

(Continued from previous page)

"When the dozer was delivered to my farm it had seven hours on the odometer, even though the machine was brand new. Immediately I put it to work clearing saplings off an overgrown field. However, within one hour of operation I knew this dozer was defective. Instead of moving in a smooth, continuous 'flowing' manner, the dozer had a jerky-jerky motion so bad that it almost ripped my guts out. I shut the machine down and called the dealer to report the problem.

"Within one hour of operation I knew this dozer was defective."

"The dealer called it a 'surging' problem and sent out a service truck to fix it. Their remedy consisted of adjusting the free play in the brake pedal and 'flashing' the computer. I assume this means they reprogrammed something. But it did absolutely no good.

"They made two more field service calls, making the same adjustments with the same poor results. When the problem persisted, the dealer took the dozer to their shop and made the same adjustments one more time. Talk about being hard headed.

"On one of the field service calls, the technician tested all the relevant system pressures while the dozer was operating. The track motor pressure fluctuated up and down, from 800 psi to 1,100 psi and back to 800 psi. So he had the problem isolated but couldn't find the cause. I believe the problem is that the speed control sensors, which should maintain a steady operating speed, are defective, causing the erratic track speeds. It seems almost like there's a gremlin under the hood messing with the throttle or governor. Based on engine sound and feel, I don't think engine rpm's are the problem but there's no way to tell for sure since Cat didn't bother to include a tachometer in the equipment gauges on this machine.

"The problem still isn't fixed. I don't think the dealer has a clue as to what's wrong or how to fix it. Maybe I need to test the lemon law?"

Warren Paulson, Caledonia, Ill.: "My 2003 Grasshopper riding mower is my best buy. No problems. It works fast and is easy to handle. My wife uses it most of the time to mow our five to seven acres of lawn. She's 84 years old."

Vance Talley, San Angelo, Texas: "I like the Central Hydraulics 1/2-ton pickup crane that I bought from Harbor Freight Tools. In 10 minutes I was able to use it to load three mesquite logs onto my truck. Together these logs weighed about 1,500 lbs., yet I didn't even break a sweat. I did have to make a bigger baseplate for the crane, as the one that it came with was too small."

Flynt Sanderson, Preston, Idaho: "It's the best tractor we've ever owned," reports Flynt about his Belarus 8345 4-WD tractor equipped with a quick-tach front-end loader. "This tractor has plenty of power, is easy on fuel, and it always starts right up no matter the weather conditions. The 4-WD system works great and has never let us down in snow, mud, or manure. The 4-WD shaft came off last summer but it was easy to replace. The radio on it doesn't always work, but that really doesn't matter to me or my dad."

On the negative side, he lists his Polaris Explorer 400 and 500 4-wheelers. "It seems like every time I turn around I have to fix or replace something on them. The 400's starter

goes out every year, and the spark plug fouls up about every 20 hours. The 500's spark plug does the same thing. The front shocks on the 500 had to be replaced and it was a difficult and expensive job. Brakes on both models have to be replaced every year. Also, the 4-WD system doesn't work about half the time."

T. J. Weber, Lansing, Iowa: "Over the last seven years I've owned a number of different Apple computers - three iBooks, two iMacs, one Mac Mini, and one MacBook - and I have nothing but good things to say about all of them. The best thing about using an Apple computer is you don't have to worry about viruses. It's easy to email friends, family and co-workers, browse the Web, and work with Microsoft Office documents including Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint without the troubles and worries of Windows. If anyone is looking for a new computer, I'd recommend you give the new offerings by Apple Computer a try. And I'm not an Apple dealer.

"My 2006 Ford F-150 XLT 4-WD Supercab 1/2-ton pickup equipped with a 5.4-liter, V-8 Triton engine and a 1/2-ft. bed is a best buy. With 365 ft./lbs. of torque, the engine has plenty of power for whatever I want to pull. It's fuel efficient as well and gets anywhere from 15 1/2 to slightly more than 18 mpg. I really like the way it rides and handles on the highway. The company definitely means what they say when they claim it's 'Built Ford Tough.'"

Ron Breukelman, Abbottsford, B.C.: Ron owns a 2004 Kubota GF1800 4-WD garden tractor equipped with a front-mount blade and says it's his "best buy". "This 18 hp tractor is normally sold equipped with a front-mount mower, but I bought it with a quick-tach scraper blade. I had been using an old Farmall Cub tractor equipped with a belly-mount blade to clean out two-story poultry barns. With my new Kubota I can almost 'turn on a dime', and with the 4-WD and front-mount blade I can also push more. It has cut my cleanout time in half. I really like this tractor's versatility and fuel economy. I can clean out 40,000 sq. ft. on three floors in five to six hours, using only about three to four gallons of diesel fuel."

Bob Owens, Montrose, Penn.: Bob nominates his EZ-Go gas-powered golf cart as his "best buy". "I use it for just about everything. My kids can drive it and I feel safe in letting them do so because it doesn't go very fast.

"I use Slime for all my tire repair work. It'll seal any leak. I really like it."

Brian Bish, Giltner, Neb.: Brian likes Deutz air-cooled diesel engines. "Farming here in central Nebraska we have to survive on irrigation. We have more than 20 wells and pumps to keep running so it's nice to have reliable, efficient diesel engines to power our irrigation systems. The Deutz engines we use range from 2-cylinder models to V-8's, and they're vital to our way of life. I bought most of them used and needing some repair work. Parts for these engines are easy to find and even though most of them were built in the 1970's, they still perform as well as any engines built today.

"My New Holland Genesis 8770 and 8870 tractors are both best buys. They're simple to operate and fuel efficient, and the super steer front axle results in a shorter turning radius than other front wheel drive tractors. My tractors have a combined total of more than 10,000 hours on them, yet they've needed only minor repairs.

"Our New Holland LS 190 skid steer loader is also a best buy. We use it for loading seed, feeding cattle, moving dirt, and doing tons of other back-saving projects."

Dustin Pentz, Coalville, Utah: "My

He Likes His Radiant Floor Heating System

Paul Brehm, New Berlin, Ill. is pleased with the Wirsbo automatic heated floor he installed in his new 2-car garage. He installed parallel runs of plastic pipe in the floor 12 in. apart. A pump circulates water heated to 110 degrees. The piping is controlled by a manifold system. The water is heated by a Viroso commercial model.

The entire heating system is compact, occupying a small portion of garage space.

"It's made from good quality materials. We really like it," says Brehm. "I installed the system by myself and found it a relatively easy job. We put the system in when we added a 2-car garage addition onto our house. The garage measures 32 by 32 ft., with a 7 by 10-ft. bathroom and step-in shower in one corner of the garage. A breezeway leads from the garage into the house. The system is zoned so we can heat all three areas - garage, bathroom, and breezeway - individually. We usually keep the temperature at 45 to 50 degrees in the garage, and warmer in the bathroom and breezeway.

"We use a geothermal heating and cooling system in our house so this system fits right in. We like using the garage for social gatherings during cool weather. It's much safer to use than a space heater, and also quieter and safer. We put 6 in. of insulation in the walls and 12 in. in the ceiling so the building is very well insulated."

Brehm bought the system from John McMillan, a dealer in central Illinois. "What sets this system apart is consistent thickness of the walls of the plastic pipes that go under



The system has two sets of manifolds, one for pipes going out and one for returning, and manifolds where you control the flow from the water heater.

the floor, which results in reliable, even heat," says McMillan. "There are no thick and thin spots in the walls of the tubes so they won't leak. The company tests the tubes for thickness every 1,000 ft."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Paul Brehm, 3623 Jim Town Rd., New Berlin, Ill. 62670 (ph 217 488-2311) or Uponor Wirsbo Inc., 5925 148th St. W., Apple Valley, Minn. 55124 (ph 800 321-4739; fax 952 891-1409; www.wirsbo.com).

Honda Rincon has more than 4,500 miles on it with no problems. I've replaced one set of tires and always change the oil at regular intervals. It rides nice and handles great, with a lot of power. I bought it used with 600 miles on it two years ago, and I'd buy another one if I could ever wear this one out."

Penny Zeiler, Lowry City, Mo.: "We've always used 4-wheeler ATV's on our farm. However, last spring we bought a Kawasaki Mule 610 utility vehicle and we just love it. We haven't used either of our 4-wheelers since then. It'll fit into the back of a pickup equipped with an 8-ft. bed."

Mike Ivie, Cornelia, Georgia: "We like our Fence Dawg. It's a fence and wire implement that allows one person to install fence wire without any help. We can use it with hog wire, and with three, four, five or six strands of barbed wire all at once."

Chris Kornkven, Helenville, Wis.: Chris likes the Palm Treo 600 PDA/cell/camera phone he bought a few years ago. "It's as reliable as a phone, but because it's a Palm the contacts are easier to manage and I can include street addresses. I can use the camera to take snapshots anywhere, which comes in handy whenever I have to take apart some complicated equipment. I can then refer back to the photo right on the phone, if necessary. There are many free software programs available for the Palm that I can get off the internet, such as a good calculator or a program called Lube Log. They really add to the Palm's usefulness. With Lube Log, I can keep track of all manner of equipment including tractors, trucks, cars, lawn mowers, even my welder. It records engine type, oil changes, and other maintenance and replacement part information.

"Whenever I go to my implement dealer, I use Lube Log to let the dealer know the exact part number that I need. A memo function allows me to make all kinds of memos,

including lists of projects to build based on stories I've read in FARM SHOW. I can also keep track of hay that I've baled, fuel usage, etc. Lube Log has a calendar/appointment function which lets me know when an appointment comes up. I never forget birthdays any more.

"Other software used on the Palm Treo includes a drawing program that's handy for drawing sketches before I build something; weight/measurement converters; and a music player so I can listen to any music I want while spending hours on the tractor. When the phone rings the music stops, and I can hear the conversation through the headphones. The best thing is being able to synchronize all the data to my desktop computer so that I never lose any of the data. The desktop computer program makes it easy to cut and paste data from anywhere right into the phone, so I always have it with me. I can't imagine getting along without my Palm Treo."

Russell Hansen, Moses Lake, Wash.: Russell likes his 2006 Trimble E-Z automatic steering system. "It takes all the guesswork out of driving a tractor in dusty conditions. No more stopping because I can't see. Also, no more skips or overlaps."

Kent Morris, Atlantic, Iowa: "My 2004 Poulan Wild Thing chain saw is my worst buy. It starts and runs good, but the bar-mount bolts on it failed. I was disappointed to find that the main chassis is made of molded plastic, and the bar-mount bolts are square-headed bolts set into this plastic chassis. Heat from the muffler melts the plastic, causing the bar bolts to pull through the plastic. I think it's an obvious design problem. I've contacted the company twice but with no results. The company has now added a heat shield to its newer models, but it still refuses to acknowledge the problem on my saw. I was told that Poulan Pro line chain saws also have a