

with the arms. Our old **Massey-Harris** and **International** rakes work 100 percent better than this rig."

**Bob Beckmann, Eugene, Ore.:** Bob likes his 1998 **Dodge Ram 1500 4-WD Quad Cab** pickup. "This pickup rides like a luxury car yet has the stamina of a heavy hauler. It carries six people in comfort, turns on a dime, and will pass anything on the road. It's definitely a keeper."

**Lyle Oakes, Montrose, Pa.:** "It's a pleasure to use," reports Lyle about his "best buy"

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**Swisher 44-in. tow-behind lawn mower.** "It pulls to one side of the mower. Does a great job and doesn't miss any grass when turning."

**Richard Thomas, Lynn, Ind.:** "My worst buy is my **Grasshopper 612** riding mower. After I used it a few times I thought that it was using too much gas so I set up a test. I had my wife run her **Dixon mower** on 6 acres and it used 2 gallons of gas. Then she used the **Grasshopper** on the same 6 acres and it used 12 gallons. I wrote to the company five times and got no reply except once when they sent out a sales rep. He had no idea what the problem was. In July 1997 he returned and said that we needed to put 60 or 70 hours on this mower before we'd be able to tell what was wrong with it. I told him to take the mower back because I didn't want to use it any more. He got in his truck and said he'd get back to me. That was the last I ever heard from him.

"The point is, how many people have two mowers allowing them to compare the fuel economy? Without two mowers I would never have found out about this problem."

**Kenneth Dierschke, San Angelo, Texas:** Kenneth likes his two 1995 **Case-IH** front wheel assist **Magnum** tractor models - a 7240 and a 7230. "I bought both tractors at the same time and neither one has ever been returned to the dealer for any reason. The 7230 is the perfect size tractor for my operation. It uses about 8 to 9 gallons per hour of fuel when pulling a 40-ft. field cultivator, which I think is excellent. The 7240 uses about 9 gallons per hour when pulling a 6-bottom moldboard plow. I'm already looking forward to the next generation of Magnums."

**John Illies, Elrosa, Minn.:** "I like my **Orthman 8350** ridge till cultivator. It works great in high residue without plugging and has easy-to-use adjustments. Also, the company provides great service.

"I use my **Deere 8300** tractor to pull the cultivator and it's also a best buy. It's comfortable, quiet, and easy on fuel. The view from the cab is great."

On the negative side, he had trouble with his **Deere 886** cultivator and **Deere** guidance hitch for it. "The cultivator was always plugging up with residue so the company sent a representative out to our farm. He came out after a heavy rain, told me the cultivator was plugging because of the wet conditions, and left. However, the cultivator had been plugging up even in perfectly dry ground. Another problem was that the guidance hitch was equipped with electric controls and therefore could only be pulled by my **Deere 8300** tractor. I finally traded both units off for the **Orthman** cultivator."

**Jared Kottwitz, Collins, Mo.:** "No problems so far," says Jared about his 1998 **Dodge Ram 2500 4-WD** pickup. "It rides excellent - I don't feel any of the bumps - and has all the power I want. It's an all-around good pickup."

His "worst buy" is his 1995 **Deere 7010** tractor. "Let's just say that when Deere says 'nothing runs like a Deere', they aren't kidding because everything else runs."

**S. Bremmer, Peace River, Alberta:** A 1989 **GM SLE** extended cab 4-WD pickup equipped with a 6.2-liter diesel engine rates as his "worst buy". It has more than 156,000 miles on it. "I bought it used in 1996 and had to replace the alternator, water pump, vacuum pump, and injection pump. I had to replace the fuel pump twice. I also had to replace a lot of other stuff including the 5-speed automatic transmission. My total cost was about \$6,000. It all went to waste when a cheaply-made oil cooler line popped out of the engine and the lack of oil ruined it."

**Terry Weivoda, Chatfield, Minn.:** "My **Deere 855** compact utility tractor is the perfect size for my tree farm and small acreage. It starts easy in cold weather and is easy on fuel, using less than one gallon per hour. I recently looked at the company's new 4000 tractor models and don't see enough improvements on them to justify trading.

"My 1996 **DR** trimmer mower is my worst buy. In I've already had to replace the trimmer head twice. The problem is that it has no grease fittings and the sealed bearings on it aren't built heavy enough and aren't designed to keep out dirt. It cost me more than \$80 to replace each trimmer head. I expected better quality from a machine that cost more than \$800. The machine also does a poor job in quackgrass and constantly plugs up."

**Dave Mueller, Manitowoc, Wis.:** "It has about 160,000 hard miles on it but still starts and runs good," says Dave, impressed with his 1990 **Dodge 3/4-ton 4-WD** pickup equipped with a **Cummins** diesel engine. "It doesn't have as much power as it used to, but considering how much work it has done it's the best farm truck we've ever had.

"I'm not impressed with **Belarus 400** tractors. I don't own them but have done extensive work on one for a neighbor. It's just one year old and is already on its third clutch. Lately there's been a different oil leak every day. It's a poorly built tractor."

**Walter Korth, Cambridge, Wis.:** "My worst buy is my 1994 **Chevrolet S-10** pickup. At 43,000 miles the transmission had to be rebuilt and a new ring gear installed, at a cost of \$1,700. The warranty didn't cover anything because it expired after 36,000 miles."

**Chris Schoenberger, Upper Sandusky, Ohio:** "My best buy is my 1998 **Arctic Cat 500 4-WD ATV**. It can pull a full wagon and can even pull a **Deere** header trailer loaded with a 924 head. It runs good and fast. My only complaint is that the 4.25 gal. fuel tank is too small."

**Gene Alt, Audubon, Iowa:** "My best buys are field sprayer tips from **Sprayer Specialists** (5233 N.W. 111th Drive, Grimes, Iowa 50111 ph 800 351-1587). They draw air through them which changes the droplet size to reduce spray drift dramatically. They work great for spraying Roundup and for any place where you need to protect adjacent crops from chemical damage. I bought 110 degree tips because they let me run my spray boom closer to the ground."

**Deborah DeHart, Narrows, Va.:** "Our **Ford 4610** tractor handles good and is fuel efficient. The only problem is that when making a left turn, the left front tire rubs on the

steering control rod which comes from the steering wheel area to the front of the tractor. I think this problem could have been avoided with better engineering."

**Donald Morrison, Mt. Vernon, Wash.:** A **Grimme GC 1700** potato harvester rates as Donald's "best buy" (Jake Kloosterman Implement Co. of Ontario, Canada). "All the American-made potato harvesters are designed for sandy or dry soil that's found in most of the big potato growing regions of the U.S. However, here in northwest Washington our soils are very cloddy and wet - conditions much like they have in Europe. So when we came upon this potato harvester we fell in love with it. It handles the potatoes very gently. The separator system uses polyurethane star rollers in combination with smooth rollers that work in opposing directions. The result is unequalled separating ability."

On the negative side, "We tested the **Brillion** land commander last spring in heavy residue soils that were planted with a cover crop like rye or wheat. It's designed to disk first, then rip. It distributed the residue very unevenly and left a bare strip in the middle. The implement is built well but just doesn't have what it takes to incorporate a cover crop evenly."

**Frank Glenn, Farmer City, Ill.:** "Your story in the last issue on repowering tractors really struck a nerve. I had previously written to you that I would never buy another **Deere** tractor after owning an 8960 that was underpowered (until I installed a **Schied** calibrated fuel pump). Now that I bought a **Deere 9400**, I'm angry at myself for not sticking to my word.

"The 9400 is 'almost a tractor' except that it's underpowered. I could try to get a computer hacker to boost engine power, but the only component that could possibly be modified would be the fuel injectors. The problem is that the tractor doesn't seem to put the power to the ground.

"We farmers should be able to make structured power upgrades to our tractors like they do with trucks. I might have **Jon Kinzenbaw**

### "The problem is that the tractor doesn't seem to put the power to the ground."

repower my tractor with a **Cummins N14** engine. Then I could paint the **Deere** engine lemon yellow and mount it on back of the tractor for extra weight."

**James D. Bopp, Cogswell, N. Dak.:** James nominates several tractors as his "best buys". They include three 1976 **Versatile 750**'s; three **International** models including a 1948 H, 1950 M, and 1959 560; and two 1976 **Allis-Chalmers** models - a 7040 and a 7060. "No major problems with any of them."

**Winan McCall, Parker, Pa.:** Winan's the owner of a "best buy" 1997 **New Holland 8560** tractor. "I really like the transmission and all the controls."

**Larry C. Steves, Fort Ann, N.Y.:** "It has more than 350,000 miles on it and is still going strong. I've never even had to open up the engine," reports Larry about his 1990 **Ford F-350 4-WD** pickup equipped with a 7.3-liter engine, 5-speed transmission, and manual hubs for switching to 4-WD. "I use it every day to pull a 20-ft. livestock trailer and also a 24-ft. flatbed trailer. The loads average 16,000 lbs. with the livestock trailer

and 24,000 lbs. with the flatbed trailer. It's a great truck."

**Joe Haynes, Carthage, Texas:** Joe likes **Kohler K5825** air-cooled engines. "The company I work for uses these engines, running them on natural gas, to dispose of salt water. The engines are used to pull a reciprocating pump that produces pressures up to 450 psi. They start in any kind of weather and run 12 hours at a time, using very little oil. I've never seen a small engine run this constantly - some of them have 700 to 800 hours on them but are still running strong."

**Ernest McClain, Sabetha, Kan.:** "I like my 1996 **Agco Allis 6690** front wheel assist, 80 hp tractor equipped with a front-end loader. It starts good in cold weather and really works well in muddy conditions. No complaints."

**Bill White, Twisp, Wash.:** Bill's impressed with his 1996 **Lincoln Weld-Pak 100**, a 110-volt flux-core wire feed welder. "We already had a **Lincoln** stick welder but needed something that could be used for welding sheet metal and for light duty jobs. It sells for about \$150, weighs only about 50 lbs., and can be plugged into a generator for remote jobs. It doesn't compare to an argon gas wire feed welder but is a huge step above stick welders that can be used only on light metal. It just never hangs up and is very reliable."

On the "worst buy" side, he lists **Sears** electric drills, **Skil** saws, and jointers. "All of the electrical equipment I've bought from **Sears** in the last five years has gone sour and the service on replacement parts has been terrible. For example, it took me five months to get a new motor for my jointer. The first motor lasted only one year and the second one lasted less than 10 minutes. I had to go through a big hassle to get a replacement for the second motor. I won't ever buy any **Sears** electrical equipment again. However, the company still makes excellent quality hand tools."

**Odell B. Aamot, Wendell, Minn.:** "My 1996 **Dodge 3500 1-ton** pickup equipped with a diesel engine, 5-speed transmission, and dually wheels is by far the best pickup I've ever had. It's very fuel efficient. Pulling a 29-ft. 5th wheel trailer it gets 12 to 15 mpg, and driving empty it gets 20 to 21 mpg. The engine has a lot of power. The dual wheels make it so stable that when semi trucks pass me I don't feel anything. It also rides well for a 1-ton pickup."

**Kirby M. Reichert, Jr., Grantville, Pa.:** "My 1995 **Case-IH 8570** baler has performed great and is a best buy. No complaints."

**Robert Bernott, Merryetta, Okla.:** "My worst buy is my 1998 **Ford F-150** pickup. It's a gas guzzler and is underpowered when pulling a load. I wouldn't recommend **Ford** to anyone who needs a work truck."

**Latty W. Freeman, Newalla, Okla.:** "The best buy I've ever made is my **U.S. Lever T-post** puller. I bought the manually-operated version about six years ago and have used it to pull hundreds of metal T-posts with no problems. After I bought it I learned that the company had gone out of business. I bought all remaining stock and will ship one to anyone for \$75 for as long as my supply lasts (21401 S.E. 59th St., Newalla, Okla. 74857). They work great. I wish someone would start making them again.

"My 1990 **GM 1500** pickup is a best buy. It has about 216,000 miles and all I've done is change the oil every 5,000 miles and lubricate it. I change the transmission oil ev-

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