

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

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speedometer, etc. The synchronizers in the transmission have already gone out. I don't work this tractor too hard, either. I use it mostly for field-type work."

Joe Pukas, Binghamton, N.Y.: "Last July we bought a **Cub Cadet** self-propelled, walk-behind mower and it's our worst buy. This mower doesn't have a throttle and runs at high speed. It has a 6 3/4 hp engine. We paid \$4480.43 for it. It uses a lot of gas and vibrates too much, which caused some bolts to come loose. It also causes the operator's hands to ache and go numb. A throttle was

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finally installed after I made two trips to the dealer and spent \$65. Now it works pretty good. However, I won't buy any Cub Cadet product again."

Blake Engleka, Fairhope, Penn.: "My 1952 **Ford 8N** tractor is my best buy of all time. This tractor can handle just about anything and does everything I expected it to, and more. It's a fun tractor to operate and is an all-around awesome machine."

"My 1992 **Chevrolet 1500** pickup is the biggest piece of junk I've ever owned. Just about everything on it has gone wrong. Right now it's out of service so I have to drive a van. As a result I can't haul anything and I hate that. I guess the saying 'You get what you pay for' really is true. I want to see what a real truck is like, so I'll probably buy a 1997 **Ford F-250 Diesel Power Stroke** equipped with an 8-ft. bed. I'll never buy a Chevy again. I've always been a Ford man and now I know why."

Dennis Degner, Dysart, Iowa: "I bought a 1985 **Deere 4850 MFWD** tractor three years ago, and it's my best buy. It's a great tractor with a quiet cab, and rides nice. I love the powershift transmission. The only thing I had to replace was the dome light switch. It's the best tractor I've ever owned."

Rod Dowell, Girard, Ill.: Rod's had problems with his 1997 **Ford New Holland 4835** tractor and says it's his "worst buy". "This tractor has about 1,300 hours on it. It has been in the shop three times for hydraulic leaks in the valve area. It also has an oil leak in the rear end housing. The problem is that there's no gasket seal."

Chuck Hodel, Eureka, Ill.: Chuck's pleased with his 2001 **Dodge Ram 2500 Quad Cab** pickup equipped with a Cummins diesel engine and automatic transmission. "It's a pleasure to drive. I bought it used and put about 1,000 miles on it just during the first six days. It pulls our 30-ft. fifth wheel trailer with ease. It has a lot of power and is quiet and fuel efficient. It's equipped with a direct miles per gallon readout and at its best gets well over 20 mpg."

Lareth L. May, Timberville, Va.: "It's a solid, reliable, well-built machine with a lot of power," says Lareth, pleased with his 1994 **Bobcat 743B** skid steer loader equipped with a Kubota diesel engine. "I haven't had any major problems with it. Other than a new starter it has needed only routine

maintenance. The only negative is that it's hard to reach three grease fittings on a U-joint between the engine and hydraulic drive."

"My 1998 **Massey Ferguson 4243 4-WD** tractor is my worst buy. It had some simple problems but I couldn't get either my dealer or the factory to fix them. It took 1 1/2 years to get the tractor repaired by another dealer. He fixed the brakes and painted the tractor. However, the night he returned the tractor to us it rained and water leaked into the cab. We fixed the leak ourselves."

E. Frazier Ward, Jackson, Miss.: "My 1998 **DeWalt 9.6-volt** portable electric drill is my best buy. It's lightweight and hard working. I always have three batteries on hand so I can keep it running around our farm. It's dependable and easy to use."

Dwight Wieland, Congerville, Ill.: A 2001 **Apache 12-ft.** double sided creep feeder rates as Dwight's "best buy". "I think this portable feeder will pay for itself in only a few years. It's very accessible to calves. I've seen up to 17 in it at one time."

Don Brown, Godfrey, Ontario: "Our **Seaboyer** outside woodburning furnace is our best buy. We heat all our hot water with this furnace, using wood that we cut down on our farm. We have a big farmhouse that's more than 100 years old, and with this furnace we can easily control heat inside the house. We also use it to heat our workshop."

Brian Barrett, Maple Ridge, B.C.: Brian likes his 1991 **Kubota 4-WD** tractor. "It's small enough to fit between the rows of trees on our Christmas tree farm. "Our pto-driven backhoe is also a best buy. It has a lot of power and is built strong. I have a bad back so I use this backhoe to lift and move all kinds of objects."

Dale Nelson, Valley City, N. Dak.: "I've used my **Stihl** chain saw to cut at least 100 cords of wood. It's almost 20 years old but still has the original sparkplug."

James R. Settle, Clarksville, Tenn.: "My 2001 **Ford F-150 4-WD** pickup has about 23,000 miles on it and has worked flawlessly. It requires only regular maintenance and drives and rides great."

William Goolsbee, Lufkin, Texas: "My best buy is my 1993 **Chevrolet 1-ton**, dually pickup equipped with a 6.5-liter turbocharged diesel engine. It has more than 95,000 miles on it but runs and rides just like it did when it was new. It's so well-balanced that it will go places where a 4-WD would have troubles."

Craig Hamilton, Springfield, Ky.: "I bought a **Deutz 5207** tractor a couple of years ago and it's a best buy. My grandfather bought two Deutz tractors new in the late 1970's and early 1980's and is still using them. Mine now has more than 6,000 hours on it. I don't think you can wear these tractors out."

Wally Minion, Bingham Lake, Minn.: Wally's happy with his 1998 **Deere 445** all-wheel-steer garden tractor equipped with a 60-in. mower deck. "It's built with quality and is a highly maneuverable machine. I recently traded it in for a 2002 **Deere X485** model. It needed a new engine after I ran it for only about 1 1/2 hours. Now it seems to be running okay. However, the steering on the X485 model could be improved."

Dan E. Stewart, Grandview, Ind.: Dan's happy with his **Power King 1824** garden tractor. "This tractor is small enough to mow our yard whether it's equipped with a 48 or 60-in. deck, yet it's also big enough to use in truck farming. It has 18 in. of clearance for

crops. The tractor is equipped with a live pto and a 3-pt. hitch. I use it with a 4-ft. Woods bush hog mower. I also use it with a 12-in. 3-pt. plow, 4-ft. tandem disk, and 4-ft. tiller."

"My 1998 **Power King 1816** tractor, which I bought used, is my worst buy. It has only 16 in. of crop clearance and you lose 3 to 4 in. of that when you use 3-pt. attachments. I built a pto shield for it and also beefed up the lift rod."

Thomas R. Stanifer, Covington, Tenn.: A **Vector** battery booster equipped with an air compressor and voltage converter rates as Thomas's "best buy". "It's a little heavy, but it's well worth its weight."

"My 1995 **Chevrolet 3500 4-WD** pickup equipped with a 454 cu. in. engine is my worst buy. It lacks power, and maintenance on it has been a nightmare. As soon as one item gets fixed, another item goes out. It's not a good vehicle for farm use."

Ron Miller, Richmond, Ky.: Ron says his "best buy" is a 1994 **Plymouth Voyager** van equipped with a 2.5-liter, 4-cyl. engine and 5-speed manual transmission. "I bought it used a year ago through an on-line eBay auction for \$2,500, which was about \$2,000 below its book value. I get a lot of funny looks from people when I tell them this van has a factory 5-speed manual transmission. I've already put about 21,000 miles on it. I use it to drive 25 miles one way to work, five days a week, and also use it to run errands in town. It consistently gets 25 mpg around town and 27 to 28 mpg on the highway. It has saved us a lot on fuel."

"It's a great little van and can haul all seven members of our family. It'll pull my 16-ft.

dual axle trailer with no problems. It has about 120,000 miles on it now but still uses very little oil. I had to fix the air conditioning and also had a weird problem with the transmission - the shift fork broke. The transmission repair shop said they had never seen a vehicle with a broken shift fork."

John Sigler, New Riegel, Ohio: John likes his **Classic** outdoor woodburning furnace (Central Boiler, 20502 160th St., Greenbush, Minn. ph 800 248-4681; Website: www.centralboiler.com). "It does everything the company says it would, keeping our house warm while all the dirt stays outside. We get more heat from wood with this furnace than with any woodburner we've used in the past."

J.L. Vaughan, Hallsville, Texas: He's impressed with the "E-Z Splice" fence repair tool marketed by **J.L. Behmer Corp.** (Box 98, Perkaskie, Penn. 18944). "All I have to carry with me now is this small tool and a pair of good pliers. In the past, the wire splicers I used tended to fail whenever I tightened a wire, but with the E-Z splice I've never had a repair fail."

John Funk, Sheridan, Montana: "It's the nicest pickup I've ever owned and has been trouble-free," reports John, pleased with his 2002 **Chevrolet Duramax** equipped with a diesel engine and Allison transmission. "It runs well and does a nice job pulling trailers. It's also fuel efficient. I love this pickup."

Robert A. Chute, Orting, Wash.: A 2001 **Honda 4-cycle** rototiller rates as Robert's "best buy". "It always starts right up and is quiet and easy to control. I like not having to mix oil with the gas. It cost much less than the 'worst buy' **Mantis** tiller we had before."

Chinese Tractors "Cheap But Risky"

The Chinese are coming. And they're invading on small tractors. Don't panic, though, if you're a tractor dealer. A lot of them will break down and there won't be any parts to fix them.

"Right now, Chinese tractors have a deservedly bad reputation. Parts and service for these tractors have been non-existent and quality hasn't been consistent, either," says Roger Powell of China America Imports, Creswell, Oregon.

"At one time, there were at least 52 Chinese tractor makers," he reports. "Companies have consolidated and some have gone out of business, but even so, there are still at least half that many. Some of the larger factories have developed partnerships with companies like John Deere, Case, Cat and Kubota."

China America Imports works as an agent for some of the exporters into the growing U.S. market for small horsepower compact utility tractors.

"We are working with a few of the best companies, setting up distributors and dealers for manufacturers who are willing to provide U.S. based parts and service support," he says.

"The main advantage of Chinese tractors right now is price. They're 30 to 40 percent lower in price than comparable Japanese or Korean tractors. The biggest disadvantage is the long wait for parts, which usually have to be shipped direct from China," he says.

Small farmers and part-time farmers are the biggest buyers. Farmers and others who can't wait for parts generally don't buy or are dissatisfied if they do. Powell says some U.S. companies have done a good job stocking parts for the Chinese tractors they sell. One



Chinese tractors - like this model from DongFeng - sell for 30 to 40 percent less than comparable Japanese or Korean tractors.

Chinese manufacturer, DongFeng, has set up a USA parts warehouse.

"Right now, unless a tractor is nationally supported, I would be very careful before buying it," he says.

Powell says anyone having trouble finding parts for a Chinese tractor should contact Lawn and Garden Products Ltd. by fax. The company, located in Qingdao, China, says it can find any part needed and will ship by UPS. "Shipping can be fairly expensive, but if you need a part, they'll get it to you," he says.

Lawn and Garden Products maintains a U.S. fax number: 707 988-0201. You'll need to include your name, address, E-mail and phone number, as well as the part number and make, model and serial number of your tractor.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Roger Powell, China America Imports, 33898 Adler Lane, Creswell, Oregon 97426 (ph 541 895-2959; E-mail: imports@centurytel.net; Website: www.china-america.biz).