

replaced just the battery and the fan belt. I bought the loader with an extra large bucket, and have used it to grade the foundation pad for my new house built into a rocky hillside. I've also used the bucket to move many yards of dirt and to build roads. The tractor doesn't have a cab so I made a fiberglass canopy for it.

"My 1997 **Dodge Ram 1500 2-WD** pickup equipped with a 360 cu. in. gas engine has about 197,000 miles on it, yet all I've replaced was a water pump. I wish they still built pickups as good as this one."



Bruce Short, New Portland, Maine: "I've used my **Harbor Freight Haul-Master** truck bed cargo unloader at least 100 times and love it. It's a heavy duty, 14-ft. long by 50-in. wide polypropylene drag sheet designed for 1/2-ton, compact, and step-side pickup beds. The drag sheet covers the entire pickup bed and comes with a roller bar that straps to the tailgate. The operator cranks a 21-in. removable handle to pull loads to the rear.

"Works great to unload firewood as well as topsoil for repairing our lawn. Sells for just \$44.99 on the company website."

David H. Reits, Niles, Mich.: "I bought some **DEF (Diesel Exhaust Fluid)** at Tractor Supply Company that was out of date and poor quality. It nearly shut my tractor down.

"This product has a limited shelf life, so make sure to check the expiration date."

This product has a limited shelf life, so make sure to check the expiration date on the bottle before you buy."

John R. Dobson, Reelsville, Ind.: "The 2018 **Lincoln wire welder** I bought at Northern Tool can weld up to 1/2-in. thick metal. I use it for all kinds of projects on our farm. No problems."

Daniel Alderfer, Carbondale, Colo.: "My **Harbor Freight 1,750 psi corded electric pressure washer** is built tough, well-designed, and has a lot of power. It rides on smooth rolling 4-in. dia. wheels and comes with a 20-ft. high pressure hose, an adjustable spray nozzle, and a 35-ft. power cord that stores on-board. I bought it on sale for \$80."

Jim Ostrander, Kingston, N.Y.: "I love my **Makita XC403 14-in. cordless chainsaw**. It's lightweight and powerful and is just the ticket at my sawmill, where I've used it to cut logs up to 20 in. dia. It's powered by four 18-volt batteries that last a long time. It comes with a 2-battery charger and a battery-powered light."

Jack Bense, Eagle Lake, Minn.: "Over the years I've used a lot of different mowers, but this one is the best yet," says Jack about his 2010 **Ferris IS1500ZX zero-turn riding mower** equipped with a 28-hp. Briggs & Stratton engine and 61-in. deck. "I use it to cut about 4 acres of lawn. I replaced the blades once, but otherwise it has required only routine maintenance."

Ken Schwenk, Bridgehampton, N.Y.:

"My best buys are 2 value-priced loaner vehicles that I bought from a dealer - a 2017 **Dodge Ram 1500 Express** quad cab, 4-WD pickup equipped with a 5.7-liter gas engine and 8-speed automatic transmission; and a 2019 **Subaru Crosstrek** equipped with a 2.0-liter engine and CVT transmission. Both vehicles ride and handle nice and are a pleasure to drive. Neither one has many bells and whistles, which suits me just fine."



Kammie Akers, Albany, Mo.: A **Hori Hori garden knife** rates as Kammie's "best buy" (www.barebonesliving.com). The knife comes with a concave blade for digging, and has a sharp beveled edge on one side for slicing and a serrated edge on the other side for cutting. Inch markers engraved on the blade make it easy to plant at precisely the correct depth and can be used to measure rope, etc. The knife comes with a leather sheath with a snap-loop for securing to your belt.

"This curved knife is like having several tools in one. I can't imagine weeding without it," says Kammie. "It replaces my garden spade and bulb planter and works great for cutting plantings apart, transplanting, and opening bags of mulch or soil."

Ron Schupbach, Brodhead, Wis.: "I upgraded from my **Deere 2023 compact loader tractor** to a 2025R model, which has bigger tires and better traction but the same bone-jarring ride. The company should install some kind of hydraulic suspension seat.

"My **Ariens walk-behind string trimmer** equipped with a Kohler engine is very difficult to start and was a worst buy from the get-go. The engine froze up so the dealer replaced it with another Kohler, but it didn't work much better. I might get the engine started after 20 pulls on the starter rope, or I might not. I contacted the company but they passed the buck and said I should contact Kohler. I own a Bad Boy zero-turn mower equipped with a Kohler engine, and that engine has been trouble-free."

Harry T. Griffin, Troy, Tenn.: "I use the mower lift I bought at **Tractor Supply Company** to change the blades and spindles on my riding mower. I'm 75 years old so I need all the help I can get with jobs like this. "My **Stanley JUMPT** starter with air compressor allows me to restart a vehicle instantly without the need for another vehicle.

"The fenders and fender liners on my 2016 **Hyundai Accent** started to pop off because the pins that are supposed to hold them in place broke. When the car hit a pot hole, the bumper fell off and knocked a hole in the radiator, but the company wouldn't help."

Daryl Reynolds, Oneonta, N.Y.: "It has been a lemon since day one," says Daryl about his 2012 **Chevrolet 3500 pickup** equipped with a 6.6-liter diesel engine. "This is a company vehicle and we've spent more than \$30,000 on it for new DEF components, antifreeze leaks, a steering box, and a new engine that cost more than \$14,000. Now it needs a new heater core, which will cost thousands of dollars more.

"My 2018 **Ferris 700 zero-turn riding mower** has cut my mowing time in half. I bought it because we use Ferris mowers at work, and they're great."

Greg Case, Troy, Penn.: "I used my **Mingo Marker Firewood Measurer** to cut more than 40 cords of firewood last



Rick Schroeder and Danny Dusek use their Chinese-built mini combine to harvest small plots of ancient wheat varieties. They can harvest about an acre per hour.

Re-Built Mini Combine Harvests Heritage Grains

After four years of hand harvesting small plots of ancient grains with a hedge trimmer, Rick Schroeder and Danny Dusek finally located a small specialty combine with the help of Frank Ferris at www.ferrisfarm.net. Schroeder says they couldn't find a machine built in the U.S. so they ended up buying one built by Shandong Kinglonger Industrial Co. in China. Their machine is a 4LZ-1.0A self-propelled unit that rides on rubber tracks and steers with two levers, like a dozer. It cost \$6,180 plus shipping and tariffs for a total of around \$7,500.

Schroeder says that because of EPA restrictions on Chinese diesel engines, they weren't able to import the 20 hp. engine made for the combine. They solved that problem by acquiring a U.S.-made Kohler horizontal air-cooled 35-hp. gasoline engine for \$2,615 plus \$500 shipping. A few modifications and a special plate were needed to mount the engine on the machine.

Their mini-combine direct cuts wheat stalks, then moves them through a drum and across a concave plate, which is a fixed grid screen that will handle crops such as wheat, rice, soybeans and milo. The chaff and seed is pulled up to a vibrator screen where the chaff is blown off and the seed falls down a small chute into bags. Running the machine is a two-person operation because one drives and the other one changes out the seed bags as they fill.

Schroeder says when they first used the machine it was obvious that the workmanship was poor. Nuts weren't tightened properly,

and even after re-tightening they came loose and bolts fell out. Bearings had to be re-oiled frequently. There was also a design flaw on the blower and screen that the manufacturer has since changed.

At one point during harvest, the pivot mount on the header broke, causing the header to fall sideways. "Danny had to weld extra steel on each side to secure it properly," Schroeder says. Another time the vibrating seed cleaner broke apart and they had a sheet metal fabrication shop make one out of heavier gauge steel. Schroeder says this still needs some work as too much seed is going out with the chaff.

Schroeder and Dusek produce five varieties of ancient wheat so it's critical for them to thoroughly clean the combine between harvesting each variety. "Cleanout requires removing the top half of the threshing drum, which took a long time, so Danny made a clean out door to blow out the bottom of the drum," Schroeder says. "That works well, and now he's considering welding hinges on the drum instead of having to unbolt it each time."

After all of these modifications, Schroeder and Dusek agree that the combine performs adequately. "We can harvest about an acre an hour, which is certainly better than the two weeks it would take us to harvest the same amount by hand," Dusek says.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Rick Schroeder, Ancient Whole Grain, 6081 Cliff Lane, Temple, Texas 76502 (www.ancientwholegrain.com).

season and it made a world of difference (www.themingomarker.com). It quickly and accurately measures and marks logs, resulting in equal cut lengths of firewood that fit the firebox just right. The unit comes with a handle and trigger, a 16-in. notched marking wheel, and a chamber for a can of inverted contractors marking paint (not included but available at most hardware and home improvement stores)."

John Worden, Waterloo, N.Y.: "Our **Krause 24-ft. disk** is a best buy. We looked at this disk for a long time before we decided to buy it. We got it from a local farmer dealer and it performs like we expected."

Roger Meihak, Forest Lake, Minn.: "It's a little hard to unload, but otherwise it works great," says Meihak about his **Cyclone Rake** leaf and lawn vacuum (www.cylonerake.com). "I owned a leaf vacuum trailer in the past, but the long hose plugged up a lot and the trailer was hard to back up."

Lamar Hege, Deer Park, Wash.: Hege bought a used **Unverferth 25-ft. rolling harrow** equipped with a leveling bar in front of 2 rolling baskets. "We pull this harrow behind our 24-ft. Krause disk. It leaves the soil beautifully conditioned and very level. Little additional horsepower is required to pull it. It gives us a great one-pass tillage

tool."

Jacob Ploeckelman, Hillsboro, Wis.: "Back in 1965 my grandpa bought a new **John Deere 24T small square baler**, which he used to feed his dairy cows. I've been using the same baler for the last 6 years to make hay for my cattle. I also sell some of the hay, and buyers are amazed at the great bales this old baler makes."

Jerome Webb, Harrold, S. Dak.: "It has amazing power and a battery that lasts a long time between charges," says Jerome about his **Milwaukee 2767-20 M18 cordless 1/2-in. impact wrench**. "It has as much power as many corded models. Milwaukee also makes a great cordless cartridge tube grease gun. We use ours almost every day on the farm."

On the negative side, "My 2016 **Ford Edge SEL all-wheel-drive SUV** had a great ride and was super fuel efficient, making it the perfect work car for my wife. All was well until mice started getting inside the vehicle. We traded for a 2018 Edge but soon mice got into it, too. Both SUVs were kept in a new country home with an attached garage. A cousin also had a mouse problem with his Edge. I found one Edge owner who lived in the country but had no mice problems. However, he also had about 20 cats living in his garage."