

housing. After poor phone guidance from the company, I finally found an authorized service agent to come out. But they wanted to charge for extra mileage because the company only pays warranty for 50 miles, and I live farther away than that. A month later the parts arrived and were installed, but we ran the generator for less than 30 seconds before the same thing happened again. Now the company won't return my phone calls or emails, and their service people won't do any more warranty work."

John Maki, Skandia, Mich.: "My worst buy is the **Johnson** 6 hp, outboard 4-cycle boat motor I bought new in 2006. The motor ran well for one year but then my troubles began. After 30 min. of trolling the motor gets hot and stops. I checked the water pump propeller but it was fine. Then I took the motor to someone who replaced the manifold gasket and a seal in the exhaust tube. The motor worked okay for a while, but now it runs hot and stops again. I finally gave up, and now it sits in our garage."

C.J. Cook, Marble Hill, Mo.: "My 2012 **Jonsered** 2152C chainsaw and CC2128 brushcutter are both best buys. These tools start right up and are lightweight yet powerful. I bought a **Jonsered** chainsaw in 1984 and when it finally quit working on me last year, I didn't hesitate to buy another one."

Stan Sutter, Shingletown, Calif.: "We bought a **Deere** 790 tractor to replace our Case 250, but it's not as good a machine. It doesn't have as much lifting capacity, and attaching implements is a much more difficult job. I wouldn't buy another one. The only positive is that it starts easier."

Phil Carter, New Era, Mich.: "I like my **Stihl** MS250 chainsaw, HT 100 pole chain saw, and B686C leaf blower. They're all quality built. We use the pole chain saw for trimming work in our apple orchard. It has five years of hard use on it but always starts and has required only minor repairs."

"I bought my **Deere** 5525 MFWD loader tractor used with 466 hrs. on it and really like it. The cab is a great improvement over the one on my older Massey-Ferguson tractor, and the air conditioner works well. I especially like this tractor's speedometer and the power reverser. Fuel consumption isn't bad, and it doesn't use any oil."

Sears Maceda, Phillips, Maine: Sears is the owner of a **Deere** Z425 riding mower. "For what this machine costs, you'd think they'd put a more comfortable seat on it. I put springs on the seat but it still isn't comfortable. Any ideas?"

Donald Gerber, Monroeville, Ohio: "My best buy is **SealLube** seal expander. It's designed to stop any rubber oil seal leaks in engines, transmissions, power steering and hydraulic systems. I used it on my **Deere** 3010 tractor, which was leaking transmission fluid. It solved the problem."

Todd Heidemann, Willow, Alaska: "My 1986 **Ford** F-150 pickup is equipped with a rebuilt 302 cu. in. gas engine and is always dependable, no matter what the weather."

"My 1994 **Kenworth** semi truck equipped with a new **Caterpillar** 3406 diesel engine does all the work of new trucks that cost 5 times as much. I keep up with a good synthetic grease and oil maintenance program."

On the negative side, he lists his 2007 **Ford** F-450 pickup equipped with a Power Stroke diesel engine. "The engine is always blowing a gasket and it's impossible to reach. This is a very over-engineered vehicle. The next time I have a shop truck built for my fleet I'll recommend a Dodge diesel."

Leonard Arenz, Streator, Ill.: A White 5100, 18-in. row splitter soybean planter runs as Leonard's "best buy." "I had to do a lot of work on the planter and almost gave up on

it. But when I went to the field I was pleased at how well it worked. It did as good a job as planters that cost 6 times as much."

"I had to do a lot of work on the planter and almost gave up on it."

On the minus side is an **Ideal** overhead door that he bought at Menards. "I had to call Ideal 4 different times and drive to Menards 4 times (176 miles) to resolve parts shortages and problems. The manufacturer was very helpful. However, from now on I'll never buy anything from a big box store that I can't fit into a shopping cart. They only want to sell you something and don't want to see you again except at the cash register."

Daniel Alderfer, Basalt, Colo.: Daniel's satisfied with his 1998 **Chevrolet** Astro all-wheel drive cargo van equipped with a V-6 engine and automatic transmission. "This vehicle has about 160,000 miles on it with no problems. The all-wheel drive has position and is virtually unstoppable. The van is high quality throughout and even though it's 15 years old, it's still worth \$3,000. The five doors on it all fit and work well even though they're used by many different workers. The V-6 engine still runs strong despite the vehicle's high mileage."

Robert Miller, Franklin, N.Y.: "Four years ago we purchased a newly designed hoop-type plastic-covered building from **FarmTek**. It was advertised to be 45 percent stronger than their previously built ones, intended for areas of the country that get lots of snow. We put it up in early fall. The first snowfall of 5 in. caved it in and, of course, our hay got wet."

"We managed to push it back up and brace it. Shortly after we received a call from **FarmTek** telling us that their engineers had determined the new building design needed more bracing. Our response: No kidding!

"They did replace a few bent braces and gave us a new plastic cover so that basically it was back to its original configuration. So it was still no good. I'm hoping they build better ones now."

Richard Rhoades, Greenville, Ohio: "I bought my 2008 self-propelled, walk-behind **Cub Cadet** riding mower with a 3-year extended warranty. However, it wasn't long before the cheap, thin mower deck started cracking and falling apart. Also, the engine mounting holes cracked. The machine was still under warranty when I brought it in for repairs, yet they refused to fix it."

James J. Keem, Arcade, N.Y.: James likes his **New Holland** LS160 skid loader. "I considered several other brands and models before I narrowed my choices down to this model and one made by **Deere**. My son and I tested both models side by side, with my son driving the **Deere**. The **Deere** has a higher horsepower rating but it got stuck and kept overheating. I was able to drive the **New Holland** model right around the **Deere** with no problem."

He's disappointed with his **Deere** LT riding mower. "The first year this mower went back 4 different times to the dealer for repairs. The next year we had more trouble, so when the warranty was about to expire we traded for a **Cub Cadet** zero turn riding mower. We've used it for almost 3 years with no problems."

Edward E. Schulte, Mexico, Mo.: Edward's the owner of a 2005 **Hustler** Super Z zero turn riding mower equipped with a 24 hp **Honda** engine. "The mower itself is well built with no problems. However, within the



Instead of a single large square baler, Carthel built a hitch to pull two small square balers. One man can make 4,000 to 5,000 bales a day, working 24 hours a day.

Double Hitch Pulls Small Balers Behind Dew Simulator

A Texas farmer has found a new way to use the **Staheli West DewPoint Simulator**: He built a double hitch that lets him pull 2 small square balers behind the **DewPoint** machine at the same time.

Normally, a big square baler is pulled behind the **DewPoint**, but **Guy Carthel**, **Lockney, Texas**, sells small square bales to the horse market. His hitch measures 46 ft. long and consists of a 4 by 12-in., 3/8-in. thick steel tube with a 2-wheeled steerable axle on back. One baler hooks up directly to the **DewPoint** machine, and the other attaches to the 2-wheeled axle. The front end of the hitch swivels from side to side on a gooseneck ball attached to the **DewPoint** machine. A big double piston pump mounts on back of the **DewPoint** and is used to operate hydraulic motors that drive each baler. A pair of big hoses lead back to each baler to deliver steam that moistens the hay.

"I built it last winter and couldn't be happier with it," says Carthel. "I like the idea behind the **DewPoint**, but it wouldn't have paid to pull a single small square baler behind it. This hitch lets me use the full capacity of the machine."

The **DewPoint Simulator** is used in arid regions of the western U.S. where growers have to wait – sometimes for days – for natural dew to form before they can start baling. The "dew simulator" machine solves that problem by applying steam to hay as it's being baled.

The self-contained steam generating machine hooks up between the tractor and baler. A pto shaft and hydraulic lines run through the rig back to the baler.

The machine is equipped with a boiler and 6 water tanks totaling 1,000 gal., as well as two 150-gal. diesel tanks (to fire the boiler burner) and a diesel-powered electrical generator to power the boiler's electrical system. Steam delivery hoses extend from the boiler back to the baler.

Injection manifolds mounted above and below the baler's pickup assembly apply steam to the hay, softening it up to prevent leaf loss and shattering during movement into the baler. Additional steam is injected into hay as it passes through the feed chamber and just before it's compressed in



Steam is pumped to rear baler through rubber pipes.

the bale chamber. An electronic moisture sensor mounted in the bale chamber reads the bale's moisture level and displays it on a moisture meter inside the tractor cab. The operator can adjust moisture level on-the-go from the cab.

"Together with the cost of the hitch I've got about \$200,000 invested in this system. But when I look at all the economics, it saves me money," says Carthel. "I can bale high quality hay with just the right moisture up to 24 hours per day. Consistency in feed quality and bale conformation is extremely important to the horse market, and with the **DewPoint** I can deliver high quality hay."

"With my 2-baler hitch one man with 2 balers can make 4,000 to 5,000 bales per day, whereas without the **DewPoint** two operators were lucky to make 2,500 bales in one night. And there was always a lot of downtime waiting for the hay to get humid enough to bale. Now I can bale hay any time, and being able to do that reliably is an amazing thing. It lets me get more done with less equipment and fewer people and improves my business outlook tremendously."

The tube hitch bar serves as an oil reservoir and holds 58 gal. of oil. Another 20-gal. tank mounts on top of the hitch.

"I can swing the back baler 29 ft. in either direction from the centerline of the tractor. The back part of the hitch pivots on a 5th wheel-type setup, so that the axle always stays inline," notes Carthel.

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first 20 hours of use the engine had to be replaced because of an oil pressure problem. There was no charge. The next engine dropped a valve and the company replaced all parts, but the dealer charged \$500 labor. The machine was out of warranty.

"The following year the engine's other cylinder dropped a valve. Again the company replaced parts at no charge, but the dealer wanted another \$500 for labor so my son and I did the work ourselves. Next, the starter went bad which cost another \$150 to

fix. We had more starting problems as well as problems with the engine, wiring and oil pressure.

"We finally traded it for a new mower equipped with a **Kawasaki** engine. It now has more than 400 hrs. on it with no problems. We later learned that many mowers equipped with 20 hp **Honda** engines have had similar problems.

"Our 1985 **Ford** F-150 2-WD pickup is a best buy. It's equipped with a 300 cu. in.,

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