

to 4-WD on-the-go. I also like the cab, which has plenty of room. I've always owned Ford pickups and this is the best one yet."

**Howard Braun, Saline, Mich.:** Howard owns a 1997 New Holland TR 87 combine. "I had some problems with it the first year while harvesting wheat. The dealer changed the concaves, which solved the problem. Now it works fine.

"We've had problems with **Goodyear** implement and front tractor tires. When the

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tires are about half worn they open up where they've been spliced together."

**Tony Williams, Beaver Creek, Ore.:** "My **DeWalt** 18-volt cordless drill/screwdriver is my best buy. It's a strong, reliable, rugged tool with replaceable motor brushes. I've used other major brands of cordless drills and wasn't nearly as satisfied with them as I am with this model."

**Joe Dietrich, Blackduck, Minn.:** "My 1998 **Belarus** 825 front wheel assist tractor has performed flawlessly and is my best buy. Price was an important part of why I bought it - Case, Deere, and New Holland weren't even close in value per dollar."

**Jess Rodgers, Douglas, Wyo.:** "My 2000 **GM Z71 Sierra** 1/2-ton extended cab pickup equipped with a 5.3-liter, V-8 engine and automatic transmission is my best buy. It rides great and has a "Tow-Haul" transmission mode which allows it to tow very well. I use it to pull loaded 16-ft. livestock trailers over country roads. The only negative is that I don't like the lights coming on automatically. Also, sometimes cows inside the trailer shake the pickup enough while it's parked to set off the pickup's theft alarm."

**Nelson Nolt, Womelsdorf, Pa.:** "It's the best pickup I've ever owned," says Nelson about his 1986 **Ford F-250** 4-WD pickup equipped with a 6.9-liter diesel engine and 4-speed transmission. "It has more than 300,000 miles on it but still uses very little oil. It gets 14 mpg. The engine has never been touched except for a rebuilt fuel injection pump. It still steers tight without wandering all over the road. My next pickup will definitely be a Ford."

**Phil Funk, Dallas Center, Iowa:** "We're happy with our **SnowFlame** 2100 corn burning stove. We used it to heat our 1,800 sq. ft. house from Thanksgiving Day to last May and it burned only about 150 bushels of corn. It performed even better than advertised. It's a neat, clean, and attractive unit that cost about \$1,400. We burned wood for 24 years to heat our house, but we find that heating with corn is much cleaner, safer, and a lot less work."

**Doug McAlexander, Cedar Grove, Tenn.:** "I bought my 1989 **Ford F-250** pickup three years ago. I found that when the temperature dropped to about 50 degrees the pickup was hard to start.

"If I sprayed ether into the air filter it would start right up. So I ordered an ether assist starting kit from a salvage yard - the kind used on IH 86 series tractors - and installed it on the engine. I made a bracket and bolted it on with the two bolts that hold the fuel filter on. I

drilled a hole in the bottom of the air filter to attach a 1/8-in. dia. plastic line from the ether assist. I accomplished this by using a 1/4-in. dia. pipe nipple, coupling and reducer in the air filter. I put a push button inside the cab. One split second push on the button and the truck starts good. It cost about \$60 for the ether assist and supplies to install it."

**James L. Bryant, Camden, Ark.:** "I bought a **Deere** 5410 tractor 3 1/2 years ago. They had a recall on the clutch push rod last summer and replaced it with a new type of rod. Last February I was using the tractor to pile up brush and the new rod came loose. I didn't get the tractor stopped until I got up into the brush pile. I'm glad I wasn't burning the brush or else I would have burned up my tractor. I stopped the tractor by turning off the key. The problem was that the nut on the upper end of the push rod had come off. The company needs to redesign this rod so the nut won't come off."

**Glen Ray Goodson, Galax, Va.:** "My 1979 **Dodge** D150 4-WD 1/2-ton Power Wagon pickup has about 320,000 miles on it and is still going strong. It's a dependable pickup. All I've done is grease the brakes and change the oil, belts, and hoses.

"My 1950 **Ford** 1 1/2-ton dual wheel flatbed truck has required only routine maintenance and is a best buy. It runs better now than it did when it was new."

**Wayne and Glenda Tankursky, Barduell, Ky.:** "We're well pleased with our new **Vermeer** Rebel 5500 round baler. We bought it after using a Gehl model for 23 years. We also bought a new **Vermeer** wheel rake. Both machines do a great job.

"Our 1992 **Chevrolet** Caprice car equipped with a small V-8-liter engine is a best buy. It gets more than 30 miles per gallon on trips and drives great.

"The worst buy we ever made was a **Howse** 7-ft. pull-type mower. The blade broke the first year while we were mowing clean, light weeds. Then the second year the whole bottom section that holds the blades broke. The company wouldn't do anything to help."

**Steven Holl, Conrad, Iowa:** Steven likes his 1999 **Deere** 8400T wide track tractor. "This tractor has outstanding flotation, traction, power, and comfort. It's equipped with tracks spaced 120 in. apart. I like them because they don't scuff the ground very much when turning. The tracks take a lot of roughness out of the field. Also, steering is so much easier than with my older wheeled tractor. I'll never go back to a wheeled tractor."

**Loren Burger, Bartlesville, Okla.:** "My 1998 **Deere** 455 garden tractor equipped with a 60-in. mower is my worst buy. One problem is that the air intake is located low and behind the left front wheel, which allows dust and dirt kicked up by the wheel to be drawn into the air cleaner. Also, the vacuum gauge that indicates a dirty filter doesn't work properly. The dealer says this gauge was designed to be used on larger tractors. Deere might know how to build large tractors, but it's obvious that the people who design their small tractors have never used one in the real world."

**Jeff Cathcart, Hope, R.I.:** "My 2000 **Volvo** V-70 car is my worst buy. It has only about 8,000 miles on it but has already been back to the dealer five times. It came equipped with a faulty spark plug; the ARS system didn't work; there was a recall on the trunk latch; the hazard switch failed; one of the power window switches failed; and the

## FARM SHOW's "Worst Buy" Van

By Mark Newhall,  
Editor & Publisher



FARM SHOW editor Mark Newhall and his 1995 Ford Windstar, which was just fitted with its 5th engine.

I drive a 1995 Ford Windstar, which we use at FARM SHOW to haul mail bags, envelopes, paper, and other supplies. Although it has just 65,000 miles on it, the 6-year-old van was recently fitted with its fifth engine. All four replacement engines have been installed during the last two years. After every installation there have been minor - and sometimes major - problems with the vehicle that have required more trips back to the dealer.

Yet, even after all that, I have mixed feelings about calling this tan-colored van a "worst buy". That's because despite the frustration, I still like the van. More importantly, the experience has not been a pain in the pocketbook because Ford stood behind its warranty. I haven't had to spend a dime.

Here's my story:

I bought the Windstar in the fall of 1995. Soon after, I began to hear about problems with the head gasket in '95 engines. From what I was able to find out, the gasket fails prematurely in more than 90 percent of the engines made that year and on the early 1996 models. Ford eventually extended the engine warranty on these models to 100,000 miles.

My Windstar started burning anti-freeze during the summer of 1999 at about 50,000 miles. The dealer agreed to do the \$1,500 repair job under warranty. About three weeks after the repair, the engine blew up. My dealer's explanation was that sometimes when they replace the head gasket, the newly tightened-up compression causes other engine parts to fail. They agreed to give me a new engine, and a loaner to drive while they made the repair.

The replacement engine lasted 12 months before it, too, started burning anti-freeze. After the head gasket repair was made to this engine, it also blew up. I got another engine in February, 2001 after a wait of five weeks. That replacement lasted until the end of May before blowing up. Another engine was put in and it blew up after two days. The fifth engine was installed during the second week of June.

For the most part, my dealer blames the problems on bad replacement engines, which come from a Ford plant in Wisconsin. Ac-

front turn signals were changed during a recall. This was my second V-70 model. I gave the first one back after putting only about 1,500 miles on it. The rotors had warped and the transmission leaked. I think Volvo has gone downhill ever since Ford bought them.

**"It has only about 8,000 miles on it but has already been back to the dealer five times."**

"My 1988 **Volvo** 240 DL was my best buy. I sold it with about 285,000 miles on it, and even then the engine still didn't use a drop of oil. The battery and exhaust both lasted more than 200,000 miles. As far as I know this car is still being driven."

**Wade Biber, Fish Creek, Wis.:** "My best buy is my 1993 **Polaris** 350cc 4-WD ATV equipped with a water-cooled engine. I use it

according to the dealer, strict standards are followed in rebuilding old engines. He says getting four bad ones in a row makes me a "statistical fluke".

I think Ford probably is to blame but the dealer also left a little to be desired. Twice, they installed engines and did not test drive them before returning the van to me. One time they only filled it about half way with anti-freeze. And nearly every time they put an engine in, they bumped or damaged something so that we had to come back in to get it fixed.

After my most recent engine replacement, I told the service rep to take the van home for a couple days and drive it around until he was sure it was running correctly. He did and found the cruise control had been damaged during installation. He fixed it before returning the van to me.

This latest replacement engine is covered by a 2-year, 24,000 mile warranty. After you've been through the troubles I've had, you find yourself listening intently for any "ticks" or "knocks" that might indicate new problems.

So far it's been running great but I don't have any confidence that this will be a long-running engine. However, I think I'll keep driving it for several reasons: 1. Who would want to buy a van that's on it's fifth engine? 2. I've always liked driving it and there have been no problems at all other than the engines. 3. It's cheap transportation and if the new engine holds out, it should serve us here for a long time.

So we'll probably keep this van for a few more years. Stay tuned for future updates.

all year long to plow snow and to pull a trailer around for small hauling jobs. I also do a lot of trail riding with it. It has about 9,000 miles on it but has required only routine maintenance. I wish all machines would work as well as this one."

**Robert T. Valentine, Wolsey, S. Dak.:** "I retired from farming in 1994. At the time of my retirement I had a **Deere** 4010 tractor which I had bought used and operated for 16 years. The only work I had to do on the engine was to rebuild the water pump twice and replace the fuel pump once. I really liked that tractor.

"I also had a best buy **International Harvester** Wheatland 560 tractor equipped with a diesel engine. It was a very rare model that was sold mainly in the winter wheat areas of western North Dakota and Montana. It had a quite short wheelbase and a short turning radius, which made it ideal to use on my double Rowse mower."

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