

small tractor work such as moving augers, etc.," says Eugene Witt, Janesville, Minn.

"We're very pleased with our 1989 Grasshopper model 1822. Thanks to the zero turn design, we mow our lawn in 1/2 to 3/4 the time it took previously and do a better job. The small dolly wheels in front of the mower deck are the only things that touch the grass before it's cut. The mower's powerful and the vacuum attachment works better than any we've had. Packs a lot more grass into the bin and picks up even at higher speeds," says LeAnn Petersen, Stronsburg, Neb. "Our only complaint is that the engine is too loud. We usually wear a headset to dampen the noise. Also, like all mowers, the deck could be designed so it's easier to clean out."

Charles Reutman, Ferdinand, Ind., has had good luck with his 1989 Kubota B-2150 4-WD with 60-in. deck and 24 hp. diesel. "It's solidly built with good power.

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Power steering and the hydro transmission make it easy to operate. It's easy to get on and off. This was not a cheap machine though, at \$11,000, so we expected good results. I would like to be able to lift the deck higher than it goes. Also, the mower deck lifting mechanism should have independent hydraulics. As it is now, it's connected to the 3-pt."

"Our 1983 Ford has too much vibration in the 16.5 hp. engine - we already replaced it once. It should have twin cylinders to make it run smoother. The hydrostatic transmission and 52-in. cutting deck are great. Handles fine," says Howard Brown, Blanchard, N. Dak.

Louis Allen, Eyota, Minn., owns a Schweiss Magnum III 60-in. "It has a 23-hp. twin cylinder Kohler engine and turns in its tracks, controlled by a single lever so you can steer with one hand. It has a heavy deck with 21-in. knives that overlap - doesn't bunch the grass. Can't think of an improvement."

"Our 1985 Shivers Country Clipper with 44-in. cut and 11-hp. motor handles well and I truly appreciate the zero turning radius. Can mow the lawn in half the time of other mowers and really don't need a trim mower. It's been virtually maintenance-free," says Eldon Pins, Hopkinton, Iowa.

Bill Garber, Delavan, Wis., is pleased with his 1989 Deere 318. "It performs well with little maintenance required. My only suggestion for improvement would be to improve the seat. It's not comfortable and is difficult to adjust."

John D. Torke, Belgium, Wis., likes his 1985 Simplicity 7117 mower with a 42-in. deck and hydraulic lift. "The Kohler twin cylinder engine is an excellent starter with plenty of power. It could use a larger fuel tank. I added a light to the rear of tractor. Wish I had installed an hour meter."

"One safety feature I like on our 1985 Snapper 38 11-hp. mower is that you must have your foot on the pedal to keep the blade turning. When you get off the mower it stops turning. The seat is uncomfortable - hurts your back. And the key and push button starter should be closer together,"

says Leanne Eich, Canova, S. Dak.

"We're well-satisfied with our 1990 Woods 2850 with a front-mount 52-in. deck. The zero-turn design is much better than belly mounted mowers. My suggestion for improvement would be to use larger diameter wheels for better traction and a smoother ride," says Miles Filer, Vandalia, Ill.

Larry Simonton, Cerro Gordo, Ill., says his 1990 Deutz-Allis 1920 is a "best buy". "What a tractor and what a mower! The 60-in. deck is twice as heavy as competitive mowers. The hydrostatic drive and power steering make it a pleasure to operate. This is my first experience with Deutz-Allis equipment and I'm completely satisfied."

"You have to mow in first gear to do a good job," says Gene Skriver, Iowa City, Iowa, about his 1984 Sears 10 hp. mower. "It has a 42-in. deck with three blades. Every time you turn it leaves two strips of uncut grass between the blades. The mower came with paint so thin the hood started rusting shortly after we got it home. Construction and materials are very low quality. Every time you turn around something breaks like a spring, pulley bearing, or a belt. The right side of the deck drags, tearing up the sod. I welded a wider shoe to the deck so it wouldn't tear up the sod so bad. We bought a Sears snowblower to fit the tractor. When we first used it the blower ran so fast the motor didn't have enough power to blow anything. Sears sent a slow down kit which helped performance a lot."

"Our 1986 Case/IH 448 has plenty of power and has an excellent mower deck that'll run through the tallest weeds and wettest grass without winding. We bought a rototiller and it does a good job but it's difficult to use because of the tractor's hydrostatic drive. We have trouble setting a steady speed. Needs some sort of creeper gear. I put quick couplers on the tiller to make it easier to mount," says Bradley Sauer, Sugar Grove, Ill.

"Why in the world don't they make the crankcase bigger - 1.8 qts. is ridiculous," says Danny Holmes, Walcott, Iowa, owner of a "best buy" 1984 Deere 318. "I have over 1,000 hrs. on the tractor without a repair. I built a hitch plate to extend the hitch backward about 5 in. Makes it easier to turn with pull-behind wagons and equipment."

Ray Ristau, Geneseo, Ill., is happy with his 1987 Murray 18-hp. "This is the second Murray we've owned. The first one was 10 years older. We've never had to buy a new battery or do any repair except for belts and blades, despite the fact that the older mower was driven into a canal by our grandson. We changed the oil, dried the plug and it started and ran like new. My only suggestion would be to make the mower deck easier to put on and take off."

"We were looking for a maneuverable mower at an affordable price. This mower has done the job," says Donald D. Heins, Concordia, Mo., pleased with his 1990 Dixon ZTR 429. "We reduced cutting time by half over the mower I owned before and there's very little trimming left to do after we're through. Plenty of horsepower and smooth performance from the 14-hp. Kawasaki engine."

"I'm very satisfied with our 1988 Swisher 8-hp. with 32-in. cut. Cost is low and maintenance is next to nothing. You can do all repair work yourself at home. The only improvement it needs is a larger drive wheel for better traction on hills and a bigger engine. I installed a better seat with a high backrest since I have back trouble. My first



The three 3-ft. mower deck sections are supported in front by three 12-in. caster wheels and in back by four 13-in. car wheels. A pair of 8-in. rubber wheels on each outside section of deck serve as "bumper guards".

IT'S 9-FT. WIDE WITH 3-WD Home-Built "Floating" Hydrostatic Hillside Mower

When Washington farmer Harry Alexander, of Reardan, needed a mower for his hilly farmstead and orchard, he decided to start from scratch and build his own 9-ft. wide, 3-WD "floating" hydrostatic mower.

The low-profile mower, which has three 3-ft. mower deck sections, is powered by a 35 hp Wisconsin VG4D 4-cylinder air-cooled engine mounted directly behind the seat. Three 12.5 by 15 Terra tires drive the mower. The front two wheels are mounted on an auto axle chain-driven by a hydraulic motor while the rear wheel is powered by a separate hydrostatic motor. The mower deck is supported in front by three 12-in. dia. ribbed caster wheels and in back by four 13-in. car wheels. A pair of 8-in. rubber wheels mount horizontally on each outside section to serve as "bumper guards" against trees.

"It has great traction and floats over even the roughest ground," says Alexander. "The three drive wheels climb right up hills without slipping, and the low profile lets me mow across slopes without tipping over. It hugs the ground like a jeep. I go 3 to 4 mph and can mow my 2-acre lawn in one hour and 15 minutes. The hydrostatic drive makes it very maneuverable. I can go forward or backward at the same speed and can turn a 90 degree corner without having to back up. Part of my mowing area is inside an orchard, and the tire bumper guards help protect the trees from being damaged. The mower blades are driven by a pto shaft."

Alexander mounted an old gearbox upside down in front of the engine. A 2-ft. long pto driveshaft leads from the gearbox to a jackshaft mounted over the center section of the mower. The jackshaft belt-drives three

90 degree gearboxes, one mounted on each mower section. Two long belts drive the outside sections and run over idlers that keep the belts tight as the sections flex up or down. A shorter belt drives the center mower section. "I salvaged the 90 degree gearboxes from the knitter drives off three old Minneapolis Moline balers," says Alexander. "I mounted the engine-driven gearbox upside down in order to provide more ground clearance for the pto driveshaft. I engage or disengage the mower by reaching down and activating a clutch built into the gearbox."

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Alexander salvaged the mower's drive axle and differential from a 1972 Oldsmobile car. A 15 gpm variable displacement hydrostatic pump operates a hydraulic motor that chain-drives the differential. The hydraulic motor driving the single rear wheel receives its hydraulic oil after it has passed through the first motor.

Power steering consists of an old auto power steering pump, an orbit steering motor from a junked combine (used as a valve), and a hydraulic cylinder linked to a steering arm on the rear fork assembly.

Both hydraulic systems share the same 25 gal. oil reservoir. A high-capacity hydraulic oil filter filters oil for both systems. Alexander says the mower's hydraulic system alone cost about \$2,500.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Harry Alexander, Rt. 1, Box 2, Reardan, Wash. 99029-9701 (ph 509 796-3815).

Swisher mower, which is 20 years old, is still going strong even though it's on its fourth engine," says Robert D. Troxel, Mt. Vernon, Mo. "My 'worst buy' mower of all time is a Troy-Bilt Trail Blazer 34-in. cut sickle-type mower. I bought it to mow ditches and under electric fences but it's the biggest pile of junk I ever bought. Trying to control it in a ditch is like trying to thread a wet noodle through a keyhole. The tires are nothing but intertubes with lugs on them. Lots of punctures. The original drive belts lasted 30 min. and you have to completely tear the mower apart to install new ones. I had to have a new oil seal installed in the Briggs & Stratton engine during the first

hour of operation. I found out after I bought it that it's made in France and imported by Troy-Bilt. I paid over \$1,000 for it and was lucky to get rid of it for \$300 even though it had just 7 hrs. on the hour meter I installed on it."

Perry Pavlat, Algoma, Wis., likes his 1990 Deutz-Allis Vanguard 12 hp. with a 42-in. cut. "It cuts evenly and makes it easy to cut around trees thanks to the front-mount mower and hydrostatic drive. The Briggs & Stratton engine starts easy and runs well. Uses no oil. My suggestions for improvement would be to use larger tires and a brake for each side to help make shorter turns."