential lock and fuel injection. I change the oil every 150 hrs. It may be a bit lumbering compared to other side-by-sides on the market, but it's a dependable, all-season worker with an all-metal cargo box that's sized just right."

Candy Morrison, Pasadena, Md.: Candy's impressed with **EcoChar**, a manure-based biochar designed to clean contaminated water and improve soil fertility (www.confluenceenergy.com; ph 970 724-9839). The product comes in a dry granular form. "Everything starts with soil health for truck farmers like us, and this stuff has really improved the soil microorganisms on our farm. Despite the severe winter we had last year we had an incredible number of volunteer seedlings this spring. We've never seen so many volunteer peppers and tomatoes."

Frank Bloom, Dundee, N.Y.: Frank's pleased with the **C.E. Schmidt** work boots he bought at Tractor Supply Co. "They're really comfortable. No matter how hot the weather is, my feet don't sweat and my socks are still dry when I take my boots off."

Wilbur Eeten, Delavan, Ill.: "My 2004 **Ford F-150** is the best pickup I've ever owned. It has more than 115,000 miles on it with no major repairs. No rust and still looks like new."

Kramme Farms, Owensville, Mo.: "Last January I bought a used 2001 **Mazda** 4-WD mini dump truck with about 40,000 miles on it to replace my **Polaris Ranger 700cc** utility vehicle. It came equipped with a 5-speed transmission, an electric-over-hydraulic dump bed, and a stainless steel toolbox as wide as the bed.

"The Mazda is the same width as the Ranger but longer. It has the same turning radius and top speed, but it can do a lot more work and the cab has heat, air conditioning, and delay wipers. That makes it much more comfortable to drive. I customized the truck with ATV wheels and tires, a front brush guard, and



a rear bumper/hitch. I also converted the rear lights to LED's, added a headache rack equipped with lights, and undercoated the truck's frame and undercarriage with a Rhino-type bed spray.

"The Mazda is a lot more fuel-efficient than the Ranger. I've stacked firewood cab high in the bed that weighed more than 1,000 lbs. but it handled it just fine, so hauling big round bales should be no problem, either.

"Most of the time we can go through mud and soft ground without switching to 4-WD, but it's nice to know it's there if we need it. We use 4-WD mostly when going real slow on hills in our woods, or when unrolling high tensile wire.

"We operate a cow-calf operation and use this truck daily for checking on cows, delivering feed, and fixing fences. The cab makes it nice when going from farm to farm on really cold days. It always starts and gets us wherever we need to go."

James J. Wagner, Bridgeport, W. Va.: "My 1970 **Massey Ferguson 135** tractor

equipped with a Perkins 3-cyl. diesel engine has about 5,900 hrs. on it. It starts good, has plenty of power, and is easy on fuel. Also, it has a rear locking differential so you can't get stuck. A metal plate on this tractor reads 'Made in the U.S.A.', which I like very much."

C.W. Kasper, Jr., Giddings, Texas: "I bought a used 1997 **Ford F-250** extended cab pickup equipped with a Power Stroke diesel engine. It had about 126,000 miles on it. This pickup does everything I could expect on our ranch. It's fuel efficient and has a comfortable ride."

Ed Petrinsky, Frewsburg, N.Y.: "Last February I bought a new **Stihl MS 261 C-M** chainsaw and was able to use it just 4 times in the dead of winter before it quit working. On Feb. 19 I took the saw back to the dealer, who found a faulty ignition module. I got the saw back 22 days later and cut up the rest of the wood I needed for the winter.

"The saw sat idle for a couple months, and then I tried using it to trim some spruce trees but it quit working again. This time the dealer had the saw for 7 days. After I got the saw back it fired once before the ignition module blew up again. This time the dealer had the saw for 30 days. I made repeated calls to tech service but got no help.

"Finally I emailed a company rep asking for either a new saw or a refund, but he told me that wasn't an option. However, he promised to send me a complimentary gift. A day later I got a 6-pack of oil and a hat.

"I'm using the saw now to cut up a bunch of tree tops and so far it has been working okay. However, I'm very apprehensive every time I start this saw up. I'd think long and hard before I bought another one, because in the short time I've owned this saw it has been down for 60 days."

Dr. Robert Beloud, Clearlake, Calif.: "My 1999 **Kubota B21** tractor runs great and has required only routine maintenance. I use it for landscaping work and to harvest timber.

"My **Wood-Mizer LT25** sawmill is a best buy."

Ervin Mast, Arthur, Ill.: "The new **Milwaukee** brushless-cordless tools are hard to beat for power and battery life, and they come with a 5-year warranty. I had been using **DeWalt** tools but they broke down too often."

Jo Wisely, Nashville, Ill.: "My **Kuhn SR 110611** speed rake has plenty of room between the rake and tires, so I can adjust the windrow size whenever I need to. It's the best rake I've ever owned."

Vernon K. Thomas, Callahan, Fla.: Vernon's impressed with his 2012 **Bad Boy MZ 27 Pro** zero-turn riding mower equipped with a 48-in. deck. "It's built tough and their customer service is great. This mower has a heavy deck and is easy to maneuver around trees. It cuts fast except in real tall grass, but even there it still works faster than other mowers I've used. It'll handle 8-in. tall grass with no problem. I've even used it to mow weeds between garden rows after our okra becomes too tall to cultivate."

Marvin Bedenbaugh, Leesville, S.C.: "I'm well satisfied with my **DeWalt DW059 1/2-in.** cordless impact wrench and **DeWalt DC 720 1/2-in.** cordless drill driver. Both tools are built strong and have long lasting batteries."

J. Krall, Mitchell, S. Dak.: "My **Stihl MS170** chainsaw starts every time and has enough power to cut through anything I want.

"The 30X **Duda 58mm** with 1,800 mm vacuum tubes I use for solar hot water heating work great (www.dudadiesel.com). I use these tubes for all our domestic hot water needs. The company really takes care of its



Steve Edwards of Granbury, Texas, says he couldn't be happier with his 1978 propane-powered Ford F-150 pickup. It has more than 576,000 miles on it.

"Best Buy" 1978 Ford F-150 Runs On Propane Or Gas

"My 1978 propane-powered Ford F-150 pickup has more than 576,000 miles on it. It's a tough old bird that has survived several accidents. Switching to propane has saved me a lot of money over the years," says Steve Edwards, Granbury, Texas.

Edwards bought the longbed pickup new in 1978, equipped with a 302 cu. in., V-8 carbureted gas engine and 4-speed manual transmission. The next year he had **Impco** in Fort Worth, Texas (ph 714 656-1200; www.impco.ws) convert the engine to run on propane as well as gas. "My father-in-law loaned me \$1,100 to make the conversion," says Edwards.

The conversion included an 80-gal. propane tank mounted in the pickup bed, and a propane injector and water vapor unit mounted on the 2-barrel carburetor. A hose runs from the tank up to a regulator.

"I paid \$5,600 for the pickup new in 1978, which was the last year Ford F-150's could be operated on regular leaded gas," says Edwards. "At the time, propane cost about 35 cents per gal., and it still costs only about \$2 per gal. today. So we run it on propane most of the time."

He says the propane conversion has paid for itself many times over. "Running on propane, it gets 12 miles per gal. in town and 14 miles per gal. on the highway. The driver just flips a switch to go from gas to propane. With propane you lose a little power, so sometimes the engine will slow customers."

On the negative side, he lists **SunMaxx Solar** thermal systems and components. "I ordered a 30-in. evacuated tube from this company for making hot water and waited 2 months for it to arrive, before I finally asked for a refund. However, the company ignored my request and I had to get the New York's attorney general involved to resolve the issue. When the company does ship something, parts are usually missing."

Waldo Westrum, Turtle Lake, N. Dak.: Waldo's impressed with his 2014 **Yanmar 2400** 4-WD garden tractor equipped with a 48-in. front-end loader and 60-in. mower deck. "It comes in handy around our large farm yard and makes short work of cutting the grass. It's powered by a 3-cyl. diesel engine and comes with power steering, 3-pt. hitch and a 540 rpm pto."

Gene M. Dunn, Silt, Colo.: "The first time I used my **Mantis** rototiller, the tines bent and wadded up like cardboard.

"With my **Worx** weedeater I'm lucky to get 15 min. on a battery charge."

John Teder, Jackson, Mo.: "I've been buying **Sears Craftsman** tools for 45 years. However, the last set of 1/4 to 9/16-in. combination open-box end wrenches I bought are poor quality. They're thicker and wider than the company's previous wrenches, which makes them useless in confined areas.

down a little going uphill."

Last November his mechanic completely overhauled the engine, putting in new rings and valves and timing chains. He also re-bored the cylinders and replaced the camshaft.

"I change the oil every 3,000 miles, even though I could go longer than that because most of the time I'm running on propane," says Edwards.

The pickup has survived 2 accidents. "My wife rolled the pickup over in 1981, but four guys got out alongside the highway and flipped the vehicle back on its wheels. She was able to drive it several more miles that day."

The propane tank helped Edwards avoid serious injury last year when he was involved in another accident. "I had stopped at a traffic light when someone going 55 mph hit me from behind. Fortunately, the propane tank was full and the weight helped keep the pickup from twisting around and rolling over."

The impact tore off the pickup's bumper and the right side of the bed, and bent part of the tailgate but he fixed everything up. "I put new headlights on and had the pickup repainted. Now everyone who sees it loves it," says Edwards.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Steve Edwards, 4513 Garden View Dr., Granbury, Texas 76049 (ph 817 326-2473).

Also, these tools are no longer stamped 'Made in the U.S.A.'.

"Here's a question: why can Ace Hardware sell Craftsman tools, but not honor the warranty if you don't buy from them?"

Lawrence Schaub, Belle Fourche, S. Dak.: A 1979 **Simplicity 7018** garden tractor equipped with an 18 hp Kohler engine rates as Lawrence's "best buy". I used this tractor with a 42-in. deck for many years to cut grass, until last year when I bought a new riding mower. However, I still use it with a 36-in. rototiller to till our large 50 by 100-ft. garden."

Frank Hofmann, Oxford, N.Y.: Frank's the satisfied owner of a 2008 **Kubota MX 5000** 4-WD tractor that he bought used in 2010. "I'm a semi retired farmer and got rid of most of my 'big' tractors. This Kubota is big enough to do most everything I need to do nowadays. No major repairs."

Joseph Jurek, Bliss, N.Y.: "About 10 years ago I bought a **King Cutter 6-ft.** finishing mower from Tractor Supply Co. After 2 cuttings the deck started to bend, which caused the blades to cut unevenly. I brought the mower inside, flipped the deck upside down, and welded angle iron braces on to keep the deck straight and to reinforce it. It worked and is still going strong. This winter I plan to replace the mower's air-filled tires with solid tires."