

“Owner’s Report” on Best, Worst ATV’s

Are you satisfied with your 3-wheel or 4-wheel All Terrain Vehicle? How could it be made better? Which around-the-farm chores do you use it for? What attachments have you built to make your ATV more useful? What “buying tips” do you have for other farmers planning to buy an ATV?

These are a few of the questions we asked randomly-selected ATV owners in an effort to highlight those ATV’s that perform with flying colors, and to pinpoint the “lemons” that fail because of poor performance — or failure of the dealer or the company to provide service.

Here’s how the survey shaped up:

“Never, never buy a 3-wheeler without differential drive,” advises Warren S. Purks, Fredricksburg, Va. owner of a 1984 **Kawasaki** 250.

“The only good thing about this particular 3-wheeler was the engine. Poor brake system and the shaft constantly broke down. Cost \$125 to \$150 to fix every time it broke. I couldn’t afford repair bills all the time so I finally sold it. Four of my friends had identical 3-wheelers and had the same shaft problems,” reports Danny Mannel, Churdan, Iowa, disappointed with his 1984 **Yamaha** 225 DX. “They should completely test the shaft drive set-up. They could also add disc brakes.”

“My wife uses it to deliver lunch to the fields,” reports George G. Goodell, Cohasset, Minn. who likes his 1984 **Honda** TRX 200. “I wouldn’t be without it. I had a **Honda** 3-wheeler but traded it for a 4-wheel model that has electric start and reverse. I made a 2-wheel trailer with dump for carrying tools and fencing equipment. Also made a throttle block for grandchildren that limits the throttle to opening 1/3 of the way.”

Charles Kubesh, Buffalo, Minn., likes his 1979 **Honda** 110 ATC. “Only repair needed has been rewinding the starter rope several times.”

“The best safety feature is a careful operator,” says William Michael Jr., Billings, Mont., owner of a **Suzuki** 4-wheeler. As a buying tip, he suggests “selecting a 4-wheeler with independent front suspension.”

“I added an odometer to measure fields and put a shield on so I can use it year round. For winter use, we took a 3-ft. sheet of aluminum and put it below the shield and on top of the motor. This keeps you nice and warm. The Big Red goes through 6-in. of snow with ease,” says Adam Brandt, Lebanon, Penn. who owns 1983 and 1985 **Honda** Big Reds. “We put a tow bar on one, pull it to the field and then leave the big tractor sit and come home on the ATV. My wife also uses one to ride the 1/3 mile from the house to the barn to milk cows.”

“We were generally satisfied with our 1982 **Honda** 185S until now. I’ve got it totally stripped and I’m now burning off and wire-brushing rust from the frame, wheels and anyplace there wasn’t red paint. It came with an extremely poor paint job and amateur welds which I’ve had to re-

pair in places. The tires were a Japanese brand and cracked out the sidewalls due to the three piece construction. Have had the recoil starter apart numerous times. The problem is in the weak compression release spring which bends, slips and gouges the plastic ring. The lights never worked from the start and the dealer wouldn’t stand behind it. The engine has been dependable and easy starting with sufficient power for hill climbing,” says Robert Evanson, Cordova, Alaska.

“Buy a 4-wheeler. They’re more stable.”

“Buy a 4-wheeler because they’re more stable and you can ride through fields without hurting the crops. Also, get a rack because they come in handy,” suggests Lisa Tucker, Mentone, Ind. who has a 1985 **Honda** TRX 125.

“All in all I feel my 1983 **Yamaha** 225 DX is a good 3-wheeler. I really like the shaft drive because it’s maintenance-free. On the negative side, it’s had a miss in the engine at low speeds since it was new. I took it to the dealer several times but he didn’t fix it. I built a heavy-duty rack to go on the back that lets me carry 4 bales of hay. Also built a trailer to pull behind it,” reports Jon Christian, Duncan, Okl.

“For around the farm you can’t beat it. It’s better than a motorcycle because you can ride in fields safer, and you can ride over crops,” says Sam Grilliot, Pretty Prairie, Kan., who likes his 1984 **Honda** 200-S. “I use it to fix and check fence, check crops and run cattle.”

“I do not own one and wish the city people didn’t. All they do is haul their kids and 3-wheelers out on weekends and overrun my property. They also run the creeks, through fish nests and keep the water muddy. None have license plates and none will give their names, yet they’re enjoying my property at no expense to them!” laments Rea Windsor, Montgomery City, Mo.

“Make sure you’re purchasing an ATV large enough to handle the jobs you want to do with it,” advises Paul Reinhardt, Okeana, Ohio, who likes his 1984 **Honda** 125M.

“I borrow my uncle’s 1983 **Yamaha** 200 E. It has more power than it needs and has good fuel consumption,” says Kimm Jacobson, Clarkfield, Minn.

Edwin Young, Orangeville, Penn., has a **Honda** 3-wheeler and a **Suzuki** 185 Quad Runner. “They’re okay, but I find they’re toys — like the motorcycle and snowmobile. I think you’re better off buying a small pickup.”

“It has 6 wheels with flotation tires and a fiberglass hull. Will climb steep grades and hauls 750 lbs. and two people in the flat seat. Has ample power and steers like a Caterpillar tractor,” says Ben Watkins, Emma, Ill., pleased with his **Allis Chalmers** Terra Tiger ATV. “We use it to sow seed, and pull wagons and trailer loads of fencing and posts.”

“I have had a **Honda** 90, two 110’s, two 200’s and a Big Red. I run them hard and they’re constantly improving them. I can’t think of any better way to build them,” says Henry Darden, Centerville, Miss. “We use them primarily for checking pastures in the winter so we don’t cut up the ground.”

“Personally, I like 3-wheelers. They maneuver in small, tight places better than 4-wheelers. Automatic clutch is preferable to keep hands free for other movements, and shock suspension is better for my old back. We made a conversion to attach a grass seeder to the rear of the ATV. Used an electric 12-V. motor on the seeder and attached a 12-V. battery to the ATV’s

front. I also pull 3-gang wheel mowers to cut lawns,” says Russ Oyer, Canton, Ohio, pleased owner of a 1979 **Honda** 90 and a 1982 **Honda** 185. “Wheel skids could be installed by the manufacturer. I installed my own to protect new riders from rolling over backwards.”

“When buying, check compatibility of tire spacing with the spacing of your row crops. Makes the machine more versatile,” advises Ronald Simmons, Deming, N.M., who likes using his 1983 **Yamaha** Tri-Moto 125 for spraying and checking irrigation water.

“I would never buy another **Honda**. If I bought another 3-wheeler it would be a **Kawasaki**. The **Honda** company should recall all their ATC’s and ATV’s and install split rear axles. They’re extremely dangerous to ride, especially when turning, even at slow speeds,” says Ronald Jorgensen, ward, S. Dad.

“The handiest thing we have on the farm. We haven’t had any trouble with our 1984 **Honda** Big Red,” reports Philip Sayer, Galt, Mo., who adds, “I wish somebody built a good trailer at a good price.”

Leo Bergeron, Prescott, Mich. has a **Honda** Big Red and a 1968 90. “I’m sure the Big Red will pay for itself in 5 years just saving the gas and repairs on a pickup or tractor. My wife says she wouldn’t go back to a tractor and wagon for picking stones. Works well for spraying and riding through timberland. We made a sprayer for it

Polaris Introduces “No-Shift” ATV

First American company to challenge the Japanese in making 3 and 4-wheel ATV’s is Polaris Industries, Minneapolis, Minn., with their Trail Boss 4-wheeler, and the Scrambler 3-wheeler.

Both models feature the Polaris “No Shift” Variable Transmission, which eliminates shifting from gear to gear with the foot peg. The only shifting you ever do is from forward to reverse. The thumb-controlled accelerator takes care of the rest.

The innovative transmission consists of a Kevlar belt that runs between two pulleys. The pulleys expand and contract, making an infinite number of gear ratios so you have the power to go through mud — yet have the speed and acceleration needed for good conditions.

The transmission eliminates the need for the foot-powered gear shift peg. In its place is a 15-in. footrest attached to both fenders, a safety feature de-



signed to keep your feet secure on the machine.

Both ATV models are chain-driven and powered by a 244 cc, 2-cycle engine that has a top speed of 45 mph. They also boast electric start, mechanical drum front brakes and mechanical disk back brakes. Standard equipment includes front and rear racks and hitch.

The Trail Boss weighs 440 lbs. and sells for \$2,198; the 380 lb. Scrambler 3-wheeler sells for \$1,968.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Polaris Industries, Inc., 1225 North County, Rd. 18, Minneapolis, Minn. 55441 (ph 612 542-0500).