

## Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Pickups

trailer. It still runs good so there's no need to buy a new one."

**Carroll R. Neuhalfen, Coleridge, Neb.:** "I've had my 1999 Dodge Ram 4-WD for only a little over six months but I like the way it drives and rides.

"I bought a new 1997 Chevrolet 2-WD model and on the way home from the dealer it pulled to the right. I was told to put some miles on it. At 9,000 miles the rear end got so hot it burned all the paint off. They couldn't fix that, either, and just said to keep an eye on it. I finally traded it in for the Dodge."

**Ron Dannenberg, Rapelje, Mont.:** "My 1993 Ford F-250 equipped with a 7.3-liter diesel engine has more than 145,000 miles on it. I've replaced the tires, two batteries, and a hanger bearing on the driveshaft—that's it. My only complaint is that the windshield wiper delay is poorly designed."

**Paul G. Dudley, Troy, Mo.:** "My 1999 Chevrolet Silverado is fairly fuel efficient for a 4-WD model, and it pulls loads okay and the ride is fine. However, the bumpers are poorly designed and there's too much wind noise around the doors and windows. Also, I don't like the seats. The 40–60 bench seat in my 1997 model was much more comfortable.

"I added a Draw-Tite brake control for the brakes on my horse trailer that works good."

**Wayne L. Hill, LaGrange, Ind.:** "I like my 1988 Ford Ranger. No problems, just regular maintenance."

**Armin Ross, McIntosh, Minn.:** "I'm generally disappointed with my 1993 Dodge Dakota 4-WD pickup. The turning radius is too wide, and the transmission still shifts hard after 70,000 miles. It took my dealer six years to fix a faulty computer."

**Jim Webster, Rockton, Ill.:** Jim owns a 1995 Chevrolet 2500 heavy duty 3/4-ton 4-WD extended cab pickup equipped with a 6.5-liter turbocharged diesel engine. "It has more than 120,000 trouble-free miles. I'm satisfied with it except that in extremely cold weather the 4-WD takes forever to engage. It gets 23 mpg empty and 17 mpg loaded. It has sufficient power and the diesel engine runs smoother and quieter than most others on the market. I think this pickup has a lot more power than any two older GM models equipped with 6.2-liter diesel engines. It'll be interesting to see if it lasts as long as they do. My 1982 GM has more than 300,000 miles on it. The only work I've done was to install a new injector pump, fuel pump, and glow plugs.

"I'm waiting for the new GM-Chevy diesel-powered pickups to come out later this year. From all the reports I've read, they're

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supposed to be awesome. A joint venture engine by GM-Isuzu and a whole new transmission."

**Wesley Restad, Eau Claire, Wis.:** Wesley's the satisfied owner of a 1999 GM Sierra 1/2-ton extended cab pickup equipped with a passenger side third door. "We use it like a car thanks to the comfortable ride and good handling. There's plenty of room in

the back seat for luggage and our two grandsons. It's also economical to operate. I'd like to see a split rear seat so that one side or the other, or both, could be folded up to provide more luggage room and ease in loading or unloading items. I mounted a bed liner and full length running boards on it."

**James Little, Maidstone, Ontario:** "I'm not happy with my 1997 GM SLE 1500 pickup. The transmission failed at about 50,000 miles. A power window failed at about 45,000 miles and cost \$385 to repair. Then the battery failed at only 55,000 miles. This pickup has never pulled anything. The warranty was up at 40,000 miles."

**Ben Hummel, Hulett, Wyo.:** A 1992 Ford Ranger 2-WD pickup equipped with a 4-cyl. engine rates as Ben's "best buy". "All I've had to do is change the oil every 5,000 miles, replace one set of spark plugs, and

**"The transmission failed at about 50,000 miles."**

replace the brake shoes twice. We tend to overload everything, so after the first few bumper-dragging loads I went to the junk yard and bought a set of rear springs from another Ranger and added three extra leafs to the truck (I didn't use the main spring.) It rides stiff but not brutal, and traction has been greatly improved. We've handled many loads of 4,000 lbs. or more with no problem. My only worry is how the tires will hold up.

"I recently bought a 1999 Ford Ranger just like the 1992 model and also doubled the springs. It has only about 5,000 miles on it so I'll reserve judgment on this one for a while.

"My son has 264,000 miles on his 1988 Ford Ranger 4-WD equipped with a V-8 engine. He uses it as a dump truck and has had very few problems, considering the hard use it gets. I believe I'll stay with Fords."

**Sam Grabill, Audubon, Iowa:** Sam owns a 1993 Chevrolet Silverado 3500 equipped with a diesel engine and automatic transmission. "It does all my heavy pulling and I'm well satisfied with it. There were some problems with the fuel injector but my dealer took care of it right away. One complaint - the company should be able to make windshield washers that spray water on the windshield instead of over the top. I use a pto (made by Borg Warner of Omaha, Neb.) to run a hydraulic pump so I can raise the box on my grain trailer. It's connected to the transfer case so it'll work with the pickup's automatic transmission. I haven't had any problems with it, but I do grease it more often.

**Eric Heselhorst, Ness City, Kan.:** Eric's the satisfied owner of a 1986 GM Sierra 1/2-ton longbed pickup equipped with a 305 cu. in., V-8 engine and 4-speed transmission. "For the work I do with it, it performs great. For pulling jobs, however, it's short of power and the rear end is geared too high. For hauling jobs, the rear end is well sprung for a 1/2-ton pickup so I can haul heavy loads. I wish the company had offered a different V-8 engine than this one."

**Ray Orloske, Jeffers, Minn.:** Ray owns a 1994 Dodge 2500 equipped with a Cummins diesel engine. "I've liked this pickup from the start, but I did have a lot of trouble with the transmission for 3 1/2 years before the dealer finally figured out what was wrong. The transmission should have closer

## Pickup Performance Boosted By "Hybrid Fuel" System

"I bought a 1991 Ford F-250 4-WD with a 460 engine and a 5-speed transmission. To get more torque at low rpm's, I advanced the cam timing 4° BTDC. The computer system in the truck adjusted the engine electronically via sequential multi-port injection," says Harry Wallace, Woodland Park, Colo.

"A bad side effect of this change was that I had to use premium gas to reduce pinging under heavy loads. Since I frequently pull a 22-ft. gooseneck trailer with gross vehicle weights up to 25,000 lbs., even premium gas wouldn't completely stop the pinging.

"So in November, 1999, I installed a supplementary propane injection system in the pickup. It consists of three pieces of 1 1/4-in. dia. PVC pipe with a #34 Garretson venturi valve on the center pipe. They're arranged to cause maximum turbulence in the air cleaner to mix the propane and air thoroughly at extremely lean mixtures.

"I've found that the best mix is 2/3 gas and 1/3 propane. This completely stops pinging under any engine operating conditions using 87 octane regular gasoline. And best of all, it boosts power almost 20 percent.

"I have a switch on the gearshift to allow me to turn the propane on and off as needed. I discovered, to my surprise, that the computer management system on the engine automatically adjusts when I turn on the propane. The first time I turned on the propane, the engine bucked and sputtered until the computer adjusted. But then the settings are stored into the computer's memory. So now, when I turn off the propane, it automatically adjusts back to straight gasoline.

"I'm saving 60 percent on fuel costs by only buying regular gas and using 1/3-propane. And I stopped the pinging under heavy loads so the engine does not self-destruct.

"Key to the system is that I added a K&N air filter soaked in oil to the air cleaner. As the propane passes through the filter it comes into contact with the liquid oil which removes the static electricity so the mix will thoroughly homogenize, eliminating positive and negative charges so there's no segregation of air and propane. Otherwise, the air induction system is stock.

speeds in the gears, which I think the company has done on more current models."

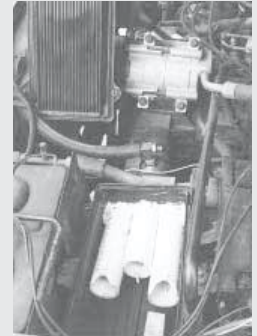
**Don Shaw, Amherstburg, Ontario:** "It handles well and has a comfortable ride," says Don about his 2000 Ford F-150 1/2-ton model equipped with a V-6 engine. "The V-6 engine is easy on fuel. This pickup should have heavier metal on the back side of the cab. Shifting loads can easily dent the cab end of the cargo box."

**Thomas E. Dorsey, Caldwell, Idaho:** "I like my 2000 Ford F-250 4-WD pickup equipped with a Power Stroke engine. This is the sixth Ford diesel-powered pickup I've owned and it's by far the best one. My only suggestion is that it could use a better air filter. I added a Rhino spray-in bed liner, fifth wheel gooseneck, and fold-down ball as well as an Air Raide air filter."

**Maurice Syme, Weiser, Idaho:** Maurice says his 1997 Ford F-150 Lariat 4-WD pickup is neither a "best" nor a "worst" buy. "The engine and drive train are very good, and the 4-WD electric shift works perfect. However, the body is poorly made. I had to replace the outer skin of the door. The back



Wallace installed a supplementary propane injection system on his 1991 Ford F-250 4-WD pickup.



System consists of three pieces of 1 1/4-in. dia. PVC pipe with a Garretson venturi valve on the center pipe.

"I mounted a 50-gal. propane tank in the back of my pickup. I use one tank of propane every 1,000 miles pulling a heavy gooseneck trailer.

"I've done a lot of research on gasoline and propane over the years and have discovered that gasoline provides power and mileage but it's difficult to control the burn because it's a liquid. With propane, on the other hand, it's easier to control the burn since it's gaseous, but it lacks btu's for power and mileage. My hybrid fuel system provides a powerful high mileage mix that easily controls the burn.

"This system requires no alteration of the emission controls or operating computer. Overall, I'm happy with how it operates."

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window leaked and I had to have it replaced or repaired. I've also had problems with the door locks, ABS computer (after warranty), other door electronics, and the steering gear (which still isn't right). The outer skin of the pickup bed is very fragile. But, I like the improved tailgate.

"In addition, the accelerator is too close to the brake pedal, especially when you have winter boots on. Sometimes the accelerator gets pushed when depressing the brakes. Also, the 'trip counter' hole lets dust in behind the glass in the dash, and there's no way to clean it. The company should use heavier metal on the outside of the bed and improve the workmanship on the body assembly. I like the electronics on this pickup, but they weren't installed with farm use in mind. Dust affects their efficiency.

"I coated the bed and tailgate with Armatuff bed liner. I'm happy with it – it stays on good. I also like the optional running boards. If I were in the market for a new pickup, I'd probably buy another Ford. 'Coffee shop' talk says most other makes are having the same problems I've had."