There are many reasons a dirt rider would be shopping for a new exhaust pipe. Some are searching for more power, in our opinion, smarter riders are looking for more effective power. Those a little higher up the intelligence scale are looking to make their machines legal for where they ride. The truly enlightened seek sound reduction. We hate to look too closely at the impulses that lead most of us to simply appreciate a new exhaust because it looks cool, but even the most anti-bling among us is susceptible. Although we sincerely hope they are becoming extinct, there are those who still think louder is better and desirable. Regardless, pipes are a common and important buying decision. This is more than your normal listing of products. We asked each manufacturer to supply a pipe that was representative of its lineup. We could have asked for every pipe made for one or two bikes, but what if you don’t own that bike? In our experience each company has general uniformity in its design and testing, and therefore performance trends are similar across multiple bikes. So, if you get a pipe from a company for a Kawasaki KX250F and a pipe for a Honda CRF450R from the same company, both pipes will usually have a similar effect on power. We asked the companies to pick the bike it wanted to have tested. The categories were four-stroke MX, four-stroke off-road, two-stroke MX, two-stroke off-road and playbike. In cases where there are pipes that are distinctly different in performance, we allowed each type to be submitted. That meant that full-line companies like FMF and Pro Circuit had more products tested. We tested every pipe at multiple locations. Each unit was carefully weighed on a certified postal scale. Finally, at the conclusion of our comprehensive exhaust system test, we had sound expert Chris Real from DPS Technical/Chem-Help sound test each and every combination in this test we opted not to cater to the group of riders who want a louder pipe. We set sound parameters for the popular SAE 20-inch test used universally in enforcement as well as the new FMU full-throttle test measured from two meters. For the 20-inch test we specified 96 decibels as the max for off-road and 99 decibels for motocross, since those are the current standards. For the full-throttle test we stipulated less than 115 decibels for off-road and below 120 decibels for MX. Also included was a third-gear roll-on wide-open test measured at 100 feet for a real-world riding comparison of the sound data for you (and us) to look at. We specified stock jetting on all models for the test for consistency. In most cases that worked out fine. on some of the non-MX bikes lean jetting (popping, sputtering at test rpm) had a negative effect on sound numbers. We were pleased that only one pipe missed the MX standards for the static test and all passed the full-throttle test. The majority were actually quieter at full throttle than stock MX mufflers. So digest the information and find what companies will be best for you. Even if you are planning on buying the one that just plain looks cool or is on your favorite factory rider’s bike.