

Best & Worst Pickups

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25,000-lb. gross vehicle weight rating. I feel safe whether pulling the trailer empty or loaded. My F-150 handles my 6 by 16-ft. stock trailer, but if I were in the market for a new pickup I'd buy a Ford F-250 or F-350 for easier pulling when the trailer is loaded to capacity."

Mike Liljedahl, Missouri Valley, Iowa, likes his 1989 Chevrolet 3/4-ton extended cab 4-WD but does have a few complaints. "The bucket seats are uncomfortable and the front wheel bearings have to be destroyed in order to be serviced. It takes about a minute for the front wheels to lock into 4-WD, the fan motor squeaks, and the engine doesn't get much more than 13 mpg."

Dale Hill, Lambert, Mont., likes his 1984 Dodge Ram 50 4-WD equipped with a 2.3 liter turbocharged diesel engine. "I replaced two glow plugs on the engine. The rest of my expenses have been for regular maintenance items such as oil filters and tires. The fuel economy isn't as good as I thought it might be, but it runs consistently between 25 and 28 mpg. I equipped the pickup with a Glasstite topper when I bought it and am well satisfied with it (Glasstite, Inc., Hwy. 4 North, Dunnell, Minn. 56127)."

"My 1981 Chevrolet 1/2-ton pickup has 231,000 miles on it and all I've replaced are the spark plugs, brakes, and tires," says Paul Madison, Carthage, S. Dak. "I think all pickups should have a light 2-speed rear end so you could pull heavy loads and protect

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the automatic transmission and get good mileage on the highway. I equipped my pickup with a Laverne grill guard and rear bumper."

"I own a 1990 Ford F-250 XLT Super Cab equipped with a 460 cu. in. engine. It has only 8,000 miles, but it worked perfect when I used it to pull a 34-ft. fifth wheel trailer to Arizona and back. It rides and handles well and the 4-speed automatic transmission really shifts smooth. However, it could use a larger gas tank. Driving against a strong wind and pulling these big trailers, you're lucky to get much more than 6 mpg," says Clarence Jensen, Edgeley, N. Dak.

"The diesel engine, 4:10 gears, and automatic transmission are a hard combination to beat for plowing snow," says John Farrell, Scottsville, N.Y., who's "mostly satisfied" with his 1987 GMC 3/4-ton 4-WD equipped with a diesel engine and automatic transmission. "The seats are covered with the best cloth available, but there's very little lower back support. More leg room would be nice. The controller for the glow plugs is a pain. Four different controllers have been installed in 45,000 miles at a cost of \$77.12 each. No one can explain why they won't last. This is the heaviest 3/4-ton pickup I could buy. The only transmission choices are a 4-speed manual and 3-speed automatic. They work fine when the pickup is being worked. However, most of the time it's empty. I'd like to see a 2-speed axle or some type of overdrive in the

transmission."

"It's a good pickup and gets good mileage, but the overdrive constantly shifts back and forth," says Herbert Galbreath, Royal Center, Ind., about his 1986 Chevrolet 1/2-ton Silverado. "The service people can't seem to improve it. My M & W spring-loaded bumper hitch takes out the jerks while pulling wagons and saves a lot of wear and tear on the pickup."

Gary Baker, Mechanicsville, Iowa, owns a 1977 Chevrolet with 190,000 miles on the original engine. "I pull more than I haul so the bumper gets a real workout. I install DMI rear bumpers on my pickups. The bumper I have on now is trouble-free and has outlasted two pickups. It makes hitching to a trailer easier since the hitch telescopes and swings from side to side. I wouldn't be without it."

Mike Peters, St. James, Minn., is the satisfied owner of a 1987 Dodge Dakota 4-WD short box. "This mid-sized pickup is ideal for parking, storage, and city driving, yet it's very rugged. It's got 33,000 and remains quiet, just like new. I welded a front hitch to the frame which I use to push very heavy equipment. The pull-out beverage tray on the dash eliminates spills. The tailgate latches smoothly with no slamming required. Leg room, head room, and hip room is ideal for utility use of up to 3 people. I'd like to see a V-8 version that's competitively priced."

"I'm satisfied with my 1989 Ford 4 by 4 XLT although it could get better mileage," says Darwin Laitenberger, Minnesota Lake, Minn. "The Brute II bumper hitch I bought from Ag Systems, Hutchinson, Minn., works well."

Duane Pearson, Ogilvie, Minn., is satisfied with his 1989 Ford F-150 equipped with a fuel-injected 6-cylinder 4-speed manual transmission and cruise control, radio, and two gas tanks. "It gets good mileage and drives like a car - actually better because you sit higher and have better visibility. Since most farmers use a pickup 99% of the time only for transportation, myself included, I see no practical need for 4-WD."

"It has good power and an excellent ride, handles well on gravel roads, and the anti-lock brakes work great," says Ralph Carlson, Norcross, Minn., about his 1988 Chevrolet 1/2-ton 4-WD.

Raymond Boettcher, Blue Earth, Minn., isn't happy with his 1988 Chevrolet Scottsdale 1500 4-WD. "It steers too hard, uses too much fuel, has tinny doors, and could use better steering, fuel economy, and body construction."

"My 1990 Chevrolet 1/2-ton pickup equipped with a 6.2-liter diesel engine does everything we ask it to. It's a best buy," says Darrol Sponberg, New Richland, Minn.

"It's smooth riding, real quiet, and has very responsive steering," says Steve Shores, Murdock, Minn., owner of a 1990 Ford F-150 equipped with a 5-speed manual transmission and 305 cu. in. V-8 electronic fuel injected engine. "It seems to have plenty of power for my needs. Fuel economy could be better than the 13 mpg I'm now getting, but this should improve somewhat after it's broken in."

Harris Afret, Northwood, N. Dak., is pleased with his 1989 Ford F-150 XLT 4-



Pickup Converted To "Bedding Truck"

Richard Waybright, Mason Dixon Farms, Gettysburg, Penn., converted a 1978 Ford F-350 1-ton pickup into a "bedding truck" used to blow sawdust into free stalls.

Waybright cut off the pickup bed behind the cab, then mounted a 5-ft. wide, 10-ft. long, 5-ft. high forage box on it. Apto-powered apron chain carries sawdust toward the front of the box where a rubber-belted conveyor picks it up and throws it

into the stalls. Thepto is powered by the truck's transmission. "The most difficult thing to figure out was to get the apron chain and cross conveyor to run at the right speeds," says Waybright.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Richard Waybright, Mason Dixon Farms, 1800 Mason Dixon Road, Gettysburg, Penn. 17325 (ph 717 334-4056).

WD. "It rides better than the 1984 Chevrolet 4-WD I had. Gas mileage could be better. The best I've seen on short to medium drives is 14.3 mpg. The 302 cu. in. engine has fairly good power."

"My 1989 Ford Ranger XLT 2-WD has a quiet cab and I like the split 60-40 high back seat and stereo system. The fuel-injected engine has good power and is easy to start. However, it could use a slower first gear and slower reverse. I have to ride the clutch too much when trying to back up or taking off with a load. Also, the bed could use six stake pockets instead of four," says Steve Niermann, Chester, Ill.

"No problems in 36,000 miles," says Leonard Bottolfson, Vermillion, S. Dak., about his 1987 Ford F-150 4-WD Lariat equipped with a 6-cylinder engine and automatic transmission. "It gets 17 to 19 mpg. I like the power windows and door locks and the seat is comfortable. However, Ford should use a clear coat final paint."

"My 1989 Chevrolet 1500 Silverado needs better fuel economy. It's sad when so-called engineers getting \$100,000 plus can't come up with a pickup equipped with a 350 cu. in. engine that can get 20 mpg or more. When I pull a horse trailer with the wind behind me I'm lucky to get 8 mpg. When I don't anything I don't even get 12 mpg. The

long gas tank should have a sump on it so you could get down to almost zero gas. The gas gauge is absurd. The truck also steers hard. Otherwise, it's a good, solid pickup," says Arthur Vander Pol, Hospers, Iowa.

"It has 11,000 miles on it and absolutely nothing has gone wrong. It has the best paint job I've ever seen," says Kenneth Richardson, Grand Forks, N. Dak., pleased with his 1989 Chevrolet 1500 4-WD Suburban.

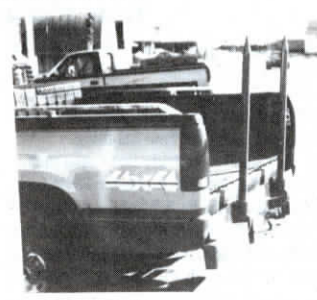
Irvin E. Burmester, Lyons, Neb., owns a 1988 Chevrolet 1/2-ton pickup. "It's had its share of recalls and problems, but dealer service and the company's stand behind the product has made it a pleasure to drive. My real worst buy is the 1988 Dodge Dakota I bought for my daughter. It cost her \$200 to get two spark plugs installed. Recently she was driving in the fast lane in Texas when the engine quit and the steering locked. She got it started again eventually and had a couple more such sessions before she finally limped it into a Plymouth dealer, who did make it road safe again. There have been other problems like a tape deck that cost more to fix than it's worth. All of this happened in 30,000 miles. What happened to truth in advertising?"

Bumper Bale Mover

You'll like this bale mover for pickups that doubles as a heavy-duty bumper, leaving the bed of your pickup free to haul cargo or hook up to a gooseneck trailer.

The Bramco "bale bumper" simply replaces the existing bumper. A pair of cylinders raises and lowers tines, which can be removed when not needed. You can change the tines to optional forks to use like a forklift to move pallets, barrels, posts and other loads. The bumper can also be fitted with an optional wire winder for fencing. A set of auxiliary hydraulic outlets lets you raise or lower hydraulically-controlled farm implements for transport with your pickup.

The bale bumper's hydraulics can be 12-volt or belt-powered. It's controlled by



a switch in the cab.

Sells for \$673.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Bramco Inc., 126 Waldon Ave., Fairview, Okla. 73737 (ph 405 227-2345).