

also sell home and life insurance.”

Ed Gaylord, Port Charlotte, Fla.: “We’re satisfied with **Gaco** roofing (www.gaco.com; ph 800 331-0196). No leaks in our roof, and it cut our electric bill in half.”

John Bowers, Selma, Ind.: “No problems with my 2013 **Hustler** mower. I haven’t even had to replace any belts.”

Jim Blackford, Hunnewell, Mo.: “I bought a 2018 **Poulan** chainsaw equipped with a 16-in. bar from Tractor Supply Company. The motor locked up and they replaced the saw, but then a ring on the engine went bad. I bought an extended warranty for this saw but Tractor Supply Company won’t honor it. Looks like that was a waste of money.”

Ronnie Auvenshine, Comanche, Texas: “It starts and runs good and has plenty of power,” says Ronnie about his 2017 **Cub Cadet XT1** riding mower equipped with a 22 hp. engine and 46-in. deck. “My only complaint is that I’m a big man, and the springs that hold the seat up aren’t strong enough. As a result the seat leans backward.”

John Latulipe, Bombay, N.Y.: John’s the satisfied owner of a 2001 **New Holland TC24DA** compact tractor. “I use it to move snow and to mow 4 acres of grass. All I’ve replaced is the battery. No problems.”

Edward Heyler, Westfield, Penn.: “I’m still actively farming at 93 years old, and my 2017 **Deere** 5055E 4-WD, 50 hp. tractor is neither the best nor worst tractor I’ve ever owned. However, I doubt the design engineers ever go out and operate their tractors under farm conditions. Here are some additions that I think would make this tractor more user friendly, without adding too much to the cost.

“An indicator to tell what gear you’re in. My older Deere 3040 has a ‘dedicated indicator’ with finger-like slots. Even an electronic indicator would be better than nothing.

“I doubt the design engineers ever go out and operate their tractors under farm conditions.”

“A hand emergency brake. The parking gear on this tractor is cumbersome, so much so that a neighbor with a similar tractor model jams his front-end loader on the ground instead of using the parking gear.

“A larger pto lever. The lever on this tractor is impossible to hold onto when wearing heavy gloves or mittens.

“Wider steps to accommodate both feet when wearing winter boots.”

Ronald H. Clenney, Chipley, Fla.: “My 2014 **Mahindra** 4025 tractor always starts right up, even after it sits idle for 3 mos. It’s a great tractor.

“My **Jinma** 24 hp. tractor is built too light. Also, in 95-degree heat the oil pressure goes down and the engine coolant temperature goes up. Sometimes I have to quit working after only about 45 min.”

Ray Martel, Bismarck, N. Dak.: “I bought a 1991 **GM** Sonoma extended cab, 4-WD pickup used in 1994 with about 20,000 miles on it. Now it has about 131,000 miles. It’s equipped with a 4.3-liter, V-6 engine that gets 21 mpg and has air conditioning, cruise control, power steering, and power brakes. I’ve replaced just the alternator and water pump. I use this pickup every day. It’s always ready to go.”

Sam Cox, Blountville, Tenn.: “Over the years I’ve owned many chainsaws, but my

Stihl 230 equipped with a carbide chain is the best ever.

“My worst buy was a pair of **Rocky Boots**. The soles rotted off them before they were even 2 years old.”

Milo Dyk, Strasburg, N. Dak.: “In 2016 I bought an **Acurite** weather station, model 01517. I returned it to the company under warranty twice but it still doesn’t work properly. Now the one-year warranty has expired and the company won’t help.”

Andy Johnson, Dewey, Okla.: “My 1991 **Dodge** D250 4-WD pickup has more than 300,000 miles on it but is still always ready to go. I’ve used it to pull regular trailers, livestock trailers, and hay trailers.”

On the “worst buy” side, he lists his **New Holland** TS64 4-WD tractor. “Within 500 hrs. 2 clutch cables broke and the loader cable vibrated loose, and one of the door handles keeps vibrating loose. It takes 2 hrs. to change the oil because the filter is located behind the loader arm and fuel filter.”

David Kemna, Ft. Atkinson, Wis.: “My 2014 **Echo** chainsaw equipped with a 14-in. bar is easy to start, lightweight, and has a lot of power. No problems.”

Daniel Wood, Nunda, N.Y.: “I bought my 2010 **Ford** F-150 crew cab pickup used in 2014 with about 108,000 miles on it. I’ve put on about another 100,000 miles with no problems.”

Jerry Byrn, Brashear, Mo.: “The second year I used my **Sears Craftsman** rototiller, a bearing in the gearbox failed. The gearbox is made so that there’s no way to lubricate it. Unfortunately, the company wanted almost as much for a new gearbox as what I paid for the rototiller.”

Mark Steinberger, Hillsboro, N. Dak.: “We use our 2015 **Deere** 825 Gator all the time, including to drive around at antique tractor shows. It’s equally useful for work or play.”

Michael Merrick, Soldotna, Alaska: “My 1995 **Deere** 955 30 hp. tractor works great. I accidentally tipped it over several times, but the rollover bar kept me safe. I raise goats and grow hay on a hobby farm. I use hay-making implements made in China because they’re smaller and better suited for my small 2-acre fields. The combination of an American-made tractor with Chinese-made implements has worked out for me.”

Darwin Oliver, Shadehill, S. Dak.: “In 1963 my dad bought a new **Deere** 3010 gas tractor. It had several problems and we finally traded for a new 1966 **Deere** 2510, which we’re still using today. It’s our best tractor ever.”

Matthew L. Martin, El Dorado Springs, Mo.: “It performs well, has a powerful engine, and is user friendly,” says Matthew about his 2017 **New Holland** T4.75 loader tractor.

Jim Benz, Mandan, N. Dak.: “I bought a **Pella** patio door in 2016 for \$5,000, but unfortunately it doesn’t seal properly. In cold weather, frost forms on it inside the house so that the door freezes shut. The company came out twice and said there was too much humidity in our house, so I got a dehumidifier but it didn’t help. When I called them back, they told me not to call again or they would charge me for a service call.”

Lance Oaks, Olean, N.Y.: “I use my **Mahindra** 22 HST loader tractor with a rear-mounted blade and 5-ft. mower deck. It’s a handy tractor with a lot of power and is easy on fuel.

Vern Bourlier, Scottsbluff, Neb.: Vern nominates his 2012 **Suzuki** King Quad 500 4-WD ATV as his “best buy.” “I use it to spray weeds, fix fence, and for irrigation work. No problems. Neighbors with other

“Best Buy” Robot Feeds Dairy Cattle

In the fall of 2017 Mitch, Max and Bob Malm became the first Wisconsin dairy operation to install a Lely Vector robotic feeder. They say that after an initial adjustment period, they’re happy with it.

The Lely Vector feeds the Malm’s 115 dairy cows and heifers around the clock. Besides saving money on labor costs, Mitch says, “The biggest benefit we’ve noticed is that the cattle hardly have any health issues. Occasionally we’ll have a cow with milk fever, but we don’t have much ketosis at all.”

Malm says the robot also saves on feed costs because it provides exact amounts of feed to every cow and doesn’t overfeed or underfeed.

Malm Dairy began using Lely milking robots in the fall of 2012, and that system impressed Mitch Malm so much that he began looking into other robotic technology. He learned that farmers overseas were using the Dutch manufacturer’s feeding robot and that it was also working on some dairy farms in Canada.

“I visited Canada to see a Vector feeder work and it just seemed so simple and a good investment,” Mitch says. The Malms purchased the unit, built a feed room addition onto their barn to house it, and spent about \$150,000 on the whole setup.

Inside the feed room a crane with buckets picks up several types of grain, hay and forage, then loads it into the robot’s mixer. The robot then selects other products like corn, roasted beans, concentrates and minerals for the ration. The Malms say the robot can be programmed to feed any ration they need. It even functions well in extreme weather conditions, traveling on a cement path to reach two different barns. Mitch Malm says it’s important to keep the path



Lely’s robotic feeder takes care of the Malms’ dairy cows and heifers around the clock with almost no human input.

clear of snow and ice so the wheels don’t spin. Inside it doesn’t have any problems moving.

As the first-of-its-kind system in Wisconsin, the robot has had several visitors observe it working in the past year. The Malms say there’s a lot of interest in the system, “but with milk prices being depressed, it’s hard to buy much of anything right now.”

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Malm Rolling Acres, W4222 153 Rd., Loyal, Wis. 54446 (ph 715 255-8927).

ATV brands spend much more on repairs than I do. This one has power steering which is a definite plus, and because of the 4-WD with differential lock it has never been stuck.

“I really liked my 2004 **Ford** F-150 pickup equipped with a 5.4-liter Triton, 24-valve engine. However, at about 180,000 miles a camshaft phaser failed, causing major damage. An engine overhaul would have cost about \$7,000 and a used engine \$3,500. I own other Ford pickups with well more than 200,000 miles on them, and they’re still running.”

Tom Housh, Hay Springs, Neb.: “We bought a used 2012 **Dodge** Durango with about 18,000 miles on it. Now it has more than 140,000 miles on it while requiring only routine maintenance.”

Edward C. Budy, Tonganoxie, Kan.: “Two years ago I drove my 2011 **Ford** Escape back to the dealer because it had 2 big rust spots on both rear wheel wells. The body was supposed to be covered by the 5-year warranty, but the dealer wouldn’t honor it.”

Mark Hoover, Leitchfield, Ky.: Mark is satisfied with his 2007 **Jonsered** 2171 chainsaw equipped with a 32-in. bar. “This wood-eating machine just kept going and going until the engine finally lost compression. I put in a rebuilt piston, and now it’s running like new again.

“**Homelite**, **Cub Cadet**, and **Poulan** chainsaws are what I call disposable saws - you use them a few times and then throw them away. But if you have a lot of wood to cut, don’t waste your money on them because some day you’ll still have to buy a real saw.”

Virgil Rauch, Grand Jet, Colo.: “My 2016 **Troy-Bilt** riding mower and 2016 **Troy-**

Bilt medium-size rototiller have performed flawlessly. The reviews were good on these products, as well as the ratings from FARM SHOW readers.”

T.W. Ojala, New Ipswich, N.H.: He’s the satisfied owner of a **DR** 16 hp. electric start, 30-in. walk-behind brush mower. “It’s a pleasure to operate. We use it to get rid of brush, weeds, sumac, wild blackberry bushes, and so forth. It’s amazing how little debris is left after this machine has done its job.

“I bought a pair of 8-in. high **Muck** boots one size bigger to fit double socks (www.muckbootcompany.com; ph 855 377-2668). These boots slip on easily and are totally waterproof and warm. I love them.”

Brian Tenhagen, Union Grove Wis.: “My **Handy Industries** Lift Table lifts up to 1,000 lbs. and is easy to set at the correct height for whatever I’m working on (www.handyindustries.com; ph 641 594-5446).”

Michael Peterson, Bellingham, Wash.: Michael owns a 1994 **Ford** F-350 1-ton 4-door, 4-WD dually pickup with almost 400,000 miles on it. “I like this pickup so much that even with the high mileage, I wouldn’t trade for a new one. It still looks new and doesn’t have a rattle in it.

“One year after I bought the pickup I had a problem with the engine. I was hauling cars and tractors on a 3-axle, 18,000-lb. capacity trailer when the pickup’s 7.3-liter IH engine blew a head gasket. Even before that I had a problem with glow plugs burning out. So I installed a used Cummins 12-valve diesel engine and 5-speed manual transmission with about 50,000 miles on it. At 5.9 liters, the Cummins engine is a little smaller but it has far more power.”