

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

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cuts and conditions great and is easy to hook up and also to service."

Mark Hiett, Bristow, Okla.: Mark's impressed with his 1991 **Ford F-150 4-WD** pickup equipped with a 300 cu. in., 6-cyl. engine and a 5-speed manual transmission. "It has more than 170,000 miles on it and has been a really good pickup. When I put the transmission in low range, the computer keeps it going at a constant speed - even while I'm hauling 90 small square bales and a hay loader on my trailer - without ever having to touch the accelerator."

Gregg Waldmiller, Caledonia, Mich.: "I bought a 1948 **Farmall** Cultivator tractor in 1994. It has never had anything replaced on it and still has a 6-volt system as well as the original radiator, starter, and generator. All I've ever done is replace the points, plugs, and distributor cap and changed the oil and filter. People say that Japanese and European-made stuff is the best out there, but I think American-made equipment built from the 1930's to the early 1970's is the highest quality equipment ever built.

"My 2000 **Dodge** Caravan is my worst buy. This vehicle is a symphony on wheels. Start it up and it ticks like the conductor tapping his baton. Put it in reverse and the oboe section starts growling. Turn on the air condi-

"This vehicle is a symphony on wheels."

tioner and the flute section starts sounding. Drive over 50 mph and the wheel bearing sounds off like a low-pitched tuba. Put on the brakes and it clunks like the percussion section. It shakes like you're sitting on a clothes dryer, and the smell when you turn on the heater is reminiscent of Grandma's breath. All this with only about 70,000 miles on it."

Gregg Liskai, Helena, Ohio: "My best buy is a 2003 corn burning stove built by **K-Bar Industries, Inc.** which I bought out of the Northern Tool catalog (www.northerntool.com). It burns about 150 bu. per winter and never shuts off. It has already paid for itself. No problems."

Samuel L. Jones, Young Ward, Utah: "My **Toyota Avalon** is a solid, durable car that's fuel efficient. No problems at all. I've put more than 180,000 miles on it and expect to put on that many more."

Franklin Starrick, Carrier Mills, Ill.: "I like my **Deere 5520** tractor equipped with a cab and 541 front-end loader. It has a great hydraulic system, and the 4-cyl. diesel engine provides plenty of fuel-efficient power. It also has a good air conditioner and heater. This tractor has a short turning radius and it always starts, even in cold weather. The loader bucket is easy to remove."

Delbert Kaesser, Rowley, Iowa: "My 2000 **Buick Century** has more than 90,000 miles on it and averages 32 mpg in all kinds of driving. On three different tankfuls of gas it averaged 42 mpg. My only expense has been for routine maintenance.

"My **Ford** van was my worst buy. The transmission went out the first week we had it. Then the valves had to be ground at about 40,000 miles. The ignition went out at 45,000 miles, the timing chain at 60,000 miles, and the water pump at 65,000 miles."

Richard Kuklock, Sauk Rapids, Minn.: "My 2004 **Deere X485** lawn tractor has about 190 hours on it with no problems. It's equipped with a 54-in. mower deck which does a good job of cutting grass, even when

it's wet."

Joe Maurizzi, Roscoe, Ill.: "My wife gave me a 2004 **Oral-B** Sonic electronic toothbrush for a birthday present. At the time I thought it was a waste of money. But this little machine really performs. I can pack it for a 3 or 4-day trip without bringing the charger."

Harlan Burkholder, Charles City, Iowa: A 2003 **Milwaukee** 18-volt cordless drill rates as Harlan's "best buy". "This drill has hundreds of trouble-free hours on it. It has a lot of power, and the batteries last a long time before they have to be recharged. It's also very durable - it has fallen down numerous times without ever cracking the casing. If it ever wears out I'll buy another one.

"Seven months after I installed my **Zartman** cow mattresses the cover got holes in it and some of the rubber flattened out. I paid top dollar for these mattresses, taking the dealer's word that they'd be trouble-free. On the positive side, they were very comfortable while they lasted."

Alvin C. Goldey, Mt. Sterling, Ky.: A 1984 **Kubota L235** tractor equipped with a 5-ft. mower deck rates as Alvin's "best buy".

"I bought this tractor used with 52 hours on it and have spent absolutely nothing on maintenance, other than changing the oil every 40 hours and the hydraulic fluid and filter every 300 hours. It still has the original fan belt. I use this tractor for mowing and rotovating.

"My 1979 **GM Sierra** 4-WD pickup equipped with a standard transmission is one of my best buys ever. Over the years I've had to replace a water pump, starter, fuel pump, alternator, and clutch which is not a bad record for 26 years of use. I often use this pickup to tow the **Kubota** tractor to various work locations."

Rich Hansen, Minden, Iowa: "Our 1969 **International Harvester** 856 tractor has 27,680 actual hours on it and was one of our main tractors for years. It has been worked hard but has only been overhauled once. We still use it to pull a feed wagon twice a day, every day. I wish they still made tractors like this one.

"Our 2001 **Kuhn GMD GII** disc mower is our worst buy. The first year we bought this mower it only made it to the third cutting before the main frame cracked in two different places. The dealer was no help. To switch the machine from field position to transport position you have to open the tractor cab window and pull a rope. The rope winds around two corners, hooks to a cylinder stop, threads through a big weight, and finally hooks to a steel bar. The engineer who designed this mower should run it for a couple of days."

Cal McMellan, Wichita, Kansas: "My best buy was a 24 by 18-ft. carport I bought from **Coast to Coast Carports, Inc.** (ph 866 267-3790). The truck arrived at our place at 7:15 a.m. Three young men started working at 7:30 a.m. and were completely done by 9 a.m. These men ran, not walked. I'm very pleased with this product. My total cost, including installation, was \$1,400.

"My worst buy is an electric drill that I bought from **Harbor Freight Tools**. It's built cheap and doesn't have variable speed control."

High Point Farms I Wilmoth, Surgoinville, Tenn.: "My three **AGCO Allis** 5670 4-WD tractors are all best buys. They range from 4 to 8 years old. These tractors have air-cooled engines that are fuel efficient.

"My 1996 **New Holland** 5630 4-WD tractor is my worst buy."

Curtis W. McLeod, Grady, Ala.: "I bought a 25 by 30-ft. **American Duro-Span** steel building from the company's website and assembled it myself. I got a great delivered price at \$3,550, and the steel-arched



Bob Truly mounted two bale spears side-by-side on his loader bucket.

Best Buy Bale Spears

"Rather than use a standard single spear on my loader bucket to move bales, I decided to mount two spears. It saves a lot of time bringing bales in from the field and moving them around the farm," says Bob Truly, Montgomery, Texas.

Truly bought the two spears at Tractor Supply Company for about \$188 apiece. He uses them on his **Deere 5520** front wheel assist tractor, which is equipped with a 7-ft. wide bucket.

Mounting the bale spears was an easy job. He simply drilled two holes in the back side of the bucket and ran a bolt through the flat steel plate on the back end of each spear. The spears are spaced about 4 ft. apart.

"It greatly speeds up bale loading and unloading. If I want I can carry a bale behind the tractor, too, and move three bales at a time," says Truly. "The two spears also work well to move brush. When used with a piece



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of plywood, the spears also make an excellent elevated work station.

"I use it with 4 by 5 bales, but I think the same idea would work with larger bales if you had a larger tractor," he notes.

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building turned out to be everything the company said it would be. They provided complete instructions as well as tips by phone from the factory, which made the building easy to assemble. I bought a model with one end finished and built the other end myself with a window, walk-through door, and roll-up door. It was a great buy."

Charles Parker, Cochran, Ga.: Charles likes his 2005 **Gorilla** tailgate lift assist (ph 877 388-8895; www.gorilla-lift.com). "We have a trailer equipped with a very heavy tailgate-loading ramp. It used to take two men to lift the tailgate so that we could close it. The **Gorilla-Lift** takes 95 percent of the weight off the tailgate and lets one person close it with only one hand. It was very easy to install."

Jody Vierling, Winterset, Iowa: "I like my 2001 **Grasshopper** 62-in. front mount mower. It rides nice and smooth which is great for anyone with back problems. Saves hours of trimming time in, around, and under trees. It's my best outdoor friend. The only problem we have is lifting the deck, which is extremely heavy. I bought the machine used with bar tires on it and they tend to tear the grass when turning, especially if it's wet. Turf tires are easier on grass but not so good on slopes."

George Hodge, Carthage, Mo.: "My 1998 **Porter-Cable** 12-volt, 3/8-in. drill is my best buy. I bought it new and have used it hard. The batteries have held their charge and last a long time, and it has plenty of power."

Harold Borowicz, Cheboygan, Mich.: A 1985 **Kubota L3750** 35 hp, 4-WD tractor equipped with a front-end loader rates as Harold's "best buy". "Because this tractor has 4-WD, I was able to replace a 70 hp **Deere** tractor with a 35 hp model and still do more work. This model gets in and out of places the **Deere** tractor wouldn't go, and it uses so little fuel that I use it like most people use an ATV or a golf cart."

Cheryl Arnold, Charleston, Maine: Cheryl's the proud owner of a 1995 **Ford** Ranger XLT King Cab 2-WD pickup. "We bought this pickup seven years ago with about 100,000 miles on it. It now has about 218,000 miles but still doesn't burn any oil and has required very little maintenance. I just change the oil every now and then. Our son has a 4-WD Ranger with almost 200,000 miles on it, and our daughter has a 1997 Ranger with almost 200,000 miles. We'd definitely recommend Ranger pickups to anyone."

Richard F. Petersen, Correctionville, Iowa: "I bought my 2004 **Toyota Corolla** because of its fuel efficiency - it gets 37 mpg. This car is built with quality and has exceeded my expectations in every way.

"My 1972 **Deere** 4000 diesel tractor equipped with a **Westendorf** front-end loader

"It gets 37 mpg. This car is built with quality and has exceeded my expectations in every way."

is a best buy. I've used it almost every day for 33 years, yet it has never been overhauled."

Vincent Carbonell, Delano, Minn.: "Mowing our lawn was always a chore until I bought this machine. Now the job is almost fun," says Vincent about his "best buy" 2004 **Country Clipper** zero turn mower. "I had been using a garden tractor with a hydrostatic transmission so I thought I had a good machine but the **Country Clipper** mower has reduced my mowing time from 2 hours and 20 minutes down to 1 hour and 50 minutes. Also, after I'm done mowing I no longer have to use a string trimmer around trees and shrubs."