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to cut multiple layers of sheet metal. An acetylene torch would cut the top sheet and weld the remaining sheets together. It also does a super job brazing. I was a distributor for the product but have since retired.

"My worst buy is my **Dodge Dakota** pickup equipped with a V-6 Magnum engine. There's nothing magnum about the engine - it's just plain gutless and is hard on fuel. I realized soon after I bought it that this pickup was using too much fuel. The dealer tried to make improvements but couldn't help. I wrote to the company and they told me I should take the pickup to my dealer for a tune-

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up. However, a brand new pickup shouldn't need a tune-up. The problem is that the engine is grossly over-fueled. The dealer suggested that I drive the pickup more to break it in and maybe the fuel efficiency would improve. It didn't. The warranty ran out and now I don't know what I can do to improve this pickup's performance."

Mark S. Webb, Sr., Cookeville, Tenn.: "My **Stihl 034** chain saw is my best buy. This is the third Stihl model I've owned. I work in the landscape business so I use these saws hard. But I've never had a reason to cuss any of them. They're a perfect example of the saying, 'You get what you pay for.'"

Ron Marsh, Salem, Ore.: "My 1997 **Dodge 1500** pickup drives great, has a lot of power, and rides beautifully even though it's a 4-WD model. The cab is quiet and has a great sound system.

"My 1999 **Deere 5210** tractor equipped with a cab is my worst buy. The tractor runs just fine, but the quality of the cab is poor. Bolts fall out, doors don't seal, and I had to replace the hinges and latches. The cab is so noisy I can't enjoy the radio, and dust sifts into it. The air conditioner can't keep the cab cool even when the outside temperature is only about 80 degrees. I wrote to the company about the cab and air conditioner problems, but no one replied. I guess once they got my purchase money - about \$35,000 - they could care less about customer satisfaction. Too bad Deere doesn't have more competition."

Yan Eller, Fishers, Ind.: "I'm impressed with my **Deere 6110** tractor equipped with a deluxe cab. I've also owned several Deere combines and two 4440 tractors, and they've performed equally as well."

Dennis R. Fuqua, Seiling, Okla.: Dennis says he's happy with his 2001 **Coleman Powermate** generator. "It starts easy and has a lot of power. It'll easily operate a 1/2-in. drill.

"My worst buy is the pipe leveler I bought from **Northern Tool & Equipment**. I can't get it to work right. It's poorly made."

Michael W. Weaver, Shiloh, Ohio: "My **DeWalt** sliding compound miter saw, 18-volt drill, and 18-volt saw are all best buys. The miter saw is easy to use, has a lot of power, and is well designed. I think 18-volt cordless equipment is the best invention to come along since electric saws and drills. The batteries are long lasting. It's an economical drill to operate."

Lyle Bentley, Oakland, Iowa: Lyle says the **Gregory Grapppler** - a heavy duty grapple fork designed for skid steer loaders - is his "best buy" (Gregory Welding, N. Hwy. 275, Sidney, Iowa 51652 ph 712 374-3366; fax 712 374-2822; Website: www.gregorygrapppler.com).

"It's designed to fit most skid steer loaders, but I had to make an adapter plate to use it on my JCB 520 4-WD boom loader. It's tremendously overbuilt so it can be used for handling brush and large logs, round bales, removing fence posts and concrete. It can even be used to scarify or rip tough ground or rock roads.

"We do some custom demolition work and have used the grapppler to remove concrete from old feedlots and also to demolish buildings. It also works great for tearing trees out of terraces and piling them up. One time I was able to pull concrete footings out of the ground that were 12 in. wide, 30 in. deep, and 10 ft. long with no problems. This grapple fork is built heavy and all major pivot points are greasable for long life. It works so well I decided to become a dealer. It sells for a little less than \$3,000.

"My **JCB** tractor is also a best buy. It can reach out a lot farther than a Bobcat, and it has a 4,500-lb. lift capacity compared to 2,000 lbs. for a Bobcat. The extendable boom lets me raise the grapple 16 ft. and extend it 9 ft. in front of me. One time I used it to tear down a 1 1/2-story house, crunch up the debris, and drop it into roll-off containers."

Larry Moore, Loudon, N.H.: "My **Daro-eau** reverse osmosis machine reduces the time it takes to boil maple sap into maple syrup by about 75 percent (Daro-eau, Inc., Ham-Noud, Quebec, Canada). "It filters out 75 percent of the water, saving both fuel and time. I also like the company's Climaflex four-seasons tubing. It stays clean and is easy to use any season of the year."

Dean Adams, Clinton, Ill.: "My best buy is my **Visioneer** Paperport Scanner for my computer. I use it to archive interesting articles from FARM SHOW. In the past, when an idea hit me as something I might use, I would cut it out and put it somewhere I wouldn't lose it. Yeah, right! Then I tried setting up a 3-ring binder and gluing the stories to typing paper. But who has time to do all that cutting and gluing? The bottom line is that when I wanted to find something, I usually couldn't.

"Then I bought a Visioneer scanner for \$40 at Sam's Club. It's simple. You just take it out of the box, hook it to the computer, install the software, and start scanning. Now I scan in any articles of interest, convert them to a Word file and store them on the disk. I also print them out to put in a 3-ring binder that I call my Idea Book. When I need to find something, I can search by name in the computer.

"The image quality is very good. Sometimes the photos come out better than in the magazine."

Ron Wieseler, Orient, S. Dak.: A **New Holland 1475** 18-ft. Haybine rates as Ron's "best buy". "It floats right over rocks and cuts both tall and short hay without needing any adjustments.

"My **Haybuster 2620** bale processor is a best buy. It reduces waste and also makes the hay more palatable for our cows. As a result, the animals can now get by on about one third less hay."

Kevin Glenister, Dryden, Ontario: Kevin

Deere Rockshaft Repair Tool Saves Thousands

Mechanic and inventor Bruce Gamble of La Feria, Texas, designed and built a tool to repair the cast rockshaft housing on Deere 8400T tractors.

"It saves a lot of money on repairs," says Gamble.

The problem is that the rockshaft has no grease zerks on the fiber bushings, which are only 1/16-in. thick. The shaft wears through those bushings and into the casting, thus "egg-shaping" the hole. If you try to put a new bushing in the hole, it won't hold.

Gamble's tool makes it possible to drill out the old hole to a larger diameter, and then install a new steel bushing that returns the casting to its original size so the factory bushing can be used. You can make the repair right on the tractor.

The tool consists of a 1 1/2-in. dia. boring bar that attaches to a 1/2-in. electric drill, a guide assembly, and a drill press-type feeding mechanism. Gamble bolts a steel plate onto the rockshaft housing to hold the guide assembly in place. The guide, with the boring bar inserted into it, bolts to the plate. He drills the egg-shaped casting out until it's round, cranking the handles on the tool as necessary to slowly feed the boring bar into the casting. Then he drives a steel bushing into the hole

to bring it back to its original size and reinserts the fiber bushing.

"It takes only about two hours to install the tool and bore out the casting," says Gamble. "Otherwise, replacing the casting is a labor-intensive job which can tie up your tractor for days. You have to remove a lot of parts including the transmission and differential. When this problem happened on my Deere 8400T (tracked) tractor, the local Deere dealer said it would cost \$20,000 to \$25,000 to repair. A new casting alone would've cost \$6,000. The problem isn't quite as bad with Deere's 8400 wheeled tractor because the casting is smaller and bolts onto the back part of the tractor. However, the casting alone costs about \$3,500."

Gamble says he also uses the tool to repair front castings on Deere MFWD tractors, using a longer boring bar and a different mounting plate.

He sells the tool for about \$2,000 plus S&H. Custom made bushings - depending on the size of the hole you have to drill - sell for \$200 apiece plus S&H.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Bruce Gamble, Rt. 1, Box 173, La Feria, Texas 78559 (ph 956 797-2169).

nominates his **Deere 926** disc-type mower/conditioner as "best buy". "My wife and I used it last year to cut 400 acres of hay and never had to get off the tractor other than to grease it. It was also cheaper than the other brands we checked out, which was a surprise.

"My **Hesston 555T** round baler is my worst buy. We've only used it to make about 1,500 bales but have already had to replace two belts at a cost of \$400 per belt. One belt got wrecked when a \$4 spring broke. We've had numerous other problems with it. We had been using a Vermeer 605A which didn't have nearly as many problems. We plan to trade the Hesston in this year for a New Holland or Deere model. We would've been better off buying one of those brands to begin with, but we tried to save a buck."

Ernest Leo Fuhr, Fort St. John, B.C.: "Our 2000 **Grasshopper 721** riding mower is equipped with a 61-in. deck and is my best buy. I use it to mow my 3-acre lawn. We live at mile 42 of the Alaska Highway and have a large bee keeping operation. This mower works so well we now use it to cut grass for most of the bee keeping operations within a 30-mile area. It'll cut brush up to 1 in. in diameter and we can use it close to fence posts and under the bear fences that protect our bee hives. We haven't had any problems at all with it. The mower is so versatile and easy to operate that even a child could run it. Several attachments for it are available, including a snowblower, sweeper, dozer blade, and dethatcher."

David Swanson, Mount Morris, N.Y.: "Our 25 by 65-ft. **Harvestore** silo is our worst buy ever. It's hard to get feed in and impossible to get it out. The Goliath unloader that we used in it was also terrible. It broke and we had to winch it out of the silo with a Cat D8, which broke it to pieces. The bottom rings of the silo burned out. It cost a lot of money to fix."

Jason Meyer, Avon, Ill.: "Our 1989 **Ford**

F-150 1/2-ton pickup is our best buy. Over the years we've put it through more than it was ever built for. It's powered by a 300 cc straight six engine and has more than 250,000 miles on it. Those miles include a lot of hard farm work. This pickup has been overloaded and driven through rough fields at high speeds, yet it still rides great on the road. Despite all the abuse it has received, it looks pretty good."

Ray Alexander, Fredericton Junction, New Brunswick ph 506 368-2444; E-mail: rga@nbnet.nb.ca: "My **Massey Ferguson 3070** is a good tractor. The only problem is that in damp weather the hydraulic oil pressure light comes on. When this happens, some of the tractor's functions quit working, especially the transmission range switch. As soon as the weather clears, the problem goes away until the weather turns damp again. I'd like to hear from anyone who knows how to solve this problem."

Ross Giles, Airdrie, Alberta: "My best buy is my 2000 **GM Sierra 1500** 4-door pickup. It's a smart looking, good riding, and good driving pickup with a quiet cab. It's also easy on fuel and has comfortable seats.

"Our **Troyer V-top** trap is also a best buy. We bought it last May and have already trapped 150 sparrows with it. We're very happy with it."

Dan Schut, Cadillac, Mich.: A 1999 **Kubota B2710** compact tractor rates as Dan's "best buy". "This tractor is built to last a lifetime. The quality of workmanship is excellent, and everything about it is rock solid. I researched all the different tractor brands and then bought what I perceived to be the best on the market. After 400 hours of use, I feel it was a great purchase."

Dean Veitch, Prince George, B.C.: "I'm well pleased with my early 1990's **International 1190** mower-conditioner. It has a roll release which opens up the rollers by lifting the conditioner up with the