

gine at 94,000 miles. My only complaint is with the paint job. The body is full of rust. Manufacturers should hire new design engineers for bodies," says Jay B. Smith of Howe, Idaho.

"It needed a new clutch at 36,000 miles. I replaced three front universal joints and added a new muffler. Mileage is about 9 miles per gallon. Despite all that, I'm generally satisfied with the performance of this pickup, considering the abuse given to it," says C.W. McCutcheon of Florence, Ontario, about his 1978 Dodge W150.

Charles Orr, a logger in Sterling, Conn., says his 1976 Ford F250 has been a big help. "I'm totally satisfied with it. It's good on fuel, sturdy, and has plenty of power. For my line of business, I need something that'll hold up going through rough spots. I'd like to see companies continue to put the same old motors in trucks and use more steel instead of plastic."

Terry Vollmer, of Oxford, Ohio feels that his Ford F250 "has paid for itself many times. I have a 200 gal. fuel tank, a 90 gal. fuel tank, and a tool box on it at least 10 months out of the year. The other 2 months we haul firewood with it. After 6 years and 98,000 miles, rust is my biggest problem."

Bernard Reed of Hermon, N.Y., is especially pleased with his 1978 Dodge W150 since he installed a Deutz diesel engine in it at 65,000 miles. "That increased the mileage from about 8 mpg to 20-25 mpg. Manufacturers should be installing a good diesel engine as standard equipment, with at least a 5-speed for heavy hauling."

What could manufacturers do to improve pickups in general?

Nearly everyone had a suggestion for manufacturers. Among the most often mentioned ideas were more rust-proofing, better paint jobs, and heavier metal in the tailgates, beds and bodies. Other common suggestions, included: "Build a front-wheel drive; Add heavier springs; Install diesel engines; Make more leg room; Fine factory workers who don't perform; Offer a 4-speed automatic transmission; Install cargo tie-downs in the box; Make better access under the hood; Build them like they did in the 40's and 50's; Add a split 60/40 electric seat; Larger fuel tanks; Improve quality control and lower the prices; and Match gear ratios and transmissions better".

Arnold Messmahl, Jr., of Somerset, N.J., feels manufacturers should "spend a few cents to put grease fittings on the drive shaft, universal joints and slip joints, and also work harder to improve gas mileage."

Gary Domnick of Morris, Minn., thinks improvements are needed in labor. "They need to find men to build them who take pride in their work and not so much in their paycheck."

"They need to build the body 25% stronger," says Oliver Low of Logan, Utah. "The bed often can't stand the use a farmer gives it. Would also like

to see better access to the spare tire."

Says Dan Warmock, Baker, Ore.: "Get Ralph Nader out of the engine compartment."

"Take a little more pride in workmanship of their products. My Ford F350 was built in Canada and, while it could use some improvement, it's not half bad. Some of the trucks the American plants are building are just junk," says Robert C. Winter of Amanda, Ohio.

"I wish all pickups still had the simple hinges on each side to open tailgates instead of handles in the middle. They were trouble-free," comments David Nelson of Evansville, Minn.

"They should add an over-drive," says Don Sindlay of St. Johns, Mich., "Probably 80% of the time I drive my pickup with no load and no passengers."

"We need 2-speed axles available for pulling trailers with manual shift pickups. And, we need another power slot between third and fourth gears," says Wesley Benda, Ludell, Kan.

S.M. Voucher of Irvine, Alberta says, "put the emergency brake somewhere other than the rear wheels. Wire, twine or brush can wrap around the axle and break the cable."

Arthur Dietrich of Cottontale, Fla., would like to see manufacturers put "a screen over the top of defroster slots so you don't lose pencils and other things down them. They should make the dash flat because we always put things there."

Peter Sturzenegger, of Smithers, British Columbia, says "pickups should have a body that does not rust out for 10 years. What good is a drive train that lasts 10 years or more if the sheet metal wears out in 3 or 4 years?"

How important is the dealer in your decision to buy a particular pickup?

More than half of the pickup owners agreed that the dealer was important

or very important in their buying decision. Many cited the dealer as being the biggest single factor in buying a pickup. About one in three owners stated that it made absolutely no difference to them at all who their dealer was. They said the pickup itself was the important consideration, since they, for the most part, performed their own service.

"A dealer is very important, especially when you get a lemon like I did," says Ronald McCoy, Crookston, Neb.

"All dealers are friendly," says Ivan Zimmer of Stanfor, Mont. "It's the shop foreman and his bandit mechanics that are the stinkers."

"With the price of labor and the shortage of mechanics, a person is just as well off to buy the vehicle where he can get the best deal. There are only a few good mechanics around and they are all over-booked with work," says Mike Ross of Outlook, Mont.

Says Bruce Berlet of Wapakoneta, Ohio: "A dealer should be there to do warranty service if you need it, and be happy to see you."

"The dealer is very important to me," says D. Darrell Howard of Mulhall, Okla. "We run many pickups and have five in service now. We need a shop that will fix them quickly and well."

"I like GM's warranty and feel that most GM dealers are a cut above the competition. A dealer that stands behind his sales and keeps his word is very important," says Arnold L. Rasmussen of Breton, Alberta.

"The dealer is \$300 on a \$9,000 pickup," says Earl Brand of Lafayette, Ind.

What accessories have you bought for your pickup?

The most popular accessories for pickups, based on our survey, are: Shock absorbing bumper hitches with sliding drawbars for easier hook-ups; extra fuel tanks; LP gas conversion kits; stock racks; sliding

rear windows; and running boards.

"I bought a tailgate cap to protect the top of the gate from bang-ups. Works great. I bought it through the dealer," reports Rick Votrobeck, Arthur, Iowa.

Jay B. Smith of Howe, Idaho put a B & M shift kit in the transmission. "Love the quicker shifts," he notes.

Dan Warmock of Baker, Oregon has all his accessories custom-built or put together from composites, except for a sliding rear window and an extra fuel tank. "We have a bumper guard, tow hook, steel deck with headcage rack and gooseneck ball, electric vacuum trailer brake controls, heavier rear hitch, remote jumper cable plugs, and we replaced the engine with a modified Ford 460 Marine engine. I would add my own fuel tank next time."

Carroll Marzolf of Preston, Minn., adds an air bumper. "Really handy for filling tires around the farm," he says.

"My DMI shock bumper is the best thing I ever saw for towing. It's spring-loaded and the tongue extends out 18 in. and slides from side to side for easy hookup to trailers. You just get close and the tongue will connect. I'd recommend it to anyone," says Robert Davis, Cardington, Ohio.

"I operate my pickup on propane," says Larry P. Cutler, Macon, Ill. "Mileage with propane is less but it costs only 72 cents per gal. I have an 80 gal. LP tank so I can go a long way."

Bernard Reed of Hermon, N.Y., installed an M & W double cushion bumper and a Deutz diesel engine, and likes them both.

"We installed a Scotchman Fuel Energizer, sold by NAPA Auto Parts, in our 1977 Dodge D200 and it cut our mileage in half," says Bruce Berlet of Wapakoneta, Ohio. "I also bought a Magna Energizer magnet that clamps on the fuel line but received no increase or decrease in mileage."

Bernard Kinkelaar, Dodge City, Kan., put Hooker headers, a Holley carb, and an Edelbrock manifold on his 1980 Chevy C20 which, he says, made it into "a good pickup".

What, in your opinion, is the best farm pickup ever made?

"I bought my Ford F100 new in 1968 and have been running it daily ever since with no major repair work. It has 228,000 farm and ranch miles on it," says Stan McCulloch of Coultts, Alberta.

"My 1966 GMC 1500 series has been trouble-free for 15 years. It's a heavy duty truck with an excellent 351 V-6 engine," reports Robert Mielke, of Palmer, Alaska about his best-ever pickup.

Lloyd Evans, Weiner, Ark., thinks his Chevrolet trucks, built between 1974 and 1979, were the best he's ever owned. "They had a 454 engine which was perfect for farm use. Never had a moment's trouble with any of them," he says.

Charles Hawley of Goodrich, N. Dak., nominates his 1968 2-ton GMC.

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Asked what pickup they'd like to buy next, most respondents to our survey talked "diesel", particularly GMC and Chevrolet's 1982 6.2 liter, 379 cu. in. V-8 diesel model. The new pickup has higher estimated mileage ratings — 31 on the road and 23 for everyday driving — than any 1981 model, 6 or 8 cylinder. The truck carries a 13,500 lb. payload.

Also popular in our "pickup preference" survey was GMC's new compact S-15, pictured above. Not as big as a foreign truck and smaller than a full-size American model, the new model features up to an 89-in. box and a standard 4-cyl. engine. Mileage ratings are high, at 39 mpg highway and 28 for everyday. An optional 6 cyl. engine is available.