

more than 70,000 miles on it and has been totally reliable. It has never been back to the dealer."

Jason Lilley, Emo, Ontario: "In the mid 1960's my dad bought a new **Deutz 6006**. It's the most dependable tractor we've ever owned and has more than 12,000 hours on it without requiring any engine work. Our Internationals, Oliver's, Cases and Zetors have all come and gone, but the Deutz is still going strong."

Mark Cavendish, Kaleden, B.C.: "My 2008 **Mantis** rototiller is lightweight but rugged, and the attachments for it work great."

Anthony Beard, Prescott, Mich.: "My **Milwaukee** metal-cutting circular saw is a versatile and powerful tool. It cuts metal like a normal saw cuts wood and will even handle 1-in. thick plate steel."

Joe Bellor, Lapeer, Mich.: Joe's impressed with his 1995 **Chevrolet 1/2-ton, 2-WD** pickup equipped with a 305 cu. in. engine and automatic transmission. "This pickup has more than 180,000 miles on it but I've had to replace only the wiper motor and coolant sensor. The pickup still drives like new and the engine doesn't burn any oil. I added a leaf to the rear springs, which lets me haul up to 3,000 lbs. of gravel and rocks."

"My 2004 propane-fired variable 25,000 to 100,000 btu **Reddy** heater is my worst buy. The fumes from the heater made my eyes burn so bad that I couldn't use it unless I kept my pole barn's roll-up door open. As a solution, the company suggested I leave a door or window open whenever I use the heater."

Duane Johnson, Tucson, Ariz.: "In recent years I've purchased several hand tools from **Harbor Freight** that have performed well, and for the price they can't be beat. The tools include an angle grinder, random orbital sander, and heat gun. All of them worked great."

John Preikschat, White City, Sask.: I bought my 1987 **Ford F-150 XLT Lariat** pickup used 10 years ago, and now it has more than 220,000 miles. It has required only routine maintenance."

Eldon L. England, Jameson, Mo.: "My all-time best buy is my 1988 **Ford F-150** pickup equipped with a 4.9-liter, in-line 6-cyl. engine and 3-speed transmission. I bought this pickup used in 1998 with about 78,000 miles on it. I paid only \$2,700 for it. It came from Lubbock, Texas, and needed some work due to gross negligence. I changed the original air filter, fuel filter, and spark plug wires. I had a friend put in new crank bearings and a high output oil pump, which cost \$180. I don't believe the former owner had ever changed the oil."

"I installed a new clutch at about 125,000 miles and fuel injectors at about 155,000 miles. The only body parts I had to replace were the rear brake cables and 2 ball joints. Now the pickup has almost 200,000 miles on it but still runs great, and I haven't found any load that it can't handle. It's just now starting to show a little rust. It's a great pickup."

Keith Krick, Orleans, Mich. ph 616 761-3045: "The **Homelite XL** chainsaw I bought 30 years ago is my best buy. It starts good and seems to run forever on a tank of gas. On the down side, I can't get a diaphragm for the chain oiler. If anyone has a source for parts I'd like to hear from them."

Kevin Turner, Marlette, Mich.: "My **Clayton 1600** wood burning furnace has no trouble heating my 1,900 sq. ft. house. I also like the **Helkoil** hot water coil that I use with this furnace. It has reduced my domestic hot water bill by at least \$20 per month."

Stuart Vaughn, Tilden, Neb.: "Our **H&W**

Western collapsible bale feeder is our worst buy. Within one month a calf placed its leg over the top of the feeder and got wedged in the joint/hinge of the feeder. The calf suffered a compound fracture and the leg had to be amputated. Shortly after that injury another calf jumped into the feeder. It got caught up while trying to get out and died from a broken neck. After this happened we had success using the feeder with larger cattle weighing about 1,000 lbs. But we won't use this feeder again with our calves."

Loyal Fulton, Selma, Iowa: "Our **New Holland TS100A** is a great chore tractor. It has an excellent cab and is fuel efficient."

Marty Rhea, McMinnville, Tenn.: "My 2008 **Husqvarna 570 E-Tech II** chainsaw works great for both big and small jobs. It's lightweight which makes it easy to carry around our farm. I'm a full-time timber cutter, and this saw has enough power to cut with models twice its size. It has a new-design carburetor that's a little cold natured, but after it warms up, look out. It does a great job."

"My 2008 small **Echo TC-210** rototiller is my worst buy. This tiller is made by Echo but looks like a Mantis. According to my dealer, Echo makes some of the Mantis rototillers. The tiller tines clog up easily, and if the

"I bought this tiller for my wife to use. But it hurts us both to use it."

ground is hard the machine will jerk you around worse than a full-size, walk-behind tiller. Also, it cost almost twice as much as a walk-behind model. I bought this tiller for my wife to use. But it hurts us both to use it."

Corby Graber, Accident, Md.: "My 1995 **Walker** zero turn riding mower with 36-in., single stage snowblower is my best buy. In exchange for doing maintenance on my mother-in-law's mower she lets me use the machine during the winter for blowing snow. It works best on hard surfaces. I have a 600-ft. long blacktop driveway, and last winter our county received 265 in. of snow. It's only a single stage snowblower but it works great. It's fast because it's on a zero turn riding mower."

"There are bigger snowblowers out there but for its size, this one can't be beat. I have a 26-in., 2-stage walk-behind model on tracks that doesn't even compare with the Walker model. It would take 4 times as long to blow snow using the walk-behind."

"It'll even blow slushy, wet snow. One weekend last winter we got 39 in. of snow at once. I cleared about half the driveway but then had to bring in a big tractor-mounted snowblower. That was the only time my Walker sat on the sidelines."

M.D. Miller, Arthur, Ill.: "We bought a **Honda FG100 A1** Harmony mini tiller and used it quite lightly for 2 to 3 years, but then had problems. When we took the mini tiller in for repairs we were told it couldn't be fixed. That was disgusting because we didn't want to spend the money for a larger tiller but this smaller one itself wasn't cheap, either."

John Flannery, Henderson, Minn.: "Our **Deere 730** diesel tractor has about 18,500 hours on it, yet the engine has never been overhauled."

Jerome Kline, Brooklyn, Iowa: "I like the **Calmer** trash reduction kits I use on my corn header (ph 309 629-9000; www.calmercornheads.com). They let me harvest faster, use less fuel, and get a cleaner sample in the tank."

FARM SHOW Tests "Ball" Composter

By Jim Ruen, Contributing Editor

After seeing ads for the Ecomposter globe-shaped composter, FARM SHOW bought one to test it out (\$179). The results were sketchy at best.

First, it looks pretty neat and is easy to use. You just roll it around to mix the compost. Lids with snap-lock hands are located on opposite sides of the ball so one is always "up".

Air tubes are fixed to the inside of the ball, pointing to the center. These also serve to break up clumps of materials and "stir" the contents when the ball is rotated.

One of the worst things about the Ecomposter is that it consists of more than 1,200 parts, all of which require assembly. On a positive note, the instructions were clear and easy to follow. The 1/2-hr. to 2-hr. suggested assembly time stretched into nearly 4 hrs. However, once completed, the ball was impressively sturdy.

FARM SHOW ordered the optional spider stand with the Ecomposter. The stand went together fast and the empty ball spun easily when set in place on the light plastic wheels.

Problems started when the Ecomposter was filled. The more material that was added, the harder the ball was to spin. Rollers instead of wheels might have made the job easier. Eventually, it was moved off the spider stand and onto a lawn ring that comes standard with the unit.

While still heavy, it was much easier to roll around the lawn than to turn on the stand. Material was added, including green stuff, leaves, and horse manure, and the ball was rolled. The company claims compost will take as little as four weeks. It also claims that the dark green color of the ball will help heat the material and speed decomposition. FARM SHOW found both claims questionable.

While a well-made compost pile will quickly warm up and even hit the magic 140 to 160-degree range that kills most weed seeds, I never detected composting



To mix compost you just roll ball around on the ground or on the roller stand.



With more than 1,200 parts, assembly was time-consuming.

warmth in the ball, even on a warm day. One knowledgeable composter looking at the ball questioned if the capacity (variously described as 82 or 71 gal., often in the same ad) offered enough mass for heating to occur. It took 8 weeks for the material inside to decompose.

Perhaps if the entire 11 cu. ft. of interior space were filled, heating would occur, although 9 cu. ft. is the recommended minimum volume. Whether the ball could still be rolled around, however, is questionable.

Bottom line: I think I'm going to build a simple composting drum on a stand and pack the Ecomposter back into a corner somewhere.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ecomposter.net (ph 800 293-2923) or check major retailers such as Sears, Home Depot, Walmart and others.

Enoch Aarrestad, Debden, Sask.: "I like my 2006 **New Holland 2331** discbine, which is designed to mount on New Holland bi-directional tractors. One time I broke 2 gears on the mower after hitting a rock. Then I got the shear hub update and since then this machine has worked great. Even in hay fields with a lot of pocket gopher mounds it just keeps on going. Also, this machine doesn't seem to plug up in heavy, wet hay like my haybine did. I used it to cut 1,900 acres last year."

"My 2004 **Global Hydronics** outdoor wood boiler is my worst buy. It's very inefficient. Uses much more wood than other units, and last year it sprang several leaks. I fixed most of them, but recently I found a couple more small leaks and will have to fix them, too. The company won't stand by its warranty."

Darin Holste, New Market, Iowa: "My 1998 **New Holland 664** round baler has been trouble-free and does a good job."

"My 2007 **Bison 3-pt.** mounted blade wore out within 2 years. It needed new pins and bushings. Nothing on it is greasable. I'm very disappointed with it."

Barry Denison, Metcalfe, Ontario: "I like everything about my 2007 **Massey Ferguson 5455** 85 hp tractor. It's quiet, comfortable to drive, easy on fuel, and has a lot of power

for its size. I really like the Power Shuttle transmission – I can adjust how fast it shifts simply by pressing a button on the console. I put about 1,100 hours on this tractor in 2 years with just one minor adjustment. Even my Deere friends were impressed after they drove this tractor a few times."

A 2004 **Pacific Western** outdoor wood burning furnace rates as his "worst buy". "This furnace works well as long as I can keep it from leaking water. It started leaking 2 years after I bought it. It came with a 20-year guarantee but the company wouldn't help. I've had this furnace welded professionally 3 separate times at a cost of about \$400 each time. Now every time I use it I have my fingers crossed."

Robert Newman, Gold Bar, Wash.: "My 2008 **Echo SRM210** weed trimmer with straight shaft is my best buy. It has a Rapid Loader system that uses .105 string cut from a roll. This weed trimmer is easy to start, and greasing the shaft, cleaning the filter, and changing the spark plugs are easy jobs. I use Echo 2-stroke oil with it."

"My 2004 **Sears GT 5000** riding mower equipped with a 6-speed transaxle is my worst buy. The transaxle has a retainer ring that holds on the drive pulley, but it's poorly designed. On a 1993 **GT 6000** riding mower,

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