

routine maintenance.

"I use the tractor with a 10-in. moldboard plow, snow blade, snowblower, sicklebar mower, 42-in. rotary mower, and cultivator. The cultivator goes on underneath and on back of the tractor to cover the tire tracks. I use a platform on back of the tractor to carry a 15-gal. sprayer and other stuff. The tractor still has the original tires and paint. I did paint the wheels and had the seat recovered."

**Ernest B. Laplante, Greenfield, Mass.:** "I bought a used **Deere 650** loader tractor equipped with a diesel engine to plow snow and for other small farm chores. But right after I bought it I found the transmission was about half full of water. I also noticed the loader and steering were 'lazy'. The transmission fluid in this tractor is used for the hydraulics.

"My Deere dealer found that water in the transmission had ruined the hydraulic pump, as the screen that keeps dirt out of the pump was plugged and corroded. The filter probably hadn't been changed since the tractor was new. A new pump, screen and relief valve had to be installed.

"Now the tractor runs fine and just sips fuel. I'm not real happy with the loader's lifting capacity, but I'm told that a Deere 650 is too big to be a small tractor and too small to be a big tractor so I shouldn't expect too much. Oh well, it's pretty and it's green."

**Sean Delaney, Rozel, Kan.:** Sean likes his **Unverferth 3750 SeedRunner** bulk seed tender ([www.unverferth.com](http://www.unverferth.com); ph 419 532-3121). "We use it for numerous tasks.

"Our **Yetter 2940 Air Adjust** residue manager system for planters has far exceeded our expectations ([www.yetterco.com](http://www.yetterco.com); ph 800 447-5777). It's easy to change the settings by using a controller right from the tractor seat.

"Our **Ingersoll-Rand 20-volt, 1/2-in. impact wrench** has more nut-busting strength than our air impact driver ([www.ingersollrandproducts.com](http://www.ingersollrandproducts.com); ph 612 315-7094). We use it to change the tires on our center pivot irrigation system. It removes rusty, corroded nuts with ease."

**Russell Spears, Magnolia, Texas:** "My mid 1990's **Jacobsen 3-pt. mounted, 3-gang reel mower** has a 72-in. cutting width. This high speed reel mower rides on steel wheels that have great traction. It mows our 5-acre yard as smooth as a golf course. I like how it runs quiet and is heavy duty, requiring little maintenance. It cuts far better than 3-pt. mounted rotary mowers and finish mowers."

On the minus side, he lists his 2013 **Swisher TB1260, 60-in. Trailcutter** tow-behind mower. "The front caster wheel is too small to properly support the weight of the deck. The belt-engage pulley system is poorly designed, which causes the belt to continuously fall off as it wears and loosens. The mower's 13 hp Briggs & Stratton engine is too small, and I've already had to replace it after only about 100 hrs. of use."

**Laura Fults, Springfield, S.C.:** Laura's impressed with her 2014 **Ryobi 4-piece Lithium Ion battery** tool set. It includes 2 batteries, a charger, drill, mini circular saw, reciprocating saw and flashlight ([www.ryobitools.com](http://www.ryobitools.com); ph 800 525-2579). "I got this tool set for Christmas and used the saw and drill to do jobs around the house every day during the holidays. Battery life is great and all the tools perform impeccably.

"The batteries recharge in only about 30 min., so with one battery in the tool and one in the charger there's never any downtime."

**Dale Melton, Casey, Ill.:** Two years ago Dale built a flatbed for his 1-ton pickup. "It's the handiest piece of equipment on our farm," he says. "I use the pickup to pull a gooseneck trailer and the flatbed to haul a welder-

generator, air compressor, and toolboxes. I also use the flatbed as a bench when making field repairs."

**David High, Neillsville, Wis.:** "Our 1988 **Case IH 7120 Magnum** tractor has been almost trouble-free. We had to change a fan bearing and split the tractor due to a broken plate in the transmission, but those are the only serious problems."

He hasn't been as lucky with his **White 6215 4-WD** tractor. "We had to overhaul the engine and transmission and install at least three new pto clutches. We've also had many electrical problems."

**Dave Nicholas, Peebles, Ohio:** "It's the best pickup I've ever owned," says Dave about his 1993 **Dodge D350 Club Cab** dually equipped with a 5.9-liter Cummins diesel. He bought it used with about 174,000 miles on it.

"This pickup has more usable space than my 2006 Dodge Ram 4-door model, and better front seats. It'll pull anything the 2006 model will pull with only half the horsepower and torque. Fuel efficiency is also 6 to 10 mpg better. During the summer of 2013 I made a 443-mile trip driving on freeways at 65 to 75 mph with the air conditioner on, but it still got 27.4 mpg. My only regret is that I didn't buy this pickup new."



**Allen Pansegrau, Kelowna, B.C. Canada:** "The homemade bale grapple I bought used from my neighbor was a real best buy. I don't know who made it, but it works great as long as the bales are tight. Activate the hydraulics and the forks go in about 6 in. With this grapple, moving bales is easy."

**Ronald Hopf, Huntingburg, Ind.:** Ronald's the satisfied owner of a 2014 **Deere 1025R TLB** subcompact utility loader tractor equipped with a backhoe. "It has more features than the competition, with a better price and financing than some other brands I checked out. I really like the quick change loader bucket.

"The tractor starts well even in cold weather and has decent traction when plowing snow, even without tire chains. It has a very short turning radius, which makes tilling small gardens with a 4-ft. rototiller an easy job."

**Ben Pentecost, Doddsville, Miss.:** "I'm impressed with my 2014 **Stihl KombiSystem 110** with weedeater, edger, blower and limb saw attachments. I like having to keep up only the one motor, and it cranks right up every time and runs reliably."

**Glen Linthicum, Little Hocking, Ohio:** "Two years ago I traded my **Case David Brown 88S** tractor for a used 1976 **99S** model. Both have been strong, reliable tractors. Maintain them well and they'll run forever. The only problem is these tractors are notoriously difficult to get on and off."

**Gerald Blumhagen, Castalia, Iowa:** "We use our 2008 **Kubota RTV 900** utility vehicle every day and find it to be a real labor saver. We've put more than 2,400 hrs. on it with no problems."

**Albert Tinnell, Shepherdsville, Ky.:** "As much as I hate to say it, my 2015 **Ford F-150 XLT** extended cab 2-WD pickup is a worst buy. The Eco-Boost 2.7-liter, V-6 engine has an advertised fuel mileage of 24 mpg city and 27 mpg highway. But after putting

## "Deflector" Apron Stops Trash Buildup

By Lorn Manthey, Contributing Editor

"Some ideas are so simple a person has to wonder why they weren't thought of years ago. That's the case with the **Debris Deflector**, a simple piece of 4 by 4-ft. vinyl that mounts above the feederhouse on a combine. I saw one installed on a machine last year and ordered one on the spot for my Deere combine. Two bolts with strong springs secure the top end of the deflector to the steps that extend out from both sides of the cab. The bottom is held in place by 2 large magnets that attach to the top front edge of our bean platform or cornhead. When the platform and cornhead are in operating position, the springs keep the apron tight so debris from the heads doesn't collect on top of the feederhouse.

"It's a simple debris solution and money well spent. I say that because in dry calm conditions, debris close to a foot deep can build up on top of a feederhouse in less than an hour. Sure a person can push it off, but most guys don't and I admit I usually didn't take the time, either. From a safety standpoint, that's not a good practice because the tinder dry leaves and trash often work their way under the cab. There are oil lines and orbit motors and other hot stuff under there that could easily start a fire.

"In addition to keeping trash off the top of the feederhouse, I noticed 3 other things that made me glad I bought it. Corn



Measuring 4-ft. square, the vinyl Debris Deflector keeps debris from collecting on top of combine's feederhouse.

kernels and beans that used to land on top of the feederhouse instead landed on the vinyl. With a simple swipe of a gloved hand every couple hours they end up in the machine, not on the ground. Second, if there is a strong breeze, the apron cleans itself as I turn at the end of a field. Another plus I learned was that during the 2 times it rained and the combine sat outside, the tight apron funneled water into the head, not into the cracks, crannies and crevices of the feederhouse. For me the \$349 was money well spent." ([www.wajohnson.com](http://www.wajohnson.com); ph 800 523-3979).

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about 8,000 miles on this pickup, mostly on long trips, the best mileage we've gotten is 21.7 mpg. That's about 25 percent less than advertised.

"The Eco-Boost engine does have amazing power for its size. However, the seats are extremely hard and uncomfortable, the steering and brakes are extremely touchy, and there's way too much wind noise for a \$35,000 vehicle. Also, whenever the pickup hits a pothole, it sounds and feels like its front end is falling off."

**Chad Berry, Venus, Penn.:** Chad's happy with his 2006 **Branson 4720i** utility tractor equipped with a loader and backhoe. "Before I bought it I never knew the company even existed, but 9 years later and after countless projects that would have crippled other machines in its class, it's still trouble-free and always ready for the next task."

He's disappointed with his 2006 **Deere X540** lawn tractor. "I made the mistake of paying a lot of money for 'green paint and stickers'. Since the first day I've had numerous problems and have had to take it back to the dealer for repairs under warranty. Every aspect of this machine is troublesome except for the Kawasaki engine. I cringe every time I get this tractor out of my shed because I know it's going to end up in my garage requiring some petty repair. It goes to show that you don't always get what you pay for."

**L.A. Stoehr, Marysville, Kan.:** "Our **New Holland 2320** tractor wobbles terribly from side to side when going down the road. The dealer says it's a Titan tire problem and that I should see them. Titan says I should see New Holland. Another problem is the loader leaks down when handling crushed rock. I had two company dealers check the loader, tractor, and hydraulics, but both say everything is within specifications and there's nothing they can do to help. They must have thought we had purchased a manure spreader, because no one wants to stand behind it."

**UnaRose Davison, Auburn, Neb.:** "My worst buy is my **Maytag** washing machine,

which has no center dasher. It twists and wads clothes up so that the water can't do a good job of cleaning. My husband's jeans are still dirty when I take them out, and once they even had mud left around the cuff even after I had used the heavy duty power wash settings. Also, I don't like the 'HE' detergent we're supposed to use with this washer."

**Ted Luckenbaugh, Abbottstown, Penn.:** Ted's impressed with a sealant called **Through The Roof** by Sashco Products ([www.sashco.com](http://www.sashco.com); ph 800 767-5656). "I used it to seal the masonry cap of a stone chimney. It also works great on shingles, tin, bricks and the joints on a roof gutter. It goes on clear and remains pliable, without getting hard and cracking like asphalt-based products do. It comes in 10 1/2-oz. cartridges as well as 1-quart and 1-gal. containers. This product isn't cheap, but it works great.

"I like using **Castrol Pyroplex** blue grease ([www.castrol.com](http://www.castrol.com); ph 800 462-0835). It's the only grease I've found that lasts in the pins of my tractor's front-end loader and in pto U-joints. Since I started using it I grease my loader half as often as I used to. The downside is that it's tough to get it off your hands."

**Travis Theobald, Beaver City, Neb.:** A 2013 **Katolight** pto-driven generator rates as Travis's "worst buy". "With fewer than 10 hrs. on it, the main circuit breaker failed last summer. Even though the warranty covers parts for the first five years, the company wouldn't stand behind its product. The machine was repaired but at my expense."

**Brian Donnelly, Newark, N.Y.:** Brian likes his **Drymate** waterproof maintenance mat ([www.drymate.com](http://www.drymate.com)). It has a soft, top layer to protect you when laying or kneeling on hard surfaces, and a waterproof backing that provides a thin layer of insulation to protect you from cold, damp surfaces.

"It's a very handy mat to have when working on equipment outdoors. It seems like the ground is always wet when you need to do repairs on the ground underneath equipment. It works much better than using empty seed bags, and it won't blow away."